



1. INTRODUCTION

Postdoctoral appointments offer recent advanced degree recipients a period in which to extend their education and professional training. The opportunity to carry out postdoctoral studies in the broad environment of research, scholarship, and creative endeavor that exists at the University of Notre Dame, can significantly broaden an individual's expertise, provide a period of more independent scholarship, and help define future career paths. Many disciplines are increasingly requiring postdoctoral experience as a prerequisite for professional placement and tenure track faculty positions. The breadth of the academic community, the institutes and centers, and state-of-the-art technologies and facilities found at Notre Dame, provide a particularly rich environment for postdoctoral training. In addition to deriving individual benefits, postdoctoral appointees make important contributions to the research and scholarly mission of the University.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Definition of a Postdoctoral Scholar Appointment

Postdoctoral appointees may be appointed by and affiliated with a department or other academic unit, center or institute authorized to make non-faculty research appointments. (1) These appointees and appointments have the following attributes:

- The appointee was recently awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate (e.g. Sc.D., M.D.) in an appropriate field; and
 - The appointment is temporary (2); and
 - The appointment involves full-time research or scholarship (3); and
 - The appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic or research career; and
 - The appointment is not part of a clinical training program; and
 - The appointee works under the supervision of a faculty member or a senior scholar; and
 - The appointee has the freedom, and is expected, to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship, which were obtained during the period of the appointment.
- Postdoctoral appointments are distinct from those of students, staff, or faculty.

(1) Notre Dame has chosen to use the AAU definition of postdoctoral appointments. Association Of American Universities, Committee on Postdoctoral Education, Report and Recommendations, March 31, 1998

(2) Temporary, in this definition, means of a limited term or duration, not temporary on-call employment.

(3) It is recognized that teaching is a key component of scholarship and that in some disciplines; a postdoctoral appointment could include a significant teaching responsibility during the course of the training and development program.

(4) As used in this document, the terms Chair, Dean, and academic unit head, are intended to also reflect the equivalent roles in non-collegiate units.

Recruitment and Selection

Because of widely varying disciplinary norms in the recruitment and selection of postdocs, there are no uniform search or selection procedures defined by the University that hiring units must follow to identify an individual in a Postdoctoral Appointee position. Nonetheless, hiring units must observe all University policies on non-discrimination and make good faith efforts to develop broad and inclusive selection pools when undertaking searches.

Requests for Appointment

Appointments are recommended by the faculty mentor and approved by the appropriate Chair and Dean (4) for the responsible unit. The Dean's recommendation in requesting appointments may be delegated to his/her designee, including delegation to the Department Chair for the responsible unit. Appointments to postdoctoral positions are made by the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee.

Requirement for Degree Completion

A postdoctoral appointment requires that the researcher have an advanced degree, Ph.D., Sc.D., M.D., or the equivalent. International researchers must hold an advanced degree that is equivalent to those provided by U.S. institutions.

If the trainee has completed all requirements toward the advanced degree, but has not received his/her degree, he/she must provide the documents certifying that the thesis has been approved in its final form, including all necessary signatures, and indicate the date that the degree will be conferred. In no case will a postdoctoral appointment be made unless the trainee's thesis has been formally approved by the degree granting institution.

Term of Appointment

The initial postdoctoral appointment is normally for one year. In general, appointment renewals will be for one year, with the maximum total term of appointments for Postdoctoral Appointees being five years. This maximum term includes cumulative postdoctoral research experience. Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. family leave, illness) if approved by the mentor, Chair, Dean and Dean of the Graduate School. If a Postdoctoral Appointee has spent part of the training period at another institution or in another field, then the total time of training should not exceed 6 years, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Reappointment

The supervising faculty member is required to complete a written performance evaluation, and review this evaluation with the Postdoctoral Appointee, prior to requesting reappointment. Postdoctoral Appointees whose appointment will not be renewed will receive a notice of nonrenewal no less than 90 days prior to the end of the current appointment period. The supervising faculty member may decide not to renew the appointment of any Postdoctoral Appointee. In such case, the Postdoctoral Appointee is entitled neither to a reason for the decision to non-renew the appointment, nor to a hearing either prior to or subsequent to the decision.

Salary/Stipend Levels

Postdoctoral appointees should be provided a stipend level that reflects both their prior postdoctoral experience and what is customary for the field.

Benefits

Full-time Postdoctoral Appointees who are appointed by the University of Notre Dame and whose funding flows through the University are eligible for a uniform set of benefits defined by the University and administered by the Office of Human Resources.

