

Policy on Appointment of Postdoctoral Fellows

Responsible Administrator: Associate Dean for Research

Sponsoring Unit: Office of Research and Scholarship

Effective Date: 04/15/2014

Last reviewed: 07/05/2022¹

Next scheduled review: 04/2025

POLICY STATEMENT

Postdoctoral training is increasingly becoming a required step on the path to a research career. Postdoctoral positions are foremost a training opportunity and develop a trainee's ability to conduct their own programs of research upon completion. Nationally, the number of nursing postdoctoral fellows is growing; postdoctoral fellows make major contributions to the national research enterprise.

RATIONALE

Postdoctoral fellowships are key training experiences that are neither student nor faculty positions, thus necessitating the explication of the nature and terms of the appointments, supervising and mentoring relationships, and resources and benefits, to ensure learning and training outcomes. The purpose of this policy is to define postdoctoral appointments, the terms of the appointments, the designation of the offices responsible for the fellow's appointment, and the eligibility and responsibilities of faculty mentors.

In 2000, the National Academy of Science, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine issued a report and recommendations.² The Executive Committee of the Association of American Medical Colleges endorsed that report and urged member institutions to adopt its recommendations. After careful study of these reports, the University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON) has established the following guidelines for conducting postdoctoral training. These guidelines address four major areas:

1. the definition of a postdoctoral appointment
2. the terms of such an appointment, including duration, compensation, and benefits
3. the designation of an office responsible for ensuring that institutional responsibilities to the postdoctoral community are met
4. the responsibilities of faculty mentors of postdoctoral fellows.

It should be noted that this policy is also consistent with the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine's 2000 report.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all postdoctoral fellows at UMSON, regardless of funding source.

¹ Review included UMB Legal Counsel and Office of the Provost review.

²National Academy of Science, National Academy of Engineering, & Institute of Medicine. (2000). *Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience for Scientists and Engineers: A Guide for Postdoctoral Scholars, Advisers, Institutions, Funding Organizations, and Disciplinary Societies*. National Academy Press: Washington, D.C. Available at <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/9831/chapter/1>

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, STATUTES, AND REGULATIONS

School of Nursing Policies and Procedures

- [UMSON Guidelines for Authorship of Scholarship Publications](#)³
- [UMSON Guideline on New Employee Technology](#)⁴

USM, UMB, or Other External Policies, Statutes, and Regulations

- [University of Maryland Reasonable Accommodations Process](#)⁵
- [UMB Benefits](#)⁶
- [UMB Policies and Procedures](#)⁷
- [UMB Policy on Authorship on Scholarly Publications](#)⁸
- [University of Maryland School of Medicine Office of Postdoctoral Scholars](#)⁹
- [University of Maryland School of Medicine Institute for Genome Sciences Careers-Postdoctoral Fellows](#)¹⁰
- [UMB Policy on Intellectual Property](#)¹¹
- [USM Policy on Tuition Remission and Tuition Reimbursement for Regular and Retired Nonexempt and Exempt Staff and Faculty Employees of the University System of Maryland](#)¹²

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Policies

- [Summary of Leave, Part-Time and Extension Policies Available to Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards \(NRSA\) Trainees and Fellows](#)¹³
- [Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award \(NRSA\) Stipends, Tuition/Fees and Other Budgetary Levels Effective for Fiscal Year 2021. NRSA Salary Levels](#)¹⁴
- [Correction to Stipend Levels for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award \(NRSA\) Stipends, Tuition/Fees and Other Budgetary Levels Effective for Fiscal Year 2022](#)¹⁵
- [Revised NIH Parental Leave Policy for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards](#)¹⁶

CONTACTS

Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the Responsible Administrator.

