2024 Summer Notes

RF Human Resources

Table of Contents

Introduction

As we head into the busy summer months the Research Foundation Office of Human Resources would like to share important information to help with your future hiring needs, summer salary decisions, and other general process improvements. The detailed information below will allow us to better partner on Human Resources (HR) related matters in an efficient and effective way.

A noteworthy milestone in RF HR is the one-year anniversary of the introduction of our electronic Appointment Form in MyBinghamton. This e-form platform allows supervisors to complete payroll appointment forms online with a simple web form. Our staff is currently engaged in designing and implementing improvements to our e-Form with our partners in Binghamton University Information Technology Services (ITS). Additionally, we are aiming to introduce new e-Forms which will allow users to appoint fellows, request extra service for exempt employees, and change how employee compensation is charged. As our team aims to continuously improve our service platforms for our customers, we would like to thank our customers for their patience and willingness to adopt new business solutions.

We are committed to partnering with our customers to provide a high level of service and support, benefitting both Binghamton University and the Research Foundation.

Thank you!

General Information - Before Work Begins

1. What if I or my employees are current Binghamton University employees?

The Research Foundation for SUNY (hereafter RF) is an employer separate from SUNY and Binghamton University. As the RF is a separate employer, all employees not previously paid by the RF Human Resources & Payroll (RFHR) must complete a Form I-9 and present **supporting documentation to RFHR** before work begins or on the first date of employment. This serves to prove the employee's identity and eligibility to work in the United States per federal law. Until all paperwork is completed and identification is presented, employees may not begin working. Principal Investigators (PIs) are responsible for tracking which personnel are currently working and ensuring that they have completed all necessary requirements to begin working.

2. What if my employees complete their I-9 after work begins?

Failure of an employee to complete their I-9 before work begins poses a significant risk to the RF and their supervisor's sponsored award. The RF is subjected to frequent federal and state audits as well as occasional audits requested by sponsors, during which hiring and work authorization are scrutinized.

3. What are the dates for the Summer 2024 period?

Summer 2024 extends from Monday, May 13th through Friday, August 16th for 70 working days (7.0 pay periods). Faculty summer salary appointment dates must fall within this date range and that summer salary may be paid for a maximum of 65 working days.

If a graduate student employee was appointed as a Teaching Assistant on the Binghamton University payroll for the Spring 2024 semester, the earliest allowable start date for RF summer employment is **May 23rd, 2024**. All graduate student employees who will be Teaching Assistants for the Fall 2024 semester may be appointed on the RF payroll through **August 14th, 2024**.

4. How do I start the process of putting an employee on the RF payroll?

Submit an RF Employee Appointment/Change Form online through MyBinghamton. Once received by RFHR, we will evaluate whether new hire paperwork or additional information will be required. Instructional guides for the hiring process can be found on the RF Human Resources web page.

General Information - Before Work Begins

5. How do I obtain building access for my employees?

If employees require building or lab access, please contact your department HR Master and/or Building Administrator to coordinate access.

6. When do I need to submit an appointment form? When will my employee be paid?

RF pay periods and pay dates differ from those of the University. Pay period dates, pay days, and appointment form deadlines can be found online on RFHR's website. Appointment forms submitted after the deadline for a specific pay period (or appointment forms for which additional information or new hire paperwork is required) will be processed in the following pay period. Due to large increases in payroll volume during the summer, it is highly recommended that you submit appointment forms in advance.

Note that e-Forms returned to PIs/supervisors or incomplete New Hire Paperwork through Interview Exchange are not considered as "complete" and may result in additional pay delays. Information provided by these required items are crucial to RFHR's ability to process appointments. Without all required information before RFHR's internal processing deadlines, an employee's pay processing may be deferred to the following pay cycle.

7. I am a new employee. What do I need to do?

RFHR utilizes an e-onboarding platform called **Interview Exchange** to allow new employees to complete most of their new hire paperwork virtually. However, employees are still required to present identification for the Form I-9 before work begins. Employees may present this documentation by scheduling either an in-person or Zoom appointment with RFHR. Until this step is completed, federal Form I-9 requirements are not fulfilled and the employee cannot begin working.