Annual Performance Evaluation and Merit Increase

Mentors are required to provide each year, a written evaluation of Postdoctoral Appointee's performance. The Postdoctoral Appointee should provide his/her written input to this evaluation, and the mentor and Postdoctoral Appointee should discuss the evaluation together.

Merit increases are to be provided with the contract renewal.

Full-Time/Part-Time Appointments

Ordinarily postdoctoral appointments are for full-time appointment. Exceptions to full-time appointment may be requested by the appointee or mentor, and approved by the Chair, Dean and Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee.

Outside Employment and Additional Compensation

A postdoctoral appointee who holds a full-time appointment should consult with the mentor, Dean and Office for Postdoctoral Scholars prior to engaging in additional employment activities such as consulting. These activities must comply with all relevant University policies including those on conflict of interest, conflict of commitment, and intellectual property.

Teaching

Postdoctoral appointments in some disciplines include a role in teaching. For those that do not normally include such a role, when allowed by the funding source and with the approval of the faculty mentor, Postdoctoral Appointees may teach. In the case of international Postdoctoral Appointees, visa regulations may determine whether teaching is allowed. The Office of General Counsel should be consulted for teaching duties involving international Postdoctoral Appointees. The position of Teaching Scholar exists at Notre Dame and may be used in the case of Ph.D. graduates who will have only teaching responsibilities.

Research data, records, products and intellectual property

The Postdoctoral Appointee should be aware that all data, software, and research records, and similar materials generated in the course of research at University of Notre Dame remain the property of the University, and their disposition must be carried out in accordance with University policies on Intellectual Property and Data Retention and Access. In keeping with academic convention, the Postdoctoral Appointee may retain copies of research data that he/she was personally responsible for collecting or generating. Future use of such data must appropriately acknowledge the University of Notre Dame, as well as the Postdoctoral Appointee's research collaborators and mentor.

Application for Grants

A Postdoctoral Appointee may serve as the principal investigator (PI) or Co-PI for a grant, upon approval of the faculty mentor, the department chair, the dean's office and the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee.

Termination

The appointment of a Postdoctoral Appointee may be terminated through resignation, nonrenewal of appointment, loss of funding which supports the appointment, or dismissal for just cause during the appointment period for poor performance, work related misconduct, violation of University policies or other serious reason as determined by the supervising faculty member.

A Postdoctoral Appointee may have his or her appointment ended with 90 days written notice if the funding supporting his or her appointment ends, or if performance is judged to be unsatisfactory. An exception to termination due to loss of funding is if funding is lost in first year of the appointment. In this case it is the responsibility of the employing department or college to identify alternate resources to fund the balance of the first year's appointment.

The mentor should discuss any involuntary terminations in advance with the Chair or Dean of the department/responsible unit. A Postdoctoral Appointee who resigns his or her appointment is ordinarily expected to complete his or her teaching duties and to provide at least 30 days written notice to the mentor.

Dismissal during the appointment period

The supervising faculty member shall provide a written recommendation of dismissal to the academic unit head, with a copy to the Postdoctoral Appointee. The recommendation shall provide the reasons or basis for the proposed action. If a Postdoctoral Appointee disagrees with the reasons for the dismissal, he/she may, within five business days after receipt of the recommendation, submit an appeal to the academic unit head, with a copy to the supervising faculty member. The academic unit head will meet with the Postdoctoral Appointee and the supervising faculty member. Within ten business days after receipt of the appeal, the unit head will issue a written determination, affirming, reversing or modifying the recommendation of dismissal with the reason for the decision. Within five business days after receipt of the decision, the Postdoctoral Appointee may submit a request for reconsideration of the determination to the college dean, who will review the case and issue a final decision within ten business days after receipt of the request for reconsideration. An extension of the timeline for the above process can be granted if approved by both the postdoctoral appointee and the faculty member/academic unit head/ or college dean. Issues such as sexual harassment, creation of a hostile work environment, or discrimination based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, veteran status, or age, are the subject of separate University policies. These issues are covered by the Office of Institutional Equity. Postdoctoral Appointees should contact the Office of Institutional Equity on specific policies and procedures relating to these issues.

Interim Action

A Postdoctoral Appointee may be suspended with pay pending a dismissal in a case in which the supervising faculty member, unit head, and college dean determine that the continued presence of the individual on the campus constitutes a substantial interference with the orderly functioning of the University or a substantial area, unit, college or department of the University.