

Procedures and Guidelines for Postdoctoral Appointments at the University of Notre Dame

For Information Only

In these procedures and guidelines, guidance for administering the appointment of postdoctoral scholars is provided. These procedures and guidelines are to be used in the implementation of the Policy on Postdoctoral Appointments at the University of Notre Dame. As such, these procedures and guidelines may repeat language used in the Policy in order to assist in the interpretation of the Policy and in the application of the Procedures and Guidelines.

Responsibilities of Postdoctoral Scholar Appointees

Postdoctoral scholar appointees are neither faculty members nor students. Nor are they visiting researchers or support staff. The responsibilities of postdoctoral scholar appointees include:

- The conscientious discharge of research and scholarship responsibilities, which may include teaching responsibilities.
- Conformance to standards of responsible conduct in research, including taking all current required training.
- Compliance with good scholarly and research practice.
- Maintenance of a laboratory notebook and/or other comparable records of research activity, which remain the property of the University upon termination.
- Adherence to University standards regarding use of isotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, animal testing, human subjects and the like.
- Open and timely discussion with the faculty mentor regarding all facets of the scholar's research activities.
- Prompt disclosure to the supervising faculty member regarding the possession and desire to distribute materials, reagents, software, copyrightable and potentially patentable discoveries derived from the scholar's research.
- Collegial conduct towards members of the research laboratory and others.
- Compliance with all applicable University policies and applicable terms of any sponsored agreement which provides support for the scholar.
- The expectation to publish following the standards of the discipline.

Responsibilities of Supervising Faculty Member

Accepting a postdoctoral scholar appointee into a supervising faculty member's laboratory or research program carries with it obligations to the scholar. These include:

- Mentoring with emphasis on encouraging independence in research and scholarship. Providing detailed advice and assistance on the development of a specific research project.
- Providing and maintaining a research environment that is conducive to a scholar's research and scholarly training.
- Mentoring in all areas of professional development, such as grant writing, development of written and oral communicative skills, manuscript preparation, and teaching skills, where applicable.
- Providing yearly a written evaluation of performance.

- Providing career counseling and assistance in job placement, including timely submission of letters of reference.
- Ensuring that any externally-funded, directly-paid postdoctoral scholar appointees receive the appropriate type of appointment to recognize their status and presence at the University (5).
- Establishing clear expectations regarding the percentage of effort the postdoctoral scholar appointee is to dedicate to project work and the percentage of effort the scholar may dedicate to his or her individual scholarship.
- Establishing at the beginning of the appointment the expectations including but not limited to: attendance, vacation, notifications of absences and tardies, request for vacation, Intellectual Property policy, and expectation of maintaining accurate records of research work.

Selection

Given the variety of existing postdoctoral programs, there are no uniform search or selection procedures that hiring units must follow to identify an individual in a Postdoctoral Appointee position. Nonetheless, hiring units must observe University policies on non-discrimination and make good faith efforts to develop broad and inclusive selection pools when undertaking searches. The hiring department could contact the [Office of Institutional Equity](#) on how to effectively conduct a search. When a hiring unit wants to move a postdoctoral scholar appointee to a regular faculty or staff appointment, it should follow the customary recruitment policies and procedures applicable to those appointment types.

Requests for Appointment

Before extending an appointment offer, the hiring unit must identify resources to support the appointment for the entire length of the appointment. To be eligible for approval by the Dean of the Graduate School, the hiring department must forward to the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars the request for appointment form (including period of appointment, salary, principal duties and obligations), appointee's CV, advanced degree transcript, visa information form (if applicable) and Employee Personal Action Form (SPAF).

The Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee responsible for non-faculty research appointments approves the request and prepares a formal letter of appointment. For appointments requiring visas, the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars works with the office of General Counsel or the International Student and Scholar Affairs Office (ISSA) to provide the necessary visa application, or where appropriate, submits the visa petition to Immigration.