General Information - Before Work Begins

8. How do I set up Direct Deposit and tax information?

New employees must enter tax withholding choices and Direct Deposit information in RF Employee Self Service once they receive their RF ID number via email from the address RFHumanResources@rfsuny.org. Instructions regarding how to access RF Self Service and how to input Direct Deposit and tax information will be emailed to you by RF Human Resources staff once your employee record has been created.

Due to the timing of payroll processes in relation to when an employee enters this information, an employee's first paycheck may be issued as a physical check mailed to their home address. If this occurs, RFHR cannot guarantee the US Postal Service will deliver the check on payday itself.

9. How often are my employees required to take breaks?

Per New York State law, employees who work at least 6 hours in a single day must also take a 30-minute meal break during which they are not completing any work whatsoever. Note that while meal breaks are required, they are unpaid time.

10. What are the current employee fringe rates?

	Regular	Postdoc	Graduate	Undergraduate	Summer-Only
FY 2023-2024	40.0%	28.0%	13.0%	6.0%	14.0%
FY 2024-2025*	39.5%	31.0%	13.0%	5.5%	14.0%

*Proposed rates submitted to DHHS, effective July 1st, 2024 pending approval

General Information - Signature Authorization

What is Signature Authorization?

Signature Authorization is the way by which a Principal Investigator (PI) officially authorizes another individual (hereafter "authorized signatory") to conduct sponsored program business on their behalf. Specifically, Signature Authorization documents this permission and details whether a "blanket" authorization was given or if the PI is only permitting an individual to conduct limited activities on their behalf.

➔ Example: A PI may authorize a staff member to approve all transactions and documents for their sponsored award (appointment forms, purchases, timecards, etc.), or they may specify that the staff member is only authorized to approve certain transactions (e.g. timecards only).

Why does Signature Authorization matter?

Most of the transactions that an authorized signatory may undertake for a PI either involve spending funds given by a sponsor or certifying to certain facts that a sponsor or governing body requires. Thus, sponsors, government entities, and auditors require this delegation of authority is properly and clearly documented to be sure that the correct individuals are conducting award business. When appointment forms or timecards are approved, funds are effectively being spent based on the approval of whomever signed the source document. As such, RF Human Resources must return any forms submitted which do not have appropriate signature authorizations and cannot move forward with processing until authorization issues are resolved.

Additionally, signature authorization is effectively an internal control process to ensure Research Foundation business is conducted in a manner that is appropriate and above reproach when examined by others.

How do I document Signature Authorization?

To delegate signature authority to someone, the PI must complete a Signature Authorization web form on the Sponsored Funds website.

Note: Until signature authority is documented, the authorized signatory cannot begin conducting business for a sponsored award.

Hiring Undergraduate Students

Compensation

Undergraduate students may only be appointed as **hourly** employees - on your employee's appointment form, you will be required to specify an hourly rate. New York State minimum wage is currently $15.00 per hour, so all students must be paid this hourly rate but may be paid a maximum of $22.37 per hour if specified on the appointment form.

Timecard Requirement

As an hourly employee, your student must submit a timecard for ALL time worked after they finish working each pay period - employees are not allowed to submit timecards for scheduled work hours in advance. If timecards are submitted by the student and approved by the supervisor prior to the timecard deadline posted online they will be paid on time provided there is available funding in the sponsored award.

When employees are paid based on the number of hours worked, payment cannot be processed until after a timecard is received, verified and processed after the close of the pay period. Due to this fact, hourly employees are paid on a two-week delay.

➔ Effort for undergrad student employees must also be certified through the Effort Certification process (e-CRT) managed by Sponsored Funds/Grants Management (when applicable).

Recently Graduated Students

If the student received their degree in May and is not enrolled in a degree program for the fall semester, they may not be employed as a student employee. Instead, you may be able to appoint them as a non-student Summer Only employee.

