

Research Staff Compensation Project Overview



April 11, 2022

Discussion Topics

- Project Summary
- Project Team
- Methodology
- Deliverables
- Research Staff Pay Bands
- Research Staff Career Pathway
- Impact
- Next Steps
- Questions

Project Summary

- Create a competitive, market-driven, professional research career pathway to enhance WMU's research enterprise
- Academic Affairs, Research and Innovation, Human Resources, and Institutional Equity partnered with national consultants from the firm Aon to review the research staff policy and compensation at WMU

Project Team

Executive Partners

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Research and Innovation
- Vice President for Business and Finance

Project Team

- Steven Carr, Research and Innovation
- Kelli Bond, Research and Innovation
- Amy Brimmer, Human Resources
- Tammy Miller, Institutional Equity
- Heather Petcovic, Academic Affairs
- Trisha Priest, Human Resources
- Adam Wall, Institutional Equity
- Evelyn Winfield-Thomas, Institutional Equity
- Lori Wingate, Research and Innovation

Additional Consultation

- President's cabinet, deans, chairs, project leads, and research staff supervisors

Methodology

- Aon conducted an independent market review.
- Market Comparators (CUPA Peer Groups)
 - Carnegie Higher Research Activity (R2) – Public Institutions
 - Total Expenses Q4 (>\$256,795,741) – Public Institutions
 - Total FTE Student Enrollment Q4 (> 8,659) – Public Institutions
 - Engineering market data not collected by CUPA; general industry data was discounted to align with the CUPA survey leveling

Deliverables

- Pay structure aligned with the competitive market for broad groups of disciplines
 - Research staff pay grade minima are lower than the faculty salary minima at all levels for all disciplines
- Career pathway adjustments
 - Renamed the entry level training position as Post-Graduate Fellow
 - Added an additional level of the professional researchers to create a well-defined career pathway
 - No change to Emeritus Researcher classification
- Research staff compensation guidelines updated to align industry best practices with WMU needs
 - Validated current practice of offering a lesser benefits package for post-graduate fellows
- No general fund cost impact – research positions are funded by grants and contracts

Research Staff Pay Bands

WMU Research Staff Pay Structure

Effective May 1, 2022 (salaried) and May 2, 2022 (hourly)

Pay Band B
Fine Arts
Humanities
Pay Band C
Education
Life Sciences
Social Sciences
Pay Band D
Aviation
Health and Human Services
Physical Sciences
Pay Band E
Engineering and Applied Sciences

Upon request, additional discipline groups will be assigned to pay bands by Human Resources and the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation based upon market rates of pay and parity with faculty research roles.



Research Staff Career Pathway

- **Post-Graduate Fellow**
 - Short term, post-graduate training position up to a 3-year term appointment.
 - Contributes to research or scholarship on assigned projects.
- **Research Associate**
 - Entry position in to a professional career pathway.
 - Contributes to and conducts research or scholarship on assigned projects.
 - May have lead responsibility for discrete components of a larger project under the general direction of a senior or principal investigator.
- **Senior Research Associate**
 - Conducts original research or scholarship on assigned projects. Designs, administers and implements research projects as specified in the project plan.
 - Monitors daily operation of research programs/projects, including the reporting requirements, budgets and time tables specified in the project.
 - May serve as a principal investigator on a funded research or scholarship project or as a co-investigator under the general direction of a principal investigator.
- **Principal Research Associate**
 - Leads a research or scholarship program and directs the work of other research staff.
 - Designs and develops research proposals and contract bids for submission to potential sponsors or clients, competes for research funds regionally, nationally and internationally.
 - Hires and supervises staff and students working on projects.

Impact

- 19 research staff positions
 - 6 Post-Graduate Fellow
 - 1 Research Associate
 - 8 Senior Research Associate
 - 4 Principal Research Associate
- No impact to Emeritus Researchers (outside project scope)
- Pay decisions on a case-by-case basis in consultation with supervisors, project leads, and department chairs.
- If employee pay is less than pay grade minimum, determine if grant or contract budget will allow pay increase to minimum
 - Otherwise, pay increase deferred until next grant or contract renewal
 - No employee will receive a pay decrease
- Future grant or contract proposals must budget pay to be at least pay grade minimum.

Next Steps

- HR to send employee notification letters to project lead and supervisors, via email by Tuesday, April 12.
- Project leads or supervisors to deliver notification letters to employees as soon as practicable.
- Any pay changes to be effective the first full pay period in May 2022.

Questions

Now:

- Please submit via the WebEx chat

After this Town Hall has concluded:

- Research staff website: wmich.edu/hr/policies/researchstaff
 - Revised research staff compensation guidelines
 - Job descriptions
 - Pay schedule
- Project team member from your division
- Individual impact
 - Talk with your supervisor and escalate through organizational structure as needed
 - Contact your HR Representative