



Policies and Procedures on Postdoctoral Scholars, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Visiting Scholars

Major Topics

[Definitions](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[Appointments](#)

[Benefits](#)

I. Introduction

This regulation establishes the policies and procedures for the terms of appointment and employment of postdoctoral scholars and fellows and for the accommodation of visiting scholars in the University. It defines their status, privileges, and benefits. It enables an assessment of the University's contribution to their training and scholarly activities in terms of faculty time and use of office and laboratory space, equipment, and library facilities. Furthermore, the designation of postdoctoral scholars makes it possible for the University to recognize their accomplishments by awarding Certificates of Postdoctoral Study.

II. Jurisdiction

All individuals appointed as a postdoctoral scholar or fellow shall be under the jurisdiction of the Provost. Individuals whose experience and training exceed that of learner or apprentice shall be considered as visiting scholars and are under the jurisdiction of the Provost or the Vice President for Research, as appropriate.

The Provost may delegate certain matters, such as the processing of appointments and reappointments of postdoctoral fellows and scholars, to the Dean of the Graduate School or appropriate college deans.

III. Definitions

A. Postdoctoral Scholar

A postdoctoral scholar is an individual who has an earned doctoral degree and is pursuing an individualized program of advanced training in research, in teaching or other important aspects of academic work, or in any combination of these activities for which the University has assumed a measure of responsibility. Although participation in the program provides advanced training, an

academic assignment is required as a condition of appointment with salary. A postdoctoral scholar has status both as a temporary academic staff employee and as a postdoctoral student.

B. Postdoctoral Fellow

A postdoctoral fellow is an individual who has an earned doctoral degree and is a recipient of a fellowship or training award. Through such an award, a postdoctoral fellow receives a stipend or living allowance (neither of which are considered salary) from grant funds provided specifically for a particular field of study or training. No academic assignment is required as a condition of receiving the stipend. A postdoctoral fellow has status as a postdoctoral student but not as an employee.

C. Visiting Scholar

A visiting scholar is an individual who is pursuing an independent program of research at the University, or is participating in an existing research program, ordinarily while on leave from another professional position. Such an individual is excluded from designation as a postdoctoral scholar or fellow by virtue of the individual's advanced training and experience beyond that of an apprentice or learner. A visiting scholar need not have been awarded a doctoral degree, but must have significant scholarly experience. A visiting scholar has status as temporary academic staff. An appointment as visiting scholar normally is without salary from the University.

IV. Eligibility for Appointment as a Postdoctoral Scholar or Postdoctoral Fellow

- A. Postdoctoral scholars and fellows include those persons who have been awarded an earned doctoral degree and are pursuing a program of advanced training and research/scholarship which has been approved by a department or research unit, the appropriate dean, and the Provost. The pertinent department or research unit shall have the responsibility for describing and evaluating the academic credentials of the candidate and the substance of the proposed program.
- B. Persons who do not qualify for participation in the University's postdoctoral program include:
 - 1. Those who are students or degree candidates in the same department or research unit, unless otherwise approved by the Provost.
 - 2. Those who previously have served as a postdoctoral scholar or fellow for five years at this University (exclusive of internship or residency training) or for five years total at several institutions in programs of postdoctoral training in the same field as their proposed additional program of training. These individuals are presumed to have advanced beyond the apprentice role appropriate to the postdoctoral scholar or fellow title, but they may be eligible for appointment as visiting scholars or possibly to be considered for appointment in one of the faculty title series.

However, since both domestic and foreign pre-doctoral programs vary in standards and some prior postdoctoral activities provide more specialized and advanced training than others, variation from this exclusion may be justified by special circumstances. Exceptions to this exclusion may be granted by the Provost upon receipt of a recommendation endorsed by the department chair or research unit director and the dean of the appropriate college.

V. Appointments

A. Postdoctoral Scholar or Postdoctoral Fellow

1. Appointment as a postdoctoral scholar or postdoctoral fellow requires recommendations by the appropriate department chair or research unit director and the dean of the pertinent college and approval of the individual's Notice of Appointment form by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Provost. Applications on forms provided by the Graduate School shall be made at the time of initiation of the individual's program of training and research.
2. A resident faculty member shall be designated to monitor and evaluate the program undertaken. Department chairs and directors of research units shall be responsible for seeing that all individuals presently in the status of postdoctoral scholar or fellow and all future appointees, with approval of the appropriate college dean, shall register promptly in the Graduate School. Principal investigators on research projects who extend offers to potential postdoctoral scholars or fellows shall inform the candidates of the regulations and benefits associated with the pertinent type of postdoctoral appointment and alert the candidates to the necessity for formal registration in the Graduate School. The Graduate School shall be notified of any changes in the duration of the program from dates included on the initial application form for appointment as postdoctoral scholar or fellow.
3. Appointment as a postdoctoral scholar or fellow in a given field at the University shall be limited to a maximum of five years, unless an exclusion endorsed by the appropriate department chair or research unit director and college dean is approved by the Provost. Department chairs and directors of research units shall be responsible for seeing that all individuals presently in the status of postdoctoral scholar or fellow and all future appointees, particularly those with appointments in the fourth or fifth year, receive adequate counseling on future, permanent employment opportunities.