DEFINITIONS

Postdoctoral Appointment

³ <https://www.nursing.umaryland.edu/intranet/media/son/intranet/policies-procedures/Guidelines-Authorship-Scholarly-Publications.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.nursing.umaryland.edu/intranet/media/son/intranet/policies-procedures/Guideline-on-New-Employee-Technology.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.nursing.umaryland.edu/intranet/media/son/intranet/policies-procedures/ADA-CAMPUS-PROCESS-2011.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.umaryland.edu/hrs/benefits/>

⁷ <http://www.umaryland.edu/policies-and-procedures/index/#page-1>

⁸ <https://www.umaryland.edu/policies-and-procedures/library/academic-affairs/policies/iii-111d.php>

⁹ <http://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/postdoc/>

¹⁰ <http://www.igs.umaryland.edu/careers/postdoc.php>

¹¹ <https://www.umaryland.edu/spa/policies-and-procedures/intellectual-property/umb-policy-on-intellectual-property/>

¹² <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII410.html>

¹³ <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-18-154.html>

¹⁴ <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-21-049.html>

¹⁵ <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-22-132.html>

¹⁶ <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-105.html>

A postdoctoral appointment is characterized by the following:

- The purpose of the postdoctoral appointment is the academic development of the trainee.
- The appointment may be project-based, school-based, or as part of an externally funded training grant program or research grant.
- The fellow is a University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) employee classified as either “Postdoctoral,” “Clinical,” or “Research” Fellow.
- The fellow has earned a PhD, PharmD, or other terminal doctoral degree (e.g., DDS, EdD, DMD, JD, DNP, MD).
- The appointment is temporary with a set term.
- The appointment involves at least 75% effort in research or scholarship.
- The appointment is viewed as preparation for a full-time academic and/or research career.
- The appointee is under the supervision of a faculty mentor.
- The appointee has the freedom to (and is expected to) publish the results of their research or scholarship during the period of the appointment in accordance with their individual development plan (IDP).

RESPONSIBILITIES

University of Maryland School of Nursing

Academic affairs of the postdoctoral program are housed in the office of academic deans (OAD) and specifically with the UMSON associate dean for the PhD program (AD PhD). Research affairs are housed in the office of research and scholarship (ORS). Key academic affairs roles include tracking and coordinating selection, progression, and achievement of postdoctoral fellowship training goals; facilitating OAD staff will ensure updated and disseminated program guidelines for faculty mentors and fellows and conduct ongoing program evaluation. Additionally, OAD will coordinate with ORS for preparing and reporting on fellows’ outcomes to school leadership and external accreditation bodies.

The UMSON associate dean for research (ADR) will facilitate fellows’ immersion in the larger UMSON research community, including connecting fellows with internal and external funding opportunities and proposal submission resources and coordinating access to UMSON and UMB campus research resources. The ADR also will serve as the liaison with the dean of the School of Nursing for any necessary institutional-level commitments for postdoctoral fellows’ external funding proposals. Additionally, ORS will ensure responsible conduct of research, including training and implementation of appropriate UMB Responsible Conduct of Research, Good Clinical Practice, Good Laboratory Practice, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) policies, as well as UMB and University System of Maryland (USM) data use and data transfer policies. The ADR also will be responsible for implementing the postdoctoral fellow grievance procedures.

Postdoctoral fellowship appointments may occur as part of individual faculty projects with external funding, may be funded directly from School or University funds, or be funded as part of an externally funded training program. Immediate supervisors and program directors will align with the nature of the funding.

Individual faculty members may serve as the postdoctoral fellow’s faculty mentor (see listed description below). Individual faculty members also may serve as the program director of a specific externally funded postdoctoral fellowship training program overseeing multiple fellows. Additionally, there may be further policies and procedures that must be followed in accordance with the fellowship training source (e.g., NIH/T32 funding).

Regardless of these different configurations, the ADR and AD PhD have overarching roles in ensuring adherence to and consistent application of academic and research affairs policies and procedures, with

specific attention to tracking fellow-level evaluation data and ensuring consistent access to resources and mentoring.

