



UNIVERSITY POLICY

SUBJECT: RESEARCH

TITLE: POSTDOCTORAL APPOINTEES

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ADOPTED: 04/01/91

AMENDED: 09/21/05

LAST REVIEWED: 09/21/05

I. PURPOSE

To establish the basic policies governing Postdoctoral Appointees at all Schools and Units of the University.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences will implement this policy.

III. DEFINITION

Because the term "fellow" is used to describe a large variety of positions, the designation of Postdoctoral Appointee is used here to identify individuals who have recently earned a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent doctoral degree, and who join the University full-time for a limited period of time to continue advanced research studies and receive additional professional training under the supervision of a member of the faculty. The position is meant to broaden the individual's scientific background and provide additional research and scholarly training and experience.

Postdoctoral Appointees are classified as students. They may retain the title of Postdoctoral Appointee for a maximum of four years at UMDNJ or six years of total postdoctoral appointment at any institution, contingent upon satisfactory performance. Beyond that period they may be hired under another appropriate title, such as Research Associate. The Postdoctoral Appointee title should not be used for individuals simultaneously classified as Clinical Fellows or Residents.

IV. POLICY

A. Letter of Appointment

All postdoctoral appointments must be accompanied by a formal offer letter from the Principal Investigator (PI) (mentor), cosigned by the Department Chair, stating the duration of the appointment, the amount and source(s) of the stipend, the relevant years of experience used to determine the stipend, the nature of the project, and the health insurance benefits. The letter should indicate that the stated duration of the appointment is contingent upon satisfactory performance and continued availability of funds from the PI's funding sources, and that an annual stipend increase will be provided. The letter should be accompanied by a copy of this University policy.

The letter of appointment should follow the sample in the attached EXHIBIT. A copy of the letter, signed by the Postdoctoral Appointee, should be sent to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, 30 Bergen Street, ADMC 110, Newark, New Jersey 07107-3000.

B. Stipends

Newly appointed Postdoctoral Appointees must receive financial support no lower than the current National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Research Service Awards (NRSA) support appropriate to the relevant years of experience as agreed upon between the PI (mentor) and Postdoctoral Appointee and stated in the Letter of Appointment. Except for Appointees working under PIs with grants funded prior to July 1, 2003, annual increases should at least equal the next NRSA step for years of relevant experience based on the scale in effect when the appointment was made. PIs with grants funded prior to July 1, 2003, are encouraged to pay the next NRSA level as a minimum annual increase, but may limit the increase to 6% if the next NRSA step is greater than that amount. PIs should budget for projected increases in all new applications.

C. Evaluations

Postdoctoral Appointees must be provided with a written evaluation of academic progress annually. A copy of the evaluation must be submitted to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

D. Benefits

1. Insurance and Health Care

All Postdoctoral Appointees shall participate in a University-sponsored group comprehensive health insurance plan and group term life insurance plan, and shall receive required occupational health services at the University's Occupational Medical Service on the appropriate campus. Budgeting for the cost of these plans and services shall be the responsibility of the PI.

2. Absence Due to Illness

Postdoctoral Appointees may continue to receive stipends for up to fifteen (15) days of sick leave per year. Sick leave is not cumulative from one appointment year to the next. Under exceptional circumstances, this period may be extended at the discretion of the mentor. Mentors may require medical verification by a physician for absences longer than three consecutive sick days.

3. Vacation

Postdoctoral Appointees are eligible for at least one day accrued paid vacation per calendar month of appointment, in addition to official University holidays. Vacation days are not cumulative from one appointment year to the next. Vacation must be scheduled in advance and approved by the mentor.

4. New Child Leave

Postdoctoral Appointees may receive up to six (6) weeks new child leave with full pay, paid from the same source as the stipend. This time consists of thirty (30) days child leave (based on NRSA guidelines) and fifteen (15) calendar days that can be taken from either sick leave or vacation.

E. Mediation Services

It is recognized that from time to time disagreements may arise between a Postdoctoral Appointee and the mentor. Postdoctoral Appointees should be clearly informed about the options they can exercise under such circumstances. In particular, they should be made aware of services available through the office of the campus Ombudsperson.

