

## NGI Administrative Support Plan

- A. University responsibilities for the management of human resources for CI employees working NOAA facilities.

- *Hiring*

NGI must follow hiring procedures in accordance with university policies and procedures given to us by the Department of Human Resources Management. The Department of Human Resources Management is committed to working strategically with the diverse Mississippi State University community in identifying and responding to hiring needs. HRM develops and maintains the University's job posting and applicant tracking systems and related policies and procedures in order to assist University departments in the recruitment and retention of an outstanding workforce.

The link provided [here](#) states Mississippi State University's HRM processes in regard to hiring, screening & selection, advertising, exceptions to recruitment, separation, and international employment.

Mississippi State University has policies and procedures in place at the link [here](#) which are related to Human Resources Management.

After completing the online training, new CI employees can review the benefits they are eligible for on the university website located [here](#). They will also be assigned a Human Resources Benefits Specialist who will setup a meeting with them to go over any questions and complete appropriate paperwork as needed.

- *Supervision*

Most of our CI employees work at Stennis Space Center (SSC) in a 44,000 ft<sup>2</sup> building owned by the Mississippi Research Corporation that is occupied approximately 30%/50% by MSU and NOAA. Most of the NOAA personnel are NESDIS/NCEI employees. The NGI CI employees sit in the NOAA space once they obtain clearance. Dr. Paul Mickle sits in the MSU space and supervises most of them. Dr. Mickle reports to the NGI Director, facilitating a very smooth performance evaluation mechanism.

MSU has postdocs, research scientists, and an associate research faculty at AOML. The postdocs are jointly supervised by a faculty member at MSU and a technical monitor at AOML. The MSU faculty member and the postdoc meet face-to-face 2-4 times per year when pandemic issues and government policies allow. Both research scientists are supervised by an NGI Associate Director and advised by a technical monitor at AOML. The associate research faculty is the NGI Program Coordinator at AOML (he also is the supervisor of one of the postdocs). He is supervised by the NGI Director.

NGI has one CI employee located at a NOAA facility in Charleston, SC. He is a senior person and works closely with the NCEI group which has part of its group in the NOAA space at SSC, so he interacts with the CI employees at SSC; the NOAA employees at both sites interact frequently. He reports to Dr. Mickle officially.

NGI has one employee at the NMFS/SEFSC Pascagoula Lab; he reports to Dr. Mickle and has a technical monitor at that lab.

- *Training*

Training will be provided by the direct supervisor regarding their daily task of a job.

The Learning and Organizational Development team within the Department of Human Resources Management is committed to the professional development of Mississippi State University employees. Employee training courses are available [here](#) to improve employee efficiency, effectiveness, and enjoyment on the job.

- *Performance Reviews*

Mississippi State University's aim for performance management is to identify and correct problems to improve overall performance.

This website provided [here](#) gives an overview of how to deal with workplace issues and suggested responses, the different measures available for resolving conflict, and information and forms for MSU's performance appraisal process.

- *Promotions/Raises*

In its Strategic Plan, "State of Excellence", Mississippi State University recognizes the university's greatest asset is its people, and the attainment of all other university goals is predicated on the ability to continue to recruit and retain high quality faculty, staff, and students. Staff compensation is a key component supporting the university's commitment to provide all members of the university community with the tools, rewards, and resources to achieve their professional and personal goals and supports the strategy to recognize and reward performance by staff.

NGI must follow the staff compensation structure of MSU when determining salaries of the employees.

Mississippi State University is committed to maintaining a staff compensation system that is externally competitive and internally consistent with the following objectives:

- To ensure Mississippi State University's ability to attract, retain, and motivate well-qualified employees in support of the institutions strategic plan;
- To maintain a compensation framework (grade structure) for Mississippi State University's staff positions that is internally consistent and aligns roles of similar scope and complexity across staff jobs;
- To provide Administrators a streamlined approach to describe jobs, evaluate jobs, archive and share information, manage all related processes, and produce reports relative to job analysis, evaluation programs, and salary decisions;
- To establish procedures regarding staff salary decisions;

- To ensure that staff salary decisions are unbiased and are not made in a discriminatory or retaliatory manner.

[Here](#) is the link to the compensation program which includes, [compensation structure](#), [salary grade or classification determination](#), [job evaluation](#), and [salary administration](#).

Staff Pay-Related Policies and Practices can be found [here](#) and as stated merit increases are subject to legislative appropriations, the availability of funds, approval by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, and University administrator instructions, merit increases based on documented work performance may be granted to eligible employees.

- *Employee Relations*

Professionalism in interpersonal relationships between university employees, and between employees and students, is important to the mission and proper functioning of the university. Consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships between individuals in such groups can present conflicts of interest, the appearance of such conflicts, or a risk of exploitation. The university has policy [OP 01.28: Consensual Relationships](#) in place and the purpose of this policy is to outline when consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships between such individuals are prohibited and under what circumstances such relationships may be permissible after appropriate steps are taken.

B. Safety

Mississippi State has policies in place for biosafety ([OP 79.02](#)), radiological, chemical, and laboratory safety ([OP 79.08](#)), facility safety reviews ([OP 79.10](#)), and electronic safety security ([OP 91.315](#)) that university employees must follow.