The ADR and AD PhD will serve as the co-directors of the Postdoctoral Training Program **except for an externally funded postdoctoral fellowship training program.**

Role of Postdoctoral Program Co-Directors:

- Comply with requirements of specific funding source, including hiring, human resources, reporting, and supervision and mentorship of trainees.
- Obtain data from trainees for institutional reporting.
- Coordinate with faculty mentor(s) to optimize postdoctoral fellow outcomes and ensure consistency across postdoctoral programs.
- Work with the postdoctoral fellow and faculty mentor to develop and implement an individual development plan (IDP) that will be reviewed and updated at least annually.
- Encourage open discussion about the postdoctoral training experience.
- Assist the postdoctoral fellow in acquiring the essential education and skills for a productive career, including the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; to work in teams; and to see the science being pursued, both in their own research program and in other venues, in the broadest of terms.

Role of ADR:

The ADR will be responsible for directing administrative support for the postdoctoral program including:

- Oversee the search process for School-funded postdoctoral fellows, as well as hiring and reappointment, if applicable.
- Develop policies and procedures to optimize postdoctoral program administration.
- Administer internal research funds provided to the postdoctoral fellow in accordance with the processes for an internal grant.

Role of Faculty Mentor:

Postdoctoral training has become a required credential for many faculty positions that include research responsibilities. The faculty mentor of each postdoctoral fellow is in a unique position to ensure that the experience makes a suitable and substantial contribution to the professional development of the fellow. At the same time, the need of the faculty mentor to advance a particular project may, on occasion, conflict with the training needs of the postdoctoral fellow. UMSON expects the faculty mentors to:

- Make sufficient time available to the postdoctoral fellow to ensure a productive experience.
- Work with the postdoctoral fellow and AD PhD to develop and implement an IDP.
- With ORS, affirm and ensure responsible conduct of research, including required training for, compliance with, and reporting of all UMB and federal environmental and research safety, conflict of interest, and information transfer policies applicable to the research conducted by the postdoctoral fellow.
- Collaborate with the postdoctoral fellow in development of research protocols, proposals, and dissemination of research results.
- Serve as the PI for IRB/Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) protocols for the postdoctoral fellow's research projects.
- Assist and/or encourage the postdoctoral fellow to develop knowledge of career options and the means for achieving career goals.
- Ensure that the postdoctoral fellow has ample opportunities to present research findings at professional meetings and symposiums.
- Provide the postdoctoral fellow with information about and support for applying to research

grant opportunities.

- Assist the postdoctoral fellow in complying with UMB data use, data sharing, and data transfer policies, recognizing that approval is not guaranteed and can take a minimum of three to six months to be finalized.
- Provide the postdoctoral fellow with regular feedback on their performance and ways in which that performance might be improved.
- If the postdoctoral fellow is interested in an academic career, provide opportunities for the fellow to develop expertise in teaching and, to the extent possible, share insights into other academic duties.
- Provide evaluation data as requested by the AD PhD.

Qualifications of Faculty Mentor:

- Regular member of the graduate faculty, preferred; if an associate member of the graduate faculty, will co-mentor in consultation with ADR, center director, or AD PhD for first year post-doc.
- Appointment at the rank of assistant professor and above.
- Active program of research as evidenced by history of external funding and consistent data-based publications in peer review journals as first or senior author over at least four years.

Role of Postdoctoral Fellow:

Postdoctoral fellows must comply with all applicable UMB policies and with all UMSON policies and procedures. Fellows are expected to attend all required UMSON meetings and trainings. They must take ownership for the development of their professional careers. This may require the fellow to seek assistance on the path best suited to their skills and personal goals. Fellows should seek the counsel of their faculty mentor(s) in choosing a career. In addition to the UMB policies, to help fellows achieve their long-term goals, UMSON expects postdoctoral fellows to be professional in the performance of their research. This requires them to:

