RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - GRADE 6

Generic Position Overview

**Family:** Natural and Applied Science

**Cluster:** (NAS6) Research Assistant

**Note:** Employees of Queen's University work in a challenging and diverse environment. Queen's is committed to encouraging the development of new skills and attributes in its workforce. It is critical that staff are able to adapt to a changing work environment and to acquire new skills as these become necessary.

Depending upon the size of the department or unit and its functional activities, incumbents who fall into this category may perform all of the duties listed below or, in the case of large departments or units, may be assigned to designated specialized functions.

**Generic Position Summary:** The incumbent coordinates and conducts experiments according to protocols and scientific methods. Some independent judgement is used in determining optimal protocol and in setting the parameters of the experiment. Prepare and analyse samples. Present information in appropriate form, including reports and graphs. Use computers to aid in data processing. Respond to requests for information, and provide advice and direction. Supervise junior staff. Perform some administrative duties, such as scheduling and bookkeeping. Ensure maintenance of lab equipment. Responsible for safe management of hazardous materials. In clinical trial labs, incumbent may assess and recruit patients, dispense medication, and conduct follow-ups according to protocols. May prepare drawings and update drafts and records.

**Primary Duties And Responsibilities:** Coordinate and conduct experiments and procedures according to protocols and scientific methods. Work independently within guidelines provided by principal investigator. Prepare and analyse samples and complex solutions. Use precision laboratory equipment and instruments. Incumbent may perform some experimental design and adapt or modify protocols to meet the needs of the research project. May work with hazardous materials or animals, including animal care, preparation and surgeries.

Analyse experimental data and present information in an appropriate form, including word processing, spreadsheet manipulation, and preparation of graphs, line drawings, or photographs. Generate analyses and reviews, and assist in the preparation of written reports for publication.

Respond to requests for information, and provide consultation to others regarding the organization and methodology of the program. Provide advice on experimental procedures and techniques to other researchers.
Assess and recruit patients for clinical trials, dispense medication, conduct follow-ups and participate in patient education as necessary.

Supervise students and junior staff. Delegate duties, coordinate workflow and provide general guidance.

Perform administrative duties including scheduling, ordering supplies, bookkeeping, and record keeping. Handle financial aspects of purchases and salary payments as necessary.

Maintain lab equipment or arrange for maintenance by manufacturer. May assist with the design, construction, and evaluation of data collection instruments. Responsibility for safe management and disposal of hazardous substances.

Prepare and update construction drawings and records. Provide assistance to other departments that would benefit from the drawings and specifications.

Undertake other duties as delegated in support of the unit or department.

**Required Background:** University degree in a relevant field with some job-related experience or a three-year post secondary program and several years job-related experience. On-the-job training will provide skills specific to the position. Some positions may require more extensive experience or training in a particular area of research, procedure, technique, or piece of equipment. Training in drafting and the use of AutoCAD may be required. Safety-related training will be provided on-the-job. Consideration will be given to an equivalent combination of education and experience.

**Special Skills:** Typical skills that *may* be required in the performance of job duties include:

Technical proficiency in the use of lab equipment and skill in use of precise instruments. Appropriate handling of samples and specimens. Drafting skill as necessary.

Organizational, problem-solving, and analytical skills. Judgement in choosing best protocol or adapting procedures to meet changing needs.

Care in handling hazardous materials, operating equipment, and preparing solutions and samples. Foresight in predicting problems and altering procedures as required to minimize risks.

Ability to handle animals may be required. This includes surgeries, care and treatment in accordance with ethical guidelines.

Computer skills to aid in the research, analysis and presentation of data. Knowledge of CAD software as required.

Interpersonal and communication skills (verbal and written) to deal with...
patients, staff, other labs and departments, and outside agencies.

Ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and make accommodations.

Supervisory and leadership skills to provide direction and instruction to junior staff.

**Decision Making:** Examples of the types of decisions regularly made on the job:

Make suggestions regarding procedures and protocols, and adapt them as required to allow for maximum progress and efficiency. Determine alternative methods that make the most of time and money. May be required to make decisions regarding the alteration of procedures or protocols as the need arises during an experiment.

Determine best way to analyse and present data in order to meet the needs of the lab and outside agencies.

Determine if patients meet criteria for clinical trial. Evaluate patient status and take appropriate actions during tests and other experimental procedures.

Determine how to delegate tasks and formulate training programs.

Decide what to do when encountering an unexpected problem while performing an experiment, and when problem is serious enough to contact supervisor.

Determine if content of a drawing is sufficient in details and notes for a construction project.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:** May be supervisory duties in some positions. May delegate work, hire/fire, and conduct performance appraisals.

*Last update: December, 1999*