

YALE UNIVERSITY
March 1, 2014

Policies for Postdoctoral Appointments

Postdoctoral appointments afford recent Ph.D. (and equivalent advanced degree) recipients a period in which to extend their education and professional training. The opportunity to carry out postdoctoral studies in a research environment such as provided at Yale University can significantly broaden an individual's expertise, provide a period of more independent scholarship, and help define future career paths. The breadth of the academic community, together with the physical resources in the libraries and laboratories, make Yale University a particularly rich environment for postdoctoral training. In addition to deriving individual benefits, postdoctoral appointees make important contributions to the research mission of Yale University.

Postdoctoral appointees may be appointed by or affiliated with a department or other academic unit authorized to make non-ladder academic appointments, such as the MacMillan Center and the Institution for Social and Policy Studies. There are two categories of appointees: Postdoctoral Fellows and Postdoctoral Associates¹. The difference arises from the requirements of the funding source. Appointees funded from Yale-administered research grants, contracts, or other University sources in order to provide services related to the supported research are classified as Postdoctoral Associates; they are employees of the University even though they are considered trainees. Postdoctoral Fellows are also trainees, but they are not Yale employees. They may be funded either from training grants to the University or from funding awarded to the trainee from an outside source.

1. Terms of Appointment

1.1 Eligibility: To be eligible for a postdoctoral appointment, an individual must hold a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., D.V.M., D.N.Sc., or equivalent degree from a recognized institution of higher learning. When a candidate has completed all of the requirements for a degree, but the degree has not yet been formally conferred, the candidate may present evidence of completion of the degree, together with a statement of the date on which the degree is to be conferred. If the degree is not conferred by the projected date, the postdoctoral appointment shall be terminated. Postdoctoral appointees must be affiliated with a primary academic department or equivalent academic unit.

The candidate must also provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae and list of publications, and must arrange for at least two letters of recommendation to be sent to the prospective faculty supervisor at Yale.

¹This document does not address all categories of appointments called "fellows." It does not apply to clinical fellows, who are subject to certain agency-mandated requirements and are covered by separate policies. In addition, the University uses the term "fellow" for other categories not covered by this document, e.g., residential college fellows and participants in advanced fellowship programs offering stipend support (e.g., Liman Fellows and Bernstein Fellows).

1.2 Appointment letter: Each new postdoctoral appointment is to be made in writing by a letter from the supervising faculty member. The letter must have the approval of the departmental chair or the appropriate dean in the case of professional schools, though the precise mechanism for obtaining this approval is left to the discretion of the department or school. Final administrative approval must also be obtained from the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs (see below). The appointment letter must include the following details:

- (i) the term, title, and schedule (full time or fractional) of the appointment;
- (ii) the level of support;
- (iii) the source of support;
- (iv) benefits provided;
- (v) a statement of the expected obligations of the appointee during the training period (this statement may refer to a general area of study and need not define a particular project);
- (vi) a statement of teaching responsibilities, if any, associated with the appointment (note that any appointee who will be teaching must also be appointed as a lecturer or equivalent academic rank); and
- (vii) a copy of these Policies for Postdoctoral Appointments.

Additional information, e.g., the possibility and conditions for renewal, may also be included. The postdoctoral appointee must acknowledge the terms of the appointment, either by signing the letter of appointment or by submitting a separate letter of acceptance.

1.3 Stipend level: The University shall establish each year a minimum annual compensation for postdoctoral appointments. Ordinarily postdoctoral appointments are for full-time employment. If a fractional appointment is requested by the appointee, this must be clearly stated, with the understanding that the appointee may perform and be compensated for additional University services or outside employment, up to but not exceeding full time. Moreover, evidence must be provided that such a fractional appointment is consistent with the rules of the funding source and with the visa requirements of appointees who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

1.4 Maximum term: Individuals generally hold postdoctoral appointments at Yale University for no longer than four years, although extensions may be granted in exceptional cases. The total term of postdoctoral appointments may not exceed six years including previous postdoctoral experience at other institutions.

1.5 Notice of resignation: If a postdoctoral appointee resigns prior to the end of the appointment, he or she will provide at least one month's notice. Postdoctoral appointees must leave all research materials with the faculty supervisor to ensure continuation of the project and compliance with relevant University and sponsor policies. However, access to these data and materials will be provided to the appointee. If the departing postdoctoral appointee holds non-immigrant status (J-1, H-1B, TN etc.) and resigns prior to the end of the appointment, the department must notify the Office of International Students and Scholars.