F. Resignation

When a Postdoctoral Appointee chooses to resign prior to the end of the period indicated in the Letter of Appointment, it is expected that at least one month's notice will be provided. Upon

leaving the laboratory, a Postdoctoral Appointee must leave all original notebooks, data, reagents and any other study components or University property with the mentor in a state that will allow uninterrupted continuation of the project and ensure compliance with the University policy, Intellectual Property, 00-01-20-21:00 and other relevant policies of the University which can be accessed on the following website: <http://www.umdnj.edu/opmweb/Policies/contents.html>.

G. Termination

Under usual circumstances, Postdoctoral Appointees should be given at least two months notice if termination of the appointment is prior to the date initially agreed upon in the Letter of Appointment. Gross violations of postdoctoral obligations or University policy may be grounds for immediate dismissal. Such situations must be reviewed with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs Advisory Committee. Other University administrative offices will be consulted as necessary.

H. Obligations

1. Obligations of the Mentor

The role of the mentor should go beyond ensuring that quality research is performed and published. The mentor is also expected to help in preparing for the next step in the Postdoctoral Appointee's career. This should include assistance in the development of a mutually established and definable research project, opportunities for publication and oral presentation of the work, regular discussion and evaluation, development of ancillary skills (e.g. writing, public speaking, networking), and application for extramural support.

2. Obligations of the Postdoctoral Appointee

Postdoctoral Appointees have certain obligations to their mentor and the University. These include the conscientious and ethical discharge of their research responsibilities, compliance with good laboratory practice and the maintenance of adequate research records, discussion with their mentor regarding possession or distribution of items belonging to their laboratory or proposed disclosure of findings or techniques, collegial conduct towards coworkers and members of the research group and compliance with University's Guidelines on Conduct of Research and all other applicable University policies. All data and research records generated in University laboratories remain the property of the University.

V. EXHIBIT

SAMPLE POSTDOCTORAL APPOINTEE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

By Direction of the President:

Vice President for Academic Affairs

EXHIBIT
SAMPLE POSTDOCTORAL APPOINTEE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

(Date)

Dear _____,

I am pleased to inform you that you have been accepted as a Postdoctoral Appointee in the laboratory of _____, Department of _____, at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) - (name of School) beginning on (start date). The financial support will be \$_____¹ for one year contingent upon satisfactory performance, with the possibility of up to three additional years² contingent upon satisfactory performance, available funding, and visa time limitations, if any. You will be provided with a written evaluation of academic progress at least once each year and an annual stipend increase contingent on satisfactory performance and University policy. Funding will be derived from (describe the source(s) of funding).

As a Postdoctoral Appointee, you will participate in the University-sponsored Postdoctoral Appointee group comprehensive health insurance plan and Postdoctoral Appointee group term life insurance plan, and receive occupational health services at the University's Occupational Medical Service. Postdoctoral Appointees receive one day accrued paid vacation time per month of appointment and up to 15 days excused sick days each year, which may not be carried over into the next year. (Describe any additional benefits, such as tuition/fees, travel, etc.).

(Describe the research and/or other activities and specific laboratory or group to which the individual will be assigned).

On your first day at the University, you will meet with the Campus Human Resources and Public Safety staff who will assist you in obtaining your University ID card which will enable you to obtain your e-mail account from Academic Computing Services. For this meeting, please bring the following documents:

- 1) two forms of identification, e.g., driver's license and social security card and/or passport;
- 2) proof of your highest degree (a copy of your diploma will be made).

If you are in agreement with the terms of this acceptance, please sign your name in the space provided below and return the original to me in the enclosed envelope.

We welcome you to UMDNJ - (name of School) and trust that this postdoctoral experience will broaden your educational background and further your career. For your information and convenience, a copy of the University Policy on Postdoctoral Appointees is enclosed.

Sincerely,

Faculty Mentor/Program Director

Department Chair

I accept this postdoctoral appointment.

Signature of Postdoctoral Appointee

Date

¹ Author of this letter must comply with financial support requirements of University policy.

² This reflects University policy and is the maximum renewal period; author of this letter may modify total number of years permitted by sponsoring agency if fewer than four.