The letter of appointment specifies the beginning and ending dates of the appointment, salary and benefits, and the appointee's principal duties and obligations. It also states that acceptance of the appointment indicates acceptance of all Notre Dame policies and procedures relating to academic appointments. The appointee indicates acceptance by signing a copy of the letter and returning it to the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars. Letters of reappointment follow the same format and procedure.

Faculty mentors wishing to extend an offer letter prior to issuance of a formal appointment letter

by the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars may use an intent-to-offer letter. A [sample](#) of such a letter is available from the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars.

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. It is the responsibility of the postdoctoral scholar appointee to provide transcripts that certify that he or she has received, or completed all the requirements of, his/her degree, and it is the responsibility of the mentor to make sure that the documentation is satisfactory. That documentation must be included in the appointee's file that is forwarded for action to Office for Postdoctoral Scholars.

If the scholar 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. This same rule applies to scholars receiving a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame. If a person cannot meet the requirements for degree completion, he/she may be eligible to be hired as a [Research Fellow](#).

Term of Appointment

Postdoctoral scholar appointments are normally for one year with the maximum total term of appointments for postdoctoral scholar appointees being five years. Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. family leave, illness) if approved by the supervising faculty member, chair or director, dean or head of the academic unit and Dean of the Graduate School.

If a scholar appointee has spent part of the training period at another institution or in another field, then the maximum total term of the appointment is 6 years, except in extraordinary circumstances. ([See Request for Extension of Employment of a Postdoctoral Scholar Appointee](#))

An individual period of appointment may not exceed the period of time for which funding is guaranteed in the appointment letter.

In cases where the postdoctoral scholar appointee is a non-US citizen or permanent resident, immigration rules and regulations may supersede these guidelines.

Request for Extension of Employment of a Postdoctoral Scholar Appointee

A request for extension of the available term of appointment requires a compelling reason. The supervising faculty member before making such a request should contact the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars to discuss rationale for such a request and potential options. If an extension seems to be appropriate, documentation must be provided to justify that the nature of employment continues to be training-related and that an extension is beneficial to the scholar, the supervising faculty member (principal investigator/supervisor), and the University. The

documentation includes the Request for Extension of Employment of a Postdoctoral Scholar Appointee (see link below) and attachments (see below). The maximum duration of the extension shall be no longer than 12 months. Prior to submission of this form, it is expected that the supervising faculty member and the postdoctoral scholar will have met to discuss training- and career-related goals. The supervising faculty member and the postdoctoral scholar appointee also are encouraged to complete an individual development plan (IDP), though it is not required as part of an extension request. The Request for Extension of Employment form must be used to request an extension of a postdoctoral appointment. Upon completion of the form, it should be submitted by the appropriate dean (or designee) to the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars, 502 Main Building.

Request for Extension of Postdoctoral Scholar Appointment

The supervising faculty member must submit the [Request for Extension of Employment Form](#) and the following attachments 120 days prior to expiration of employment.

1. Updated CV from Postdoctoral Scholar
2. Statement, no more than one page, which addresses:
 - a. Reason for Request: Provide justification as to why an extension is necessary (e.g., extraordinary circumstances, change in field, short-term employment prior to start of subsequent position, etc.).
 - b. Training-related Goals: The supervising faculty member and scholar must agree on training-related goals for the extension period. Detail new skills, techniques, and/or abilities to be acquired during the extension period, which will lead to professional independence. Such goals should be specific, with measurable accomplishments.
 - c. Career-related Milestones: The supervising faculty member and postdoctoral scholar must agree on career-related milestones for the extension period. Detail plans for defining a career path that will progress the postdoctoral scholar to the next stage of his/her research-related career, whether in higher education, industry or other field. Such plans might include submission of journal publications, proposal development, teaching-related experience, and/or other professional development activities.

Reappointment

Prior to the end of each appointment, the supervising faculty member is required to complete a written performance evaluation, and review this evaluation with the postdoctoral scholar appointee, prior to determining whether to request reappointment. (See the performance review procedure discussed below). If a decision is made not to offer reappointment, the scholar will receive a notice of nonrenewal from the supervising faculty member no less than 90 days prior to the end of the current appointment period. The supervising faculty member should begin the written performance evaluation process in sufficient time to provide the 90-day nonrenewal notice.

