

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SCHOOL

OFFICE OF RESEARCH

POSTDOCTORAL POLICY

APRIL 2003

UMMS POSTDOCTORAL POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standard guidelines for all Postdoctoral Associates or Fellows at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Administrative responsibility for this policy rests with the academic departments and Human Resources. The Office of Research will provide general administrative oversight and assistance.

RECRUITMENT/ADVERTISING

Although many postdoctoral appointments are not made through recruitment/advertising efforts, in cases where recruitment efforts are made, they must comply with Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action guidelines.

APPOINTMENT

Application – The Postdoctoral Policy will apply to Postdoctoral Research Associates or Fellows working at the University Massachusetts Medical School.

Postdoctoral Research Associate or Fellow – Candidate must have received a PhD., MD, or equivalent degree from an accredited institution or fulfilled all requirements for the degree as documented by the degree awarding Institution. The Postdoctoral position is considered to be an advanced training position. The candidates will be engaged primarily in research with minimal or no didactic teaching responsibilities. It is anticipated that a Postdoctoral training position will generally not be longer than five (5) years at this institution.

The Department is responsible for assigning the appropriate labor unit (63W) to exempt the postdoctoral associate or fellow from automatic cost of living and merit increases.

Visa Issues

All new hires must complete an Employment Eligibility Verification form (INS form I-9) establishing his/her ability to work in the United States before commencing work.

Any individual who is not a U.S. Citizen, or does not have permanent residence, is required to have a valid visa to enter and work in the United States.

University-sponsored postdoctoral fellows or associates generally enter the USA on a J-1 or H1B Visa or if a recent graduate of a US PhD. program must have an F1 optional Practical Training EAD card.

Administrative responsibility for the UMMS F, J and H-visas rests with the International Students and Scholars Office. The telephone number is 508-856-8472. It is the responsibility of the Department Administrator in conjunction with the hiring Principal Investigator to work with the International Students and Scholars Office to complete the necessary paperwork for issuing, maintaining and renewing a visa.

It is required that prior to any travel outside the United States, the postdoctoral associate or fellow discuss his/her travel plans and obtain any necessary documentation from the International Students and Scholars Office.

APPOINTMENT and TERMINATION PROCESSES

Upon Selection of a candidate, the Department Administrator is responsible for following the University of Massachusetts Medical School hiring procedure for postdoctoral research associates or fellows.

Appointment

A new post doctoral candidate must complete all the necessary pre-employment paperwork, obtain Employee Health clearance and attend a new employee orientation. The International Students and Scholars Office, working with the Department Administrator, will oversee this process.

A Personnel Action (P.A.) must be processed for the initial appointment. The initial appointment will usually be for a one year period but may be made for less than one year upon mutual agreement of both parties.

Non-renewal of appointment should be provided in writing by the PI three (3) months before termination. All appointments at the University Massachusetts Medical School are contingent upon the availability of funds. Notice of resignation by a postdoctoral research associate or fellow, should be given sixty (60) days in advance (inclusive of accrued vacation time).

Probationary Period

The first six months of employment at UMMS is considered a probationary period. If a post doc transfers to a new position there is a three month probationary period. See UMMS Probationary Period Policy.

Suspension or Termination

Postdoctoral personnel may be immediately suspended (unless prohibited by the granting agency's regulations) if in the judgment of the Principal Investigator and Department Chair/Program Director or, in the Chair's absence, the Director of Research, the individual's actions represent a threat to safety or a clear impediment to the work of a research lab or other organizational unit. After an investigation has been conducted and the findings support the prior decision to suspend and with agreement by the sponsor, Chair, and Director of Research, in consultation with Employee Relations, the employment of the postdoctoral research fellow or associate may be terminated.

If a person is on a visa the International Students and Scholars Office must be notified of the termination in order to notify the appropriate governmental agencies.

An appeal of a Suspension will follow the Grievance Procedure described in a succeeding section, beginning at Step Two.

Granting Agency Regulations

All awards for postdoctoral research fellows or associates are accepted with the understanding that their terms and conditions will be adhered to by UMMS. In the event that there is a conflict between the

conditions required by the granting agency and UMMS policy, it is the responsibility of the department in which the award is made in consultation with the Office of Research, if necessary, to resolve the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved, UMMS Human Resource policies prevail.

It is the responsibility of the sponsor (PI) and the department administrator to inform all postdoctoral personnel of any special conditions, such as the pay-back provision on federal training grants, which would obligate or otherwise substantively affect their position.

Personnel Action (PA)

A Personnel Action must be processed for initial appointment, resignation, funding changes, salary changes, increase and decrease in time.

Salary

The minimum salary paid to postdoctoral research fellows or associates is set according to Institutional policy and is reviewed annually by the Office of Research. Initial hiring salaries may be higher than the established minimum level, provided the salary level is consistent with Institutional policies. For a candidate with an M.D. degree, the number of years since the medical degree was awarded, including years of residency, can be considered relevant training. For candidates with more than one terminal degree, the year that the first relevant degree was awarded shall determine the number of years of experience.

Individuals receiving external fellowship salary awards are generally paid the stipend indicated by the award. In cases where the awarded stipend is less than the postdoctoral fellow or associate's current salary the salary may be supplemented from another funding source.

Postdoctoral personnel are not eligible for any proposed UMMS across-the-board, cost of living or merit increases. Salaries are usually increased on the hiring date anniversary, according to Institutional policy. Salaries for part time appointments are prorated. The minimum part time appointment is for 10% time unless restricted by visa status.