Hiring Graduate Students

Compensation

Graduate students may be appointed either as hourly or salaried employees. Grad students appointed as hourly employees must submit timecards in order to receive payment. Grad students paid on a salaried basis are not required to submit timecards.

All grad student employees should be paid at least $15.00 per hour to mirror New York State minimum wage requirements. However, RF Human Resources strongly encourages PIs to pay graduate students at least $17.00 per hour to Masters students and $20.00 per hour to PhD candidates.

Employing Spring 2024 Teaching/Graduate Assistants

If a graduate student employee was appointed as a Teaching or Graduate Assistant on the Binghamton University payroll for the Spring 2024 semester, the earliest allowable start date for RF summer employment is **May 23rd, 2024**.

Employing Fall 2024 Teaching/Graduate Assistants

If a graduate student employee will be appointed as a Teaching or Graduate Assistant on the Binghamton University payroll for the Fall 2024 semester, the latest allowable end date for RF summer employment is **August 14th, 2024**.

Recently Graduated Students

If the student received their degree in May and is not enrolled in a degree program for the fall semester, they may not be employed as a student employee. Instead, you may be able to appoint them as a non-student Summer Only employee.

Effort Certification (e-CRT) Requirement

Effort for all grad student employees must be certified through the Effort Certification process (e-CRT) managed by Sponsored Funds/Grants Management.

Hiring Graduate Students
(Continued)

Grad Benefits Eligibility

RFHR staff will evaluate each appointment to determine whether the student is eligible for benefits from the Research Foundation which include health, dental, and vision benefits. **Note that hourly grad students are not eligible for insurance benefits.** Grad student employees are eligible for insurance benefits if they meet all of the following criteria:

- They are appointed as **salaried** employees
- They are paid a gross of at least $165.12 biweekly
- They were on the RF payroll and enrolled in RF grad insurance benefits for the spring semester **OR** are newly appointed for the summer and the PI states in writing that they intend to reappoint the student on the RF payroll for the entire fall semester.

Please refer to the Academic Calendar on the Binghamton University website for the dates semesters begin and cease.

Note: If a grad student's summer appointment ends and their fall appointment starts more than 28 days later, the student is not eligible for summer benefits. However, they may be eligible for benefits during their fall appointment on the RF payroll.

Hiring Non-Students
(Or Newly Graduated Students)

Types of Non-Student Employment

There are two types of non-student employees - non-student Summer Only employees and Regular employees.

1. Non-Student Summer Only - Summer employee appointments are limited to the summer period. If the employee is unlikely to be appointed beyond the end of summer, they are classified as "summer-only" and the corresponding fringe rate is applied. "Summer-Only" employees are not eligible for benefits with the RF but are required to complete timecards.

2. Regular Employee - If a "summer-only" employee works beyond the end of summer, they are classified as regular employee retroactive to their appointment start date and the applied fringe charges to the sponsored awards are adjusted. Regular employees may be eligible for benefits - RFHR will evaluate each appointment to determine benefits eligibility.

Additional Hiring Requirements

For all non-student employees, hiring managers are required to submit a job description along with the appointment form. As the RF has fixed titles that correspond with pay ranges and position requirements, RFHR uses the position description to determine the most appropriate title to use. Employee appointments cannot be processed by our business system without an RF title.

Recruiting Regular Employees

While Summer-Only appointments do not need to be posted, Regular employee positions may need to be posted for 15 days as a full search is conducted and Affirmative Action approval is obtained from the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DDEI). Regular employee positions for less than one year are considered temporary and do not require a search, but will require a search if the appointment is later extended to last longer than one year.

Hiring Non-Students
(Or Newly Graduated Students)

Timecard and Effort Certification Requirements

All non-student employees are required to complete timecards to certify their time worked.

Summer-only employees and regular employees appointed for less than 6 months and for less than 50% FTE (Full-Time Effort) do not accrue Paid Time Off (PTO) for vacations or personal days. However, they may have accrued holiday time and/or sick leave they may use. If an employee will not work on a regularly scheduled work day and does not have appropriate PTO balances to charge, they must either make up the time within the same pay period or RFHR must be notified two weeks in advance so their pay may be adjusted.