B. Visiting Scholar

At the request of the department or research unit with which the visiting scholar will be chiefly associated and on recommendation of the pertinent dean, the Provost or the Vice President for Research may provide the individual with a letter of appointment to a temporary academic staff position as visiting scholar. The designation "visiting" in the position title indicates that the individual has a temporary appointment for a term not to exceed one year, subject to renewal in exceptional cases if approved by the Provost or Executive Vice President for Research.

VI. Compliance of Work Assignment or Training Activities with Purpose of Grant or Contract

Where a postdoctoral position or a visiting scholar position is funded through a grant or contract from an extramural source, it shall be the responsibility of the nominating department or research unit to ensure that the work assignment or training activities of the postdoctoral scholar or fellow falls within the purpose of the grant or contract.

VII. Benefits

A. Postdoctoral Scholars

Postdoctoral scholars, in view of their classification as both students and salaried academic staff, will be eligible for certain benefits but will not be eligible for participation in the University of Kentucky Retirement Plan. They are responsible for all premiums. They do, however, receive a basic life insurance benefit and a health credit. Premiums will be those currently in force and are subject to change as these may be modified from time to time under the provisions of the contracts as negotiated between the University and various insurance companies or Third Party Administrators (TPA's). Specifically, they are eligible:

1. For an identification card, indicating clearly the recipient's status as a postdoctoral scholar, issued without fee by Human Resources to each individual enrolled as a full-time postdoctoral scholar after a copy of a signed Postdoctoral Scholar Notice of Appointment form or other appropriate documentation of eligibility of the individual has been received from the Office of the Provost or the Graduate School. This ID card will enable the recipient to have access to library facilities, recreational facilities, and check-cashing services on campus, and to make purchases with a discount at campus bookstores;
2. To enroll in one of the University of Kentucky employee health plans. They are ineligible to use the Student Insurance Plan and the Student Health Service. U.S. Department of State regulations require all J-1 postdoctoral scholars and their dependents (J-2) to have medical evacuation and repatriation coverage. This coverage is not provided with employee health insurance plans and can be purchased at the Office of International Affairs;
3. To pay the Student Activity Fee each semester, which generally will provide for the following: a Student Identification Card, access to tickets for home football and basketball games and to major concerts sponsored by the Student Activities Board, and admission to Lexington Philharmonic concerts. A valid student identification card also permits the use of library facilities, recreational facilities, and check-cashing service on campus;
4. For coverage by University's basic life insurance program;
5. To enroll in the University's optional life insurance program. If enrolled in the University's optional life insurance program, eligible to purchase dependent life insurance for spouse and children;
6. To purchase group accident insurance;
7. To purchase dental insurance;
8. To purchase vision insurance;
9. For coverage under the University's Long Term Disability Plan;
10. For coverage by provisions of Kentucky Workers' Compensation Act;
11. To participate in the Employee Education Program (EEP);
12. For coverage under the University's Blood Donor Program;
13. For temporary disability leave in accordance with Staff Personnel Policy and Procedure Number 82.0;
14. For holiday leave with pay in accordance with Staff Personnel Policy and Procedure Number 83.0 and the President's Official Holiday Announcement;
15. To apply for an E parking permit;
16. To participate in the voluntary tax-shelter plans offered by the University of Kentucky, including health care flexible spending accounts and dependent care flexible spending accounts;
17. To apply for membership in the Hilary J. Boone Center at the University of Kentucky;
18. To apply for membership in the Spindletop Hall Alumni, Faculty, and Staff Club; and

19. For an entitlement to fifteen (15) working days of vacation leave with pay per annual assignment period. The fifteen (15) days of vacation leave shall be credited annually to the postdoctoral scholar on the first day of the new fiscal year.* With prior administrative approval, postdoctoral scholars may take vacation leave during the period in which they are eligible to take such leave. Vacation leave, if used, must be taken in the assignment period in which it is credited, or the vacation leave will be forfeited.