Additional Compensation

On occasion a postdoctoral fellow or associate may be compensated for work completed not pertaining to their fulltime position. Prior to accepting and completing this additional work the post doc must have the approval of the PI and inform the Department Administrator.

Taxes

Federal, state and Medicare taxes will be paid by all postdoctoral personnel unless the individual is a citizen of a country which has a tax treaty with the U.S. Government. To determine whether you qualify under a tax treaty you should contact the International Students & Scholars Office at 508-856-5633.

Retirement Deduction

A weekly retirement deduction is taken for all postdoctoral personnel who are eligible to become members of the State Retirement System. These deductions are refunded, upon Termination if an individual has not become vested, according to State Board of Retirement guidelines.

HEALTH, LIFE, LONG-TERM DISABILITY AND DENTAL INSURANCE

Postdoctoral personnel employed by UMMS at 50% or more time and receiving a salary from UMMS are eligible for enrollment in UMMS group- health, dental, life and long term disability insurance plans.

When a stipend is paid directly from an outside agency to the postdoctoral research associate or fellows, the individual is not eligible for group insurance because he/she is not an employee. In most cases, the department can confer eligibility by arranging for an account to be set up into which funds from the outside agency are first deposited and then paid out to the individual as salary via the personnel action process. Administrators should check with the Office of Research to determine the best method.

In cases where it is not possible to establish an account and a postdoctoral research associate or fellow needs health insurance the department may arrange insurance with the International Students and Scholars Office or if more extensive coverage is needed Fallon Health Care. The PI has the option to reimburse the postdoctoral research associate or fellow for the cost of the health insurance.

ATTENDANCE

Work Week

The work week consists of a minimum of 40 hours a week as defined by the supervising Principal Investigator. Part time postdoctoral personnel have a prorated work week.

Vacation Days, Personal Days and Holidays

Full-time postdoctoral personnel are awarded fifteen (15) days of vacation time per year and three (3) personal days on July 1st of each year. Postdoctoral personnel hired between October 1 and March 31 are awarded *pro rata* vacation and personal days to be used during the fiscal year. Postdoctoral personnel appointed for periods of time shorter than one year are awarded *pro rata* vacation and personal days. There are thirteen (13) paid holidays per year. Postdoctoral personnel are not eligible to receive comp time if they work a paid holiday. There will be no carryover of unused vacation time from one year to the next. Payout of unused vacation time on termination will be at the discretion of the PI.

Sick Days

Full-time postdoctoral personnel are awarded fifteen days of sick leave on July, 1st of each year. Postdoctoral personnel hired between October 1st and March 31st are awarded pro rata sick days. Sick time is carried forward each year and may be accrued up to a maximum of 960 hours. Postdoctoral sick time can be used for personal and/or family illness but can not be used as a supplement to vacation time. An employee will not be compensated for any unused sick time upon termination.

Postdoctoral personnel are eligible to join UMMS sick bank. See UMMS policy Sick Leave Bank.

Leaves of Absence

Unpaid Personal Leave of Absence – Postdoctoral personnel may be granted an Unpaid Personal Leave of Absence if approved by the PI, Department Chair/Program Director or designee in accordance with the appropriate UMMS policy, providing the grantor policy permits. If the funding source does not permit unpaid leave or will expire prior to the end of the leave and the department grants the leave, the department must negotiate the disposition for any remaining funds with the grant agency.

Family or Medical Leave of Absence - Post doctoral personnel must be granted family or Medical Leave of Absence by the PI and Department Chair/Program Director or designee in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act. Accrued sick, personal, and vacation days may be used during the leave. Otherwise, the leave is unpaid. If the funding source will expire prior to the end of the leave the postdoctoral personnel would be terminated at that time, thus terminating the leave. See UMMS Family and Medical Leave Policy.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Reasonable efforts should be made within each Department to resolve grievances between a postdoctoral fellow or associate and the supervising Principal Investigator. Unresolved grievances, by written request of the postdoctoral fellow or associate will be considered according to the following appeals process (all appeals and responses must be in writing):

Step One

- Postdoctoral fellow or associate appeals to Chairperson or Program Director within five (5) working days of the inability to resolve the conflict with sponsor.
- Chairperson or Program Director responds, to the Postdoctoral fellow or associate within five (5) working days.

Step Two

- If unsatisfied with response, postdoctoral fellow or associate requests review by Director of Research within five working days of receipt of Step One Response.
- Director of Research responds to the postdoctoral fellow or associate within ten (10) working days.

Sexual Harassment Grievances are handled by the Equal Opportunity Office. They can be reached at (508) 856-2179.

SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT

All postdoctoral fellows or associates are expected to abide by the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Policy on Scientific Misconduct.

VOLUNTARY STATUS

Postdoctoral personnel who bring their own funding and are not employed by UMass Medical School, should be officially registered as volunteers. As an official member of Volunteer Services they will be covered for institutional liability issues, receive an ID badge and have passed the physical examination requirements to work within the Medical School.

It is the sponsor's responsibility to register any volunteer who will be coming into contact with radioactive substances with the Department of Radiation Safety for training and badge monitoring, and with Environmental Health and Safety for *Right to Know* training and, if applicable, Biohazard training.

The Volunteer Services Office is located on Level B, of the hospital; room HB-591 telephone number is 508-856-2558. To become a volunteer, an adult volunteer application form must be completed and brought to the Volunteer Services Office.

Volunteer Services will provide parking permits only to those individuals not receiving any compensation for their work here; if they are receiving compensation from another country or external agency, parking coupon books must be purchased. After receiving the application, Volunteer Services will schedule the physical exam, orientation, and I.D. badge for the volunteer.

Volunteer Services should be notified when the individual leaves UMMS.