Regular employees appointed for at least 6 months and 50% FTE are eligible to accrue PTO for vacations. After a new hire's appointment has been processed, RFHR will contact the employee directly via email to provide more information on timecards and leave accruals.

2024 - 2025 Research Foundation Salary Plan

The Research Foundation is currently developing the 2024-25 salary plan - we will provide further information once it is available. Please be aware that employees of sponsored projects are eligible to receive merit, equity and promotional increases with the approval of the Associate Vice President for Research / RF Operations Manager. All salary increases exceeding the RF Salary Plan provisions will be submitted to the RF Operations Manager before processing.

Employee salary adjustments for graduate and undergraduate employees can usually be processed at any time and are not tied to the campus salary plan. Please submit a Research Foundation Employee Appointment/Change Form to initiate any salary change. If additional documentation is required for a proposed change, RF Human Resources will contact the PI directly.

Fellowships

What are Fellowships?

Fellowships are awards in recognition of a student or postdoc's promise as a scholar intended for their support. Fellows are not employees as fellows do not perform a service and fellowships do not carry a requirement to work. Fellows may be eligible for RF benefits, but as fellowships do not incur fringe benefits charges, the fellow may be responsible for the full cost of benefits for which they are enrolled.

Occasionally, stipends are paid to students or other individuals for their participation in a program in which they are not considered an employee. These **participant stipends** are paid by RF Accounts Payable rather than RF Human Resources. To determine whether to classify a request as a fellowship or participant stipend (and thus, determine which department will process payment), RF Human Resources will request additional information in the form of a short PDF questionnaire from the PI before proceeding with processing.

Requirements to Appoint a Fellow

Fellows do not need to complete Form I-9s but do need to provide Direct Deposit information to RF Human Resources. Fellows are paid **exclusively** via Direct Deposit - fellowship payments will not be processed until Direct Deposit information is provided.

Once a fellowship appointment form is received, RF Human Resources sends all required forms (including Direct Deposit forms) via **Interview Exchange**. After the forms are completed by the fellow, RF Human Resources will process fellowship payments (including inputting Direct Deposit information on the fellow's behalf).

Fellowship Taxes

Fellows that are non-resident aliens for tax purposes (foreign nationals who have been in the United States for less than 5 years) will have a 14% federal tax withheld from their payment. All other fellows will not have any tax withheld from their payments.

➔ Note: Regardless of whether taxes are withheld from a fellow's payments, fellowships may be taxable income. The RF highly encourages any fellow with questions regarding a fellowship's impact on their personal tax situation to speak with a tax professional.

Faculty Summer Salary

Summer Salary Dates

Faculty are eligible to receive salary from their sponsored awards over the summer period when they have no academic obligation to the University. This period is defined by the Office of the Provost and extends from May 13th, 2024 through August 16th, 2024, or 70 working days. However, faculty may earn a maximum of 65 days of salary during the summer period.

Salary Amounts

The maximum amount a faculty member is eligible to earn is based on their SUNY Institutional Base Salary for the preceding academic year. Additional limitations on salary amounts may be imposed by sponsors (such as the NIH salary cap), amounts submitted in the award budget, or availability of funds at the time of processing.

Breaks in Work / Summer Teaching

During the summer period, if a faculty member receives salary from an award it is assumed that they are actively contributing effort to the sponsored project. If you have scheduled time off (such as for a vacation), please indicate the dates you will not be working on your summer salary appointment form and your summer salary will be prorated accordingly. For all unexpected time off, please contact RFHR.

➔Faculty who teach summer courses or participate in new student orientations are also expected to adjust their RF summer salary requests accordingly.

Appointing Other Faculty to a Sponsored Award

If a faculty member is paid on an award for which they are neither PI nor Co-PI, they are classified as a "Senior Research Scientist" and must complete leave records through RF Employee Self Service to attest their time worked. This requirement is in addition to the requirement for PIs and Co-PIs to certify effort for themselves and their employees through e-CRT. Note that a faculty Research Scientist is considered "summer-only" and does not accrue Paid Time Off (PTO).