The supervising faculty member may decide not to renew the appointment of any scholar. In such case, the scholar is not invited to appeal the decision.

Salary

Postdoctoral scholar appointees should be provided a salary level that reflects both their prior postdoctoral experience and what is customary for the field. The Dean or head of each major unit will set the salary scale for scholars in that discipline. This scale will include a minimum expected salary, and may include a maximum salary and/or step levels based on years of experience.

Salaries that are significantly above or below the expected range for a discipline should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Chair and Dean, in consultation with the Office for Postdoctoral Scholars as appropriate.

Benefits

Full-time postdoctoral scholar appointees who are appointed by the University of Notre Dame and funding flows through the University are eligible for the following benefits.

- Medical Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Basic Life Insurance
- Supplemental Life Insurance
- Travel/Accident Insurance
- Supplemental Retirement Account
- Educational Benefits Employee/Spouse
- Paid Holidays
- Salary Continuation/Sick Leave¹
- Vacation²
- Leave of Absence (FMLA, Personal, Military)

¹ Revision for new appointments and renewals effective after January 1, 2011: Full salary for up to one month (or until the end of the contract, whichever is earlier). Two personal days may be taken per calendar year and five days per calendar year may be used for the illness, medical and/or dental appointments of a child, stepchild, spouse and/or parent.

²Clarification to application of benefit: Two weeks per year. Vacation becomes available for use after the completion of 90 days of employment. Appointments are generally for one year. Up to one week of vacation can be carried forward into a subsequent year of appointment. All vacation time is to be used before the end of the appointment. Any unused vacation time will be forfeited at the end of the appointment and no payment for unused vacation time will be made.

- Leave of Absence (FMLA, Personal, Military)
- Long term care insurance
- Athletic Tickets and Parking (subject to availability)
- Availability of Athletic Facilities
- LifeWorks Employee Assistance Program
- Bookstore, Joyce Center Varsity Shop, and Golf Pro Shop
- Golf Courses
- University Libraries
- Parking
- Automobile Discount Program
- Auto and Homeowners Discount Program
- Social Security Benefits
- Workers Compensation
- Unemployment Compensation

Details regarding each benefit program can be found at the Office of Human Resources website <http://hr.nd.edu/benefits/summary-information/benefit-summaries/>.

It is the supervisory faculty member's responsibility to monitor benefits. The supervisory faculty member should work with the scholar to ensure that all vacation time is used prior to the end date of his/her appointment. If the scholar is supported by a research grant, the supervisory faculty member should make every effort to ensure that the vacation time is used during a period in which the grant that will be charged for the vacation time has benefited from time worked by the scholar.

Annual Performance Evaluation and Merit Increase

Supervisory faculty members are required to provide each year, a written evaluation of postdoctoral appointee's performance. The postdoctoral scholar appointee should provide his/her written input to this evaluation, and the mentor and scholar should discuss the evaluation together. A sample annual review form is available [here](#).

Postdoctoral scholar appointees do not participate in the annual University merit increase process. Merit increases are to be provided with the contract renewal. Requests for reappointment with no increase or with an increase significantly above the current University merit increase guidelines will require the written approval of the appropriate department Chair and Dean. Requests for increases other than at the contract renewal date require written approval of the department Chair and Dean.

Outside Employment and Additional Compensation

A postdoctoral scholar appointee who holds a full-time appointment should consult with the supervising faculty member, dean or head of the academic unit, 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. In addition, such employment should be discussed with the supervising faculty member, and must not interfere with the primary

research and training obligations, and must comply with the rules of the funding source.

Any request for additional pay for services from the University of Notre Dame, above the postdoctoral scholar appointee salary, must be consistent with Human Resource Services policies regarding additional compensation and must be approved in advance by the dean or head of the academic unit, or his/her designee and the Dean of the Graduate School or his/her designee.