1.6 Notice of termination: If a postdoctoral appointment is terminated by the faculty mentor prior to the end of the appointment, the appointee must be notified in writing at least three months in advance. The exception is for appointees who are terminated because of poor performance. In such instances, the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs should be consulted. If the departing postdoctoral appointee holds non-immigrant

status (J-1, H-1B, TN etc.) and resigns prior to the end of the appointment, the department must notify the Office of International Students and Scholars.

2. Benefits

- 2.1 Health and dental coverage: As employees of the University, postdoctoral associates are entitled to fully or partially subsidized membership in one of the available health plans offered by Yale, for themselves, their families, and civil union partners, subject to specific plan provisions. Postdoctoral fellows are eligible to enroll in the same health plans, and this membership may be subsidized in whole or in part, to the extent that funds for this purpose are included in the fellowship or are supplemented by the faculty mentor or the department. Postdoctoral appointees are also eligible to enroll in dental coverage made available by the University on the terms offered to M&P employees and members of the faculty. All postdoctoral appointees must have evidence of health insurance coverage during their appointment.
- 2.2 Teacher preparation: A postdoctoral appointee may participate in teacher preparation activities sponsored by the school with which the appointee is affiliated and, when appropriate, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
- 2.3 Paid time off: Paid time off (PTO) is designed to provide postdoctoral appointees time away from work to attend to personal responsibilities and balance the demands of both their professional and personal lives. Postdoctoral appointees are entitled to eight (8) University holidays each year: New Year's Day, MLK Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Appointees are additionally entitled to 12 business days as PTO during each one-year appointment, prorated for appointments of less than 12 months. All PTO should be scheduled in advance with the faculty mentor, and it is recommended that a written record of time used be maintained. PTO does not accrue from one year to the next and is not paid out if unused by the end of an appointment.
- 2.4 Sick time: Postdoctoral appointees may receive up to 9 sick days annually but require medical documentation from a health care provider if an absence exceeds 7 consecutive days. Sick time may be used when the appointee is ill, injured, or caring for an ill family member (child, spouse, parent, parent-in law and same sex domestic partner). Sick days do not accrue from one year to the next and are not paid out if unused by the end of an appointment. Appointees who exhaust their sick day allowance and need additional days may use Paid Time Off or apply for an unpaid disability leave of absence. In the event that an appointee's funding source specifies paid time off and/or sick time provisions that are more restrictive than those outlined above, the terms of the funding source shall apply.
- 2.5 Leaves: Postdoctoral appointees who bear a child or adopt a child under the age of six or whose spouse or civil union partner bears a child or adopts a child under the age of six during the term of their appointment may be granted up to eight weeks of paid parental leave. To qualify for this leave the appointee must be a primary caregiver throughout the period of the leave: caring for the child during normal working hours, while the other parent, if any, is employed at least half time. The Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") provides eligible employees with up to 12 workweeks of unpaid, job-protected leave within a 12-month period, and requires health benefits to be maintained during the leave. FMLA is a federal law; Connecticut state FMLA allows for 16 weeks of unpaid leave over a 24 month period. Both laws are

applicable to eligible employees and run concurrently. Unpaid leave may be granted under FMLA in the following circumstances: serious illness of the appointee; birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child; care of a seriously ill child, stepchild, spouse, parent, parent-in-law or civil union partner. Requests for these and exceptional leave arrangements should be forwarded by the postdoctoral appointee's department to the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs. In the event that an appointee's funding source specifies leave provisions that differ from those stated above, the terms of the funding source shall apply, and where necessary, the leave request shall also be sent to the funding Agency.

