

Compare How a Union Contract Improves the AR Experience



	Before Contract	With Contract
Compensation	AR salary scales increased by an average of 1.7% over the last 10 years.	AR salary scales will increase by an average of 6% per year, and between salary scale and merit increases the typical AR will receive a wage increase of 24% over the life of the contract.
Appointment Length	No minimum appointment length. ARs could be appointed and reappointed on a monthly basis.	Initial appointments must be for a minimum of 1 year. After the first merit review, reappointments must be equal to length of time in a pay step (2 - 3 years at a minimum), providing for increased job security and longer visas.
Promotions and Career Advancement	20% of eligible ARs did not receive a merit increase from 2016-2019, most often because they were not informed of or pressured to defer their merit review.	All ARs must receive merit reviews on time (every 1 - 3 years), UC must provide the AR with notice of its decision and an explanation, and approved promotions and merit increases must be effective on July 1 in the year of review.
Layoff, Corrective Action, Dismissal	Academic Researchers could be disciplined or dismissed arbitrarily, or "at will." UC could lay off ARs at any time and for no reason without notice or compensation.	ARs may only be disciplined or dismissed for just cause. UC must provide justification for layoffs. PIs may, in lieu of layoff, opt to temporarily reduce their salary to preserve benefits.
Retirement Plans	UC had sole authority to change retirement plans, including employee contribution rates.	UC must maintain current employee contribution rates and cannot change pension plans or tiers without bargaining with the Union.
Dispute resolution and Non-Discrimination	No neutral, fair dispute resolution process at UC. ARs could bring discrimination/harassment complaints to University-run offices (Title IX), but there was no appeals process and no career protections.	All workplace disputes (including discrimination/harassment) are resolvable by a fair and expedient grievance procedure and, ultimately, appeal to a neutral arbitrator. ARs who report a discrimination/harassment claim are protected to ensure their research and career progress can continue.
Family and Medical Leaves	No guaranteed parental or family leave, and vacation days could be used to receive pay during leaves. Sick time could only be used for medical-related leaves.	No limits on use of accrued sick and vacation days used for family and medical leave (including parental leave), and parental leave can be used in a flexible manner. A new Union-UC committee is established to explore expanding paid family leave for ARs.

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Bridge Funding	Very few, if any, ARs could access bridge funding due to a lack of dedicated funding.	The contract establishes a joint Union-UC committee with the express purpose of finding mechanisms to fund a bridge funding program for ARs.
International Researcher Rights	No protection against university delays in visa processing.	UC is accountable for delays in visa processing for which they are responsible, including for lost compensation.
Vacation and Holidays	UC had unilateral authority to approve or deny vacation. No guarantee of time off on UC holidays.	24 days of vacation and 13 UC holidays per year. Vacation requests may not be unfairly denied.
Health and Safety	UC unilaterally set and enforced safety standards. ARs could be disciplined for refusing to perform tasks they believed to be unsafe.	Health and safety standards are enforceable through a strong grievance process. If an AR believes a task to be unsafe, they may delay performing it until a campus health and safety inspector evaluates the task and appropriate accommodations are made.
Political Action	No unified voice in political decision making and action.	ARs can play an organized role in electing pro-science, pro-public education, pro-worker candidates and advocating for policy change.
Bargaining Power	UC had no obligation to bargain over the terms and conditions of AR employment, or solicit or accept input from Academic Researchers.	Academic Researchers bargain as equals with UC. ARs can pay union dues (1.44% of gross salary) to create independent resources for advocacy. AR successor contract negotiations in 2022 will take place close to the same time as 19,000 Academic Student Employees (UAW 2865), increasing bargaining power for both.

NOTE: This document is a summary.

Please go to www.academicresearchersunited.org/CRV for more information.

Email ARunited@academicresearchersunited.org with questions.