NGI employees in NOAA laboratories must also follow safety policies and procedures provided to them by that particular laboratory.

C. Budget Tracking, Adjustments, and Disbursements

- *Budget Tracking*

As the lead institution of this 6 academic unit CI partnership, MSU ensures compliance with OMB 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance), DOC regulations and NOAA grant requirements through knowledgeable staff who review and remain current on applicable regulations and conditions. NGI grants management, accounting, program office staff, and researchers, work in conjunction with MSU Office of Sponsored Projects and MSU Sponsored Programs Accounting personnel to ensure regulations and conditions are being followed. MSU Office of Research and Economic Development, Office of Sponsored Projects, MSU Office of Internal Audit, and other departments conduct training sessions on Uniform Guidance and DOC research compliance requirements. The University and its departments are also subject to external A-133 audits.

MSU program office staff, Office of Sponsored Projects staff, and Sponsored Programs Accounting staff are active members of the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) and the Society of Research Administrators International (SRAI). These memberships allow access to regional and national conferences where other universities and research administrators meet to

discuss challenges and changes in the world of grant management. The sessions at these conferences increase knowledge and experience in managing federal awards.

The NOAA award has a unique grant number with individual funds established for each new task. The approved budget for each task is entered into “Banner” (MSU’s financial system). All expenditures are tracked by the fund number and are reviewed and approved by the principal investigators and the business manager to ensure compliance with all applicable university, state, federal, and award terms, conditions, and regulations ([Account Reconciliations OP 61.01](#)). Transactions are also reviewed by MSU Sponsored Programs Accounting to further ensure compliance. The Director of Sponsored Programs Accounting uses this transaction information to prepare and submit the required financial report as per the conditions of the NOAA cooperative agreement. An internal tracking system is maintained to ensure reports are submitted in an accurate and timely manner.

In addition, NGI partners Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), Florida State University (FSU), Louisiana State University (LSU) University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH), and University of Southern Mississippi (USM), agree to comply with the same regulations and terms and conditions of the NOAA award to MSU.

- *Adjustments*

When adjustments are needed to the original award terms those adjustments are communicated and routed through the Program Administrator for NGI. Request are reviewed to ensure the request is reasonable, allocable, consistent, and allowable by referring to the [CI Handbook](#), [Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual](#), and [Uniform Guidance \(2 CFR Part 200\)](#).

Once the determination is made that the request is reasonable, allocable, consistent, and allowable the NGI Program Administration Office submits an award action request via [Grants Online](#).

Once the AAR is approved by NOAA Grants Management Division a notification is received and routed through the Office of Sponsored Projects. The amendment is entered into “Banner” (MSU’s financial system) on the unique grant number assigned to the CI award. The Program Administrator for NGI ensures that any modification to subcontracts with NGI partners Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL), Florida State University (FSU), Louisiana State University (LSU) University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH), and University of Southern Mississippi (USM) are issued.

- *Disbursements*

Disbursements are handled in Sponsored Programs Accounting and are performed semi-monthly based on expenditures that have posted. MSU Sponsored Programs Accounting uses ledgers generated from “Banner” (MSU’s financial system) which tracks the expenditures for NGI grant and subgrant funds and uses this data to request draw downs in Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP). All requests for disbursement are completed after the expenses are incurred. Once the draw down is completed and funds are received from NOAA a journal voucher is completed in “Banner” to distribute the funds to the appropriate fund assigned for a particular project. This journal voucher packet with printouts from the ASAP system are then given to senior personnel to check for accuracy and completeness and approved for posting. This information is then used to prepare the SF-425 which is entered into the NOAA website [Grants Online](#).

#### D. Compliance with University Regulations and Policies

Mississippi State University requires all employees, including Intermittent Workers and Rehired Retirees, to review and acknowledge key MSU policies.

- Department/Unit(s) are responsible for ensuring all employees have completed the Policy Acknowledgement Certification by September 30, 2021.
- New employees will be required to complete the certification as part of the onboarding process.
- Hiring Coordinators should monitor the completion of Policy Acknowledgement Certification by running the BANNER report “PWRPACK” by ORG number. All employees showing incomplete should be contacted to complete the certification.
- HRM will report incomplete employees to each division annually before the end of the fiscal year.

Employees should access the Policy Acknowledgement Certification using the following steps:

- Log onto [learning.hrm.msstate.edu](http://learning.hrm.msstate.edu) using your NetID and NetPassword.
- Select “My Community” followed by “Learning Library” from the dropdown menu.
  - on desktops, this is located in the blue band across the top of the page.
  - on mobile devices, this is located in a dropdown menu in the upper left corner.
- Select the course: “Policy Acknowledgement for MSU Employees” (tip: use the search feature).
- Click “Learn Now”.
- Click “Start”.
- Click on each link to read and review the individual policies.
- Click “Mark as Completed”.

\*Note\* NGI partners [Dauphin Island Sea Lab \(DISL\)](#), [Florida State University \(FSU\)](#), [Louisiana State University \(LSU\)](#), [University of Alabama Huntsville \(UAH\)](#), and [University of Southern Mississippi \(USM\)](#) abide by their own policies and procedures found in the links provided.