- 2.6 Career services: A postdoctoral appointee may participate in career development workshops and other activities (except interview events designed solely for degree students) sponsored by the school with which the appointee is affiliated and, when appropriate, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
- 2.7 Auditing University courses: Postdoctoral appointees and their spouses or civil union partners are eligible to audit (not for credit and not recorded on a transcript) University courses in the Graduate School and Yale College during the academic year. Classes audited by postdoctoral appointees should be consistent with the appointees' training objectives, and appointees should discuss their plans with their mentors to ensure that the coursework does not interfere with research activities. Postdoctoral appointees must have the permission of the instructor to audit classes. In the case of spouses or civil union partners wishing to audit undergraduate courses, approval of the Director of Special Students is required in addition to permission of the individual instructor. For Graduate School courses, approval of the appropriate associate dean of the Graduate School is required. Each professional school sets its own policies concerning the auditing of courses. Information about these policies can be obtained from the dean's office of each school.
- 2.8 Tuition benefits: Postdoctoral appointees (whose appointment is at least half-time) may only receive tuition benefits if the classes taken are consistent with their educational training. Postdoctoral appointees and their spouses or civil union partners may receive a tuition reduction when they enroll, through the regular admissions procedures, in courses offered through the Yale College non-degree Special Students Program, the Yale Summer Session, or the Graduate School's Division of Special Registration and master's degree programs. For information regarding tuition benefits in the professional schools, consult the dean's office of those schools.
- 2.9 Facilities: An appointee has access to the University's facilities on terms usual to faculty and staff and is eligible for parking privileges with a limited allocation priority.

3. Expectations for Training

- 3.1 Mentor responsibilities: As trainees, postdoctoral appointees must be formally mentored or co-mentored by a member of the ladder faculty (Assistant, Associate or Full Professor), or those with Yale appointments who have been approved for a promotion to a ladder rank on a specified date. As part of the annual reappointment process the mentor is expected to write an evaluation or progress report of the postdoctoral appointee's activities in a manner that is clear and timely. These reports should be provided to the appointee and forwarded to the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs. Mentors have the responsibility to provide an appropriate educational experience that helps to advance the career of the postdoctoral appointee.

3.2 Appointee responsibilities: The postdoctoral appointee is expected to:

- (i) fulfill specific research and training objectives;
- (ii) conform with ethical research standards of the University;
- (iii) comply with all relevant federal, state and municipal regulations and guidelines that relate to human subjects research, the care and use of laboratory animals, and the use of hazardous materials;
- (iv) comply with all relevant University policies; and
- (v) record and document research results appropriately.

If the appointee will be engaged in other specific activities, such as teaching, these expectations should be stated in the letter of appointment or in a subsequent written communication.

3.3 Outside employment: A postdoctoral appointee who holds a full-time appointment should consult the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs 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 faculty mentor, must not interfere with the primary research and training obligations, and must comply with the rules of the funding source.

3.4 Teaching at Yale or at other institutions: Some postdoctoral appointments include a role in teaching. For those that do not include such a role, when allowed by the funding source and with the approval of the faculty mentor, some postdoctoral appointees may teach at Yale and in certain circumstances may receive compensation in addition to the stipend. Consult the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs for further information.

4. Administrative Support

4.1 Departmental role: Each department or school that makes postdoctoral appointments shall designate a faculty member to oversee the appointment procedures and to serve as a resource to faculty on postdoctoral policies. The faculty member is expected to provide guidance and support to the postdoctoral appointees in the department and to serve as a link to the University-wide Office for Postdoctoral Affairs. Administrative support shall be provided by the department or school.

4.2 Postdoctoral Affairs: The Office for Postdoctoral Affairs has two administrative locations that serve the community. An office in the School of Medicine will serve departments in that school. Another office, located on Central Campus, will serve FAS departments and the other professional schools. These offices supplement the role of the departments and schools in implementing policies and procedures related to the appointment, roles, requirements, and responsibilities of all postdoctoral appointees in the respective FAS departments and professional schools. Areas in which the offices provide assistance and oversight of compliance with University policies include:

- Initial appointment and reappointment
 - Authorization (levels and sources of support)
 - Approval and processing

- Stipend and data change monitoring
- Visas (coordination with Office of International Students and Scholars)
- Policy administration
 - Leaves, benefits, termination, grievance, resignation
 - Research compliance (coordination with other University offices)
- Support functions
 - Orientation
 - Communication with the postdoctoral community
 - Career services and professional development.

5. Complaint Procedure

A Complaint Procedure for Postdoctoral Appointees is available for individuals who believe they have been treated in a manner inconsistent with University policies or believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, status as a covered veteran, or gender identity or expression. Decisions based on the professional judgments of faculty members or supervisors, such as academic or performance evaluations, or decisions based on the availability of funding are not subject to review under this procedure.

The full grievance process can be found in the [Yale University Complaint Procedure for Postdoctoral Appointees](#)