Research Administration Contact List

The Division of Research supports Binghamton University's success as a premier public, nationally recognized institution and leader in transformational research that benefits society. The division promotes and supports excellence in research and scholarly activities and fosters an environment of consciousness and responsibility that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

Leadership & Operations

Lisa Gilroy (lgilroy@binghamton.edu)

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RF Accounts Payable/Purchasing

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Chris Karl (ckarl@binghamton.edu)

Marianne Cannon (macannon@binghamton.edu)

Linda Fox (lfox@binghamton.edu)

Kelly Luce (kluce@binghamton.edu)

Tyler Whiting (twhiting@binghamton.edu)

Who To Call

Below you will find contact information for key departmental resources within the Division of Research. Please feel free to reach out to anyone listed below for assistance.

Human Resources, Payroll and Benefits

General Inquiries

RF Human Resources Main Line/Email - Call 607-777-4264 or email rfhr@binghamton.edu

Recruiting (Regular Employees)

Adam Chavez, Nicole Gorman

New Hire Paperwork

Aileen Ferro

Hourly Timecards and Payroll

RF Human Resources Main Line/Email

Professional and Staff Support Timecards

Jaime Silveri

Benefits Enrollment and Orientations

Nicole Gorman, Jaime Silveri

Accident Reporting / Worker's Compensation

Emily Hermanovitch

FMLA / NYS Paid Family Leave / Leaves of Absence

Nicole Gorman, Jaime Silveri

Employee Relations

Adam Chavez, Emily Hermanovitch

Who To Call (Continued)

Account Establishment/Budget Adjustments
Grant and Contract Administrators (GCA) & Grant Specialists

Jennifer Flanagan

Linda Hoke

Ben Fay

Katie Blaine

Emilee Bobik

Tatiana Sangadzhieva

Sabine Wintergerst

Grants Management Staff

Gino Bucciarelli

Alexanderia Stebbins

Sherline Williams

Mark Burns

Cassandra McKnight

Effort Reporting (Certification of Salary Distribution Forms)

Alexanderia Stebbins, Gino Bucciarelli

Financial Reports, Invoices to Sponsors

Cassandra McKnight

Checks to be deposited to Research Foundation Accounts

Geri Ashley

Income Fund Reimbursable (IFR) transactions

Gino Bucciarelli, Alexanderia Stebbins

Independent Contractor, Non-Resident Alien Payments

Mike Walsh, Marianne Cannon

No-Cost Extensions

GCAs and Grant Specialists

Who To Call (Continued)

Project Terms and Conditions

GCAs and Grant Specialists

Policy and Contract Issues or Other Related Sponsored Project Matters

Lisa Gilroy, Jennifer Flanagan, Don Miller

Proposal Preparation and Submission

GCAs

Property Control, Equipment Inventory, Equipment Insurance

Mike Walsh

Purchasing, Bid Preparation, Purchase Order Creation, and Subcontractor Payments

Mike Walsh, Chris Karl

Refund/Reimbursement checks for deposit to Research Foundation Accounts

Mike Walsh, Marianne Cannon

Report Center Access and Training

Alexanderia Stebbins

Technical Reporting Requirements and Report Submission Dates

Gino Bucciarelli, Maureen O'Neill

Travel

Tyler Whiting, Mike Walsh

Vendor and Human Subject Payments

Mike Walsh, Marianne Cannon

Additional Resources

Research Development and Administration Webpages

Division of Research

RF Human Resources

Grants Management

Sponsored Programs

RF Accounts Payable/Purchasing

Strategic Research Initiatives

Tools

RF Employee Self Service Portal

MyBinghamton Portal for RF Human Resources e-Forms

RF Report Center

Employee Compensation Certification (ECC, formerly ECRT)

SUNY Pre-Award and Compliance System (PACS)

Who Is My Grant and Contract Administrator (GCA)?