* For purposes of determining prorated first-year vacation credit for a postdoctoral scholar whose first-year assignment begins after the start of a fiscal year, or for purposes of determining terminal vacation pay for a postdoctoral scholar who separates his or her employment from the University, vacation days are deemed to be earned per month during an assignment period. The calculation of terminal vacation pay per day of unused vacation leave shall follow the convention established for faculty employees as codified in AR 3:6, sub-section III (Prorated Vacation Credit and Terminal Vacation Pay).

B. Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral fellows, in view of their status as postdoctoral students but not salaried employees, shall be eligible for certain benefits under stated conditions. They shall be responsible for all premiums. They do, however, receive a basic life insurance benefit and a health credit. Premiums will be those currently in force and are subject to change as these may be modified from time to time under the provisions of the contracts as negotiated between the University and various insurance companies or Third Party Administrators (TPA's). Specifically, postdoctoral fellows are eligible:

1. For an identification card, indicating clearly the recipient's status as a postdoctoral fellow, issued without fee by Human Resources to each individual appointed as a full-time postdoctoral fellow after a copy of a signed Postdoctoral Fellow Notice of Appointment form or other appropriate documentation of eligibility of the individual has been received from the Office of the Provost or the Graduate School. This ID card will enable the recipient to have access to library facilities, recreational facilities, and check-cashing services on campus, and to make purchases with a discount at campus bookstores;
2. To enroll in one of the University of Kentucky employee health plans. They are ineligible to use the Student Insurance Plan and the Student Health Service. U.S. Department of State regulations require all J-1 postdoctoral fellows and their dependents (J-2) to have medical evacuation and repatriation coverage. This coverage is not provided with employee health insurance plans and can be purchased at the Office of International Affairs;
3. To pay the Student Activity Fee each semester which will provide for the following: a Student Identification Card, access to tickets for home football and basketball games and to major concerts sponsored by the Student Activities Board, and admission to Lexington Philharmonic concerts. A valid student identification card also permits the use of library facilities, recreational facilities, and check-cashing service on campus;
4. For coverage by University's basic life insurance program;
5. To enroll in the University's optional life insurance program. If enrolled in the University's optional life insurance program, eligible to purchase dependent life insurance for spouse and children;
6. To purchase dental insurance;
7. To purchase vision insurance;
8. To participate in selected voluntary tax-shelter plans offered by the University of Kentucky, including dependent care flexible spending accounts;

9. For coverage under the University's Blood Donor Program;
10. To apply for an E parking permit; and
11. To apply for membership in the Hilary J. Boone Center at the University of Kentucky.

C. Visiting Scholars

In view of their status as temporary academic staff, visiting scholars shall be eligible for certain benefits under stated conditions. They shall be responsible for all premiums, which shall be those in force and are subject to change from time to time under the provisions of the contracts which are negotiated between the University and various insurance companies and/or Third Party Administrators (TPA's). Specifically, they are eligible:

1. For an identification card, indicating clearly the recipient's status as visiting scholar, issued without fee by Human Resources to each individual appointed as a research scholar after that Office has received a copy of the letter confirming the appointment of the individual as such by the Provost or the Executive Vice President for Research. This ID card will enable the recipient to have access to office and laboratory facilities as assigned, library facilities, and check-cashing services on campus, and to make purchases with a discount at campus bookstores;
2. To apply for an E parking permit;
3. To enroll in one of the University of Kentucky employee health plans. Because of their status as temporary employees, they are ineligible to receive a health credit. J-1 visiting scholars and their dependants (J-2) are also eligible to purchase the Student Health Plan at their own expense. Visiting scholars and their spouses insured by the Student Insurance Plan may use the University Health Service on a fee-for-service basis;
4. To purchase dental insurance;
5. To purchase vision insurance;
6. To apply for membership in the Hilary J. Boone Center at the University of Kentucky; and
7. To apply for membership in the Spindletop Hall Alumni, Faculty, and Staff Club.

VIII. Certificate of Postdoctoral Study

Upon satisfactory completion of a postdoctoral program of study as certified by the sponsoring resident faculty member, each postdoctoral scholar or fellow will be issued a certificate signed by the chair of the department or director of the research unit with which the individual was primarily associated and by the Provost. This certificate will indicate the field or fields of postdoctoral study, the name of the resident faculty member, and the period for which the postdoctoral scholar was appointed.

References and Related Materials

Administrative Regulations:

3:6 Faculty Assignment and Vacation Leave Policy

Revision History

AR II-4.0-1: 4/3/1989, 4/30/1993, 8/18/1998, 9/29/2005,

AR 5:1: 7/1/2008

For questions, contact: [Office of Legal Counsel](#)