

YOUR RIGHTS as an Academic Researcher at UC



UAW 5810 is the union of nearly 5,000 Academic Researchers at the University of California and 7,000 Postdocs at UC and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Here is a summary of your rights and benefits as an Academic Researcher. If you have any work-related issues or questions, contact the union via email at uaw5810@uaw5810.org. You can see the full contract on the website at academicresearchersunited.org/fullcontract.

Compensation and Benefits:

- AR salary scales will increase by 4-7% on January 1, 2020 and again on July 1, 2020 by 3-5%. Additional increases of 3-5% will follow on July 1, 2021 and July 1, 2022.
- Over the life of the agreement, AR salary rates will increase 14%-24% depending on title, rank, and step.
- See academicresearchersunited.org/fullcontract for current salary scales.
- UC may provide pay above the rates established in the contract.

Health and Retirement Benefits:

- To participate in UC benefits (medical, dental, vision, etc.), you must enroll within 31 days of your hire date. You may change your enrollment choices during the annual open enrollment (usually during October-November) and/or if there is a qualifying event such as a birth or adoption, marriage, or job change.
- Newly hired ARs choose between two types of retirement plans: a defined benefit pension plan (UC Retirement Plan) and a defined contribution plan (UC Savings Choice). If you do not select a plan within 90 days of hiring you will be placed in the pension plan.

- For retirement plans, UC must maintain current employee contribution rates and cannot change pension plans or tiers without bargaining with the Union.

Appointments and Job Security:

- Initial appointments must be for a minimum of 1 year. After first merit review, reappointments must be equal to length of time in a pay step (2 – 3 years at a minimum), providing increased job security and longer visas.
- ARs may only be laid off under certain conditions and must be provided 45 days' notice.
- For ARs who primarily supported by funding sources on which they are a Principal Investigator, UC may approve a temporary salary reduction instead of a reduction in percent effort to prevent a layoff.
- ARs may not be fired or disciplined arbitrarily and without "just cause." If you believe your supervisor or the university is contemplating discipline or termination of your appointment, you should contact the Union immediately as you have the right to representation and due process.

Merit Review and Promotions:

- All ARs must receive merit reviews on time (every 2 - 3 years for most ARs). UC must provide written notice of eligibility for a merit increase six weeks before materials are due, and notice of its decision and an explanation.
- Approved promotions and merit increases must be effective on July 1 in the year of review.
- See academicresearchersunited.org/fullcontract for normal time between pay steps.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Protections:

- Discrimination and sexual harassment are resolvable through the grievance procedure and, ultimately, appeal to a neutral arbitrator. ARs who report a discrimination or harassment claim are protected to ensure their research and career progress can continue.

Time Off – Vacation, Sick Time, and Holidays:

- Full-time ARs accrue 24 days of vacation and 12 sick days per year and receive 13 paid holidays. Vacation requests may not be unfairly denied.
- Approved absences of less than a full day (e.g., for a doctor's appointment) do not require a sick leave day. Sick days can also be used for other types of leave (childbearing, family illness, family leave).
- Sick leave accrued in other UC appointments (such as Postdoc) should be transferred when you become an AR.

Get Involved!

We are a member-driven union — only through majority participation in each department can our union work to improve AR careers and research programs. Email uaw5810@uaw5810.org if you're interested in getting involved!

Leaves of Absence:

- The contract guarantees the length of time and the salary and benefits ARs receive when taking time off for reasons such as giving birth, bonding with a newborn child, or taking care of a family member.
- ARs can use sick leave or vacation when they cannot work due to a work-incurred injury or illness compensable under the California Workers' Compensation Act, including to supplement temporary disability payments to reach 100% pay.

International Researcher Rights:

- ARs will not suffer a loss in pay if UC misses its deadlines to send necessary paperwork to external agencies, resulting in a delay in the start date of a reappointment.

Resolving Workplace Problems:

- While the contract encourages informal resolution of grievances, it includes the right to take an unresolved grievance to a neutral third-party arbitrator so that the university cannot unilaterally determine the outcome.

Health and Safety Protections:

- ARs have the right to relevant health and safety training, to refuse a hazardous assignment until it has been remedied or determined to be safe, to access safe operating procedures and legally-required safety records for chemicals, substances and equipment, and to use protective clothing and equipment necessary for each assigned duty.
- The contract guarantees ARs access to tools and equipment necessary to carry out assigned duties.