

Postdoctoral Fellows Policy

I. Background

The term "Postdoc" encompasses a wide variety of positions at universities. The traditional concept of a research postdoc identifies the position as a temporary educational appointment aimed at further developing the research skills and in some cases the teaching skills of the recipients under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

II. Definition

Postdoctoral Fellows are individuals who hold the degree of Ph.D. or M.D. or the equivalent and come to the University for the principal purpose of furthering their personal development by engaging in research, teaching or participating in advanced training related programs. A Faculty member hereinafter referred to as "Sponsor" recommends the fellow for an appointment. The fellow will work under his or her Sponsor's direction. The appointment is temporary. Appointments are normally made on an annual basis (or longer under certain circumstances - see NOTES below) for no more than six (6) years.

III. Fair Search Procedure

Every request for appointment of a candidate who will be paid by Brandeis must be accompanied by either a Fair Search Report form - or - a memo to the Office of Equal Opportunity from the Sponsor requesting a waiver of the fair search procedure, and explaining the specific reasons for the waiver request. If a search has been conducted, the Fair Search Report should explain how and where the position was advertised, the number of candidates that applied, and the number of candidates that were actually interviewed.

IV. Exemptions to Fair Search Procedure

The Fair Search procedure does not apply and is not needed for the following categories:

- Courtesy appointments - Visiting Scientist, Visiting Research Associate, etc.
- Postdocs who are appointed on Training Grants.
- A temporary appointment for a period of three (3) months or less.
- A postdoc coming here with his/her own fellowship or outside source of funding.
- Letter of Appointment

When a Sponsor makes a firm decision to appoint a postdoctoral fellow, a letter must be prepared by the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) and signed by the Associate Provost prior to commencement of duties. This letter will include the basic terms of appointment such as the period of appointment (dates of appointment), the stipend level, and other applicable information pertaining to the fellow's appointment. If the appointment is renewed or extended, that action should be documented by a new letter, which includes the foregoing information and is sent to the candidate. The candidate will be required to return a countersigned copy of each letter of appointment or renewal indicating acceptance of the terms set forth. The letters (countersigned copies) are placed in a permanent file kept in OSP.

V. Obligations of Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral fellows have certain obligations to their Sponsor, the laboratory in which they are working, the Department with which they are associated, the grantor whose funds support them, and the University. These obligations include but are not limited to:

- (i) the conscientious discharge of their research and / or teaching responsibilities;

- (ii) conformity with ethical standards in research or teaching;
- (iii) compliance with good laboratory practice, including the maintenance of adequate research records, and due observation of University standards regarding use of isotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, animals, and the like;
- (iv) observation of appropriate guidelines regarding vertebrate animals and human subjects if applicable;
- (v) open and timely discussion with their Sponsor regarding possession or distribution of materials, reagents, or records belonging to their laboratory, and any proposed disclosure of findings or techniques privately or in publications;
- (vi) collegial conduct towards coworkers, members of the research group and department;
- (vii) compliance with all applicable University policies. All data and research records generated in University laboratories remain the property of the University.

VI. Proof of Doctoral Degree

Eligibility for appointment as a postdoctoral fellow requires an advanced degree, Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent. It is the intent of Brandeis University that international fellows have advanced degrees which are equivalent to those provided in domestic institutions in order to qualify for appointment as postdoctoral fellows. It is the responsibility of the fellow to provide transcripts which certify that she/he has received her/his degree, and it is the responsibility of the Sponsor to be sure that this documentation is satisfactory and that it is included in the trainee's file attached to the letter of appointment. If the trainee has completed the requirements for the Ph.D. but has not yet received her/his degree, then she/he should supply documents certifying that the thesis has been approved and indicating the date when the degree is expected to be conferred; this special exception applies only to trainees receiving their degrees from domestic institutions.

VII. Publications

The fellow, in coordination with the Sponsor, has the freedom, and is expected, to publish the results of his or her research/scholarship during the period of the appointment.

VIII. Stipend Level

When a fellow is appointed to a National Institutes of Health (NIH) training grant the stipend levels for postdoctoral fellows must concur with the NIH recommended postdoctoral stipend levels and National Research Service Award (NRSA) Guidelines .

For all other appointees, the stipend level should constitute a fair, equitable wage based on level of experience and department of appointment.

IX. Terms of Appointment

According to current University policy, individuals at Brandeis University normally serve no more than six (6) years in the status of Postdoctoral Fellow.

X. Teaching

On occasion Postdoctoral Fellows will have the opportunity to teach at Brandeis University. When these cases arise, a separate non-tenure track appointment to the faculty will be made.

XI. Benefits

Please refer to Guide for Benefits and Services for Postdoctoral Fellows/Research Associates produced by the Office of Human Resources/Employee Relations. Any questions should be directed to the Office of Human Resources/Employee Relations extension x64468.

XII. Applications for Grants

Each department should set a policy about the rights of postdoctoral fellows to apply for grants as Principal Investigator. If the department policy permits such applications, it is suggested that there be a requirement for approval by a knowledgeable tenured faculty member as well as the usual approval by the department chair on the OSP Proposal Routing Form.

NOTES: In the case of a foreign national when a visa is being issued and the Sponsor would like to appoint the fellow beyond the initial twelve (12) month period, the appointment may be requested for the total appointment period if funding is available, so that visa paperwork does not have to be processed annually.

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