Teaching

Postdoctoral appointments may 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 scholar appointees may teach. The number, type and level of courses taught by a scholar will be determined and approved by the Department Chair and Dean of the appropriate academic unit. In the case of international scholars, visa regulations may determine whether teaching is allowed. The Office of General Counsel should be consulted for teaching duties involving international postdoctoral scholar 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.

Professional Development

Postdoctoral scholar appointees may take advantage of grant writing training, teaching workshops, and career development activities provided by the University.

Career Counseling

The supervising faculty member is the primary resource for postdoctoral scholar appointees seeking temporary research appointments or permanent positions in the academy or industry. The Office for Postdoctoral Scholars is also available to assist postdoctoral scholar appointees.

Research data, records, products and intellectual property

All research is governed by the University of Notre Dame. All data, software, research records, and other materials generated in the course of research the University of Notre Dame remain the property of the University. The postdoctoral appointee must be familiar with and follow the [University policies on Intellectual Property and Data Retention and Access](#). Questions should be directed to the supervisor faculty member.

In keeping with academic convention, the postdoctoral scholar 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 scholar's research collaborators and supervisory faculty member.

Application for Grants

A postdoctoral scholar appointee may serve as the principal investigator (PI) or Co-PI for a grant, upon approval of the supervising faculty member, the chair or director, the dean or the head of the academic unit and the Office of Research. Considerations for this approval include the qualifications of the scholar, length of the postdoctoral appointment, and nature and scope of

the grant. If an externally funded program requires that a scholar be listed as a PI or Co-PI no specific approval is required. In approving PI or Co-PI status, it is the responsibility of the Chair and the Dean to ensure that the scholar is cognizant of all obligations and responsibilities that are entailed by this status. There must be clear evidence that the scholar has the experience and expertise to function as PI or Co-PI with incumbent responsibilities to direct the proposed research program, direct the budgeted personnel, manage the budget, and ensure that the research is carried in compliance with all applicable University rules and regulations as well as those of the sponsoring agency. Normally, individuals who qualify for PI or Co-PI status would be scholars who are well advanced in their postdoctoral training.

Termination

The appointment of a postdoctoral scholar appointee may be terminated through resignation, non-renewal 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 scholar may have his or her appointment ended with 90 days written notice by the supervising faculty member 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 supervising faculty member should discuss any involuntary terminations in advance with the Chair or Dean of the department/responsible unit.

A scholar 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 supervising faculty member.

Grievance Process

A scholar who believes that he or she has been treated unfairly should first discuss the problem with the supervising faculty mentor and/or Chair of the department/responsible unit. Each unit should designate a faculty member, or member of the administration experienced in postdoctoral education, whose duties are to serve as a resource for the scholar in addressing and resolving grievances. If a solution cannot be reached at the level of either the department/responsible unit or through the efforts of the designated resource person, the scholar should present the grievance to the Dean for information, evaluation, and as necessary, adjudication. The determination by the Dean is the final step in the grievance process.

Dismissal during the appointment period

The supervising faculty member shall provide a written recommendation of dismissal to the director or chair, with a copy to the postdoctoral appointee. The recommendation shall provide the reasons or basis for the proposed action.

Interim Action

A postdoctoral scholar 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.

The director or chair will make the decision regarding the recommendation of dismissal after gathering the relevant facts and reviewing the issues. The director or chair's review of the facts may include interviewing the faculty member, the postdoctoral scholar appointee, or anyone else the director chair deems necessary, in his/her sole discretion.

Within five calendar days after receipt of the decision, the postdoctoral scholar appointee may submit a request for reconsideration of the determination to the dean or head of the academic unit, who will consider the matter, conduct whatever additional review he/she deems necessary and issue a final decision within ten calendar days after receipt of the request for reconsideration.

A request for reconsideration that includes a complaint involving sexual harassment, creation of a hostile work environment, or discrimination based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, veteran status or age should be reported immediately to the Office of Institutional Equity for investigation.