

Policies for Postdoctoral Appointments

Postdoctoral appointments afford recent Ph.D. (and equivalent advanced degree) recipients for 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, makes 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 Associates. 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 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.

Note: This 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. 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 - A postdoctoral appointment is for a duration of up to one year and does not automatically renew. Ordinarily, no less than 90 days prior to the end of the appointment, the appointee will receive written notice as to whether or not the appointment will be renewed. Appointees who have not received such notice should contact their department administrator.

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 90 days in advance. Such notice is not required for appointees who are terminated because of poor performance, including misconduct. In such instances, faculty mentors should consult the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs.

If a 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 Fellows not receiving a Yale University paycheck and not able to enroll for benefits using Yale's Workday, are eligible to enroll with Yale Health's Postdoctoral Fellow Membership Health Coverage Program. Additional information, monthly rates and the process of how to enroll can be found on Yale Health's [Unpaid Postdoc Fellows webpage](#).

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) provides postdoctoral appointees with time away from work to balance the demands of both their professional and personal lives. Postdoctoral Associates and Fellows (where permitted by their funding source), are entitled to 23 days as PTO during each one-year appointment that can be used for vacation or sick time. Plus, the [Official Yale Holidays and recess days](#).

If, by nature of their work or as directed by their faculty mentor, a postdoctoral appointee is required to work on an Official Yale Holiday or recess day, they will be entitled to an additional day of PTO that must be used in the same 12-month appointment period.

PTO is 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 is not tracked in Workday, it does not accrue from one year to the next, is not paid out if unused by the end of an appointment, and cannot be used on the last day of an appointment.

Bereavement

Postdoctoral appointees are entitled to up to three days off without loss of pay in the event of death in the immediate family. The immediate family is defined as parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, spouse, child, grandparent, domestic partner, grandchild, or person in an equivalent relationship. Exceptions to this policy require approval by the Associate Provost for Postdoctoral Affairs. If additional time is necessary, departments may allow the appointee to use PTO days or may approve personal leave.

[Spreadsheet template for tracking PTO](#).

This policy was updated on 10/22/2024 and is effective 11/1/2024.

2.4. Sick Time - *This policy is replaced by the Paid Time Off policy that combines sick and vacation time. This policy change is effective Nov 1, 2024.*

2.5. Leaves – refer to the Leaves page on the website

- 2.6. Career Services - A postdoctoral appointee will be provided career services by the Office of Career Strategy for non-academic job searches and the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs for academic job searches.
- 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 Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs 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.
For more information, please click here: <https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/benefits/yale-signature-benefits/educational-assistance-programs-yale>.
- 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 ([IDP Evaluation Form](#)). 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 supplements 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 office provide assistance and oversight of compliance with University policies include:

Initial appointment and reappointment:

- (i) Authorization (levels and sources of support)
- (ii) Approval and processing
- (iii) Stipend and data change monitoring
- (iv) Visas (coordination with Office of International Students Scholars)

Policy administration:

- (i) Leaves, benefits, termination, grievance, resignation
- (ii) Research compliance (coordination with other University offices)

Support functions”

- (i) Orientation
- (ii) Communication with the postdoctoral community
- (iii) Career services and professional development

5. Complaint Procedure

See the Complaint Procedure and Complaint Procedure and Support Resources documents on the website.

Refer to the Faculty Standards of Conduct and related procedures -

<https://provost.yale.edu/policies/faculty-standards-conduct-and-related-procedures>