- Meet regularly with the faculty mentor to ensure a productive experience.
- Work with the AD PhD and faculty mentor to develop and implement an [IDP](http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/)¹⁷ that will be updated at least annually and then reviewed with their mentor and AD PhD.
- Encourage open discussion about the postdoctoral training experience.
- Work with the faculty mentor and use other campus resources to acquire the essential knowledge and skills for a productive research career, including the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; to work in teams; and to see the science being pursued, both in their own research program and in other venues, in the broadest of terms.
- Develop knowledge of career options and the means for achieving career goals.
- In consultation with the faculty mentor, present research findings at professional meetings and symposiums.
- Obtain information about and leverage data obtained during postdoctoral program to apply for research grant opportunities.
- Actively participate in the UMSON/UMB research community, including presenting research at least annually in on-campus forums and participating in research seminars and centers aligned with their research.
- Provide the faculty mentor with regular feedback on the mentor's performance and ways in which that performance might be improved.
- If interested in an academic career, take part in opportunities to develop expertise in teaching as specified in their IDP.
- Comply with the responsible conduct of research and with required training for, compliance with, and reporting of all UMB and federal environmental and research

¹⁷ <http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>
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safety, conflict of interest, intellectual property, and information transfer policies applicable to the research conducted by the postdoctoral fellow.

- Comply with UMB data use, data sharing, and data transfer policies.
- Provide evaluation data before, during, and after the postdoctoral fellowship experience as requested by the AD PhD.
- If an international postdoctoral fellow, assure that their visa is kept current.

UMSON Resources for Postdoctoral Fellows

- Postdoctoral fellows are provided with access to a telephone, technology as per UMSON guideline, workspace, and IT support.
- Postdoctoral fellows are provided laboratory bench space, as applicable, within the faculty mentor's allocation.
- Postdoctoral fellows who are appointed through external grants receive funding for their research expenses through those programs.
- Postdoctoral fellows receive an annual amount of up to \$12,000 in research-related funds for up to two years from UMSON, inclusive of research-related travel, trainings, and other research-related expenses, pending availability of funding sources.
- Postdoctoral fellows may sit in on any UMSON PhD course with permission of their faculty mentor and the course instructor at no cost. (Note, this is not officially auditing a course, which requires formal registration and payment of associated tuition and fees).
- Postdoctoral fellows may receive tuition remission for courses they and/or family members take at USM institutions in accordance with USM policy on tuition remission and tuition reimbursement.
- International postdoctoral fellows are encouraged and expected to develop and/or implement the use of excellent oral and written communication skills in English, the recognized language for the dissemination of scientific knowledge in the United States.

Terms of Appointment

Postdoctoral fellows will receive raises based on the NIH salary ladder and changes in NIH postdoctoral salary scales (class 19 ANNLIL).

Recruitment Procedure: Postdoctoral fellows may be contacted by or contact potential faculty mentors through a variety of mechanisms including direct contact with the AD PhD, potential faculty mentors, and the UMSON human resources process. This policy is to formalize the temporary nature of the postdoctoral experience.

Procedure for Posting a Postdoctoral Position: All requests from faculty mentors for postdoctoral fellow position posting will be routed through the department chair, UMSON's Human Resources, and the dean for approval and will be copied to the co-directors of the Postdoctoral Training Program.

Procedure for Approval of Appointment: All requests from faculty mentors for postdoctoral fellow appointments to UMSON will be routed through the department chair, UMSON's Human Resources, the ADR and AD PhD, and the dean for approval. Information that must be supplied includes:

- Name and academic degrees of postdoctoral fellow
- Faculty mentor's name and faculty rank/status
- Funding source and duration
- Appointment dates (from-to)
- Proposed location in UMSON where the postdoctoral fellow will be working and desired space and equipment needs.

Duration of Appointment: Postdoctoral appointments at UMSON will not normally exceed one year ("initial appointment"), with the opportunity for re-appointment for an additional two years and

generally do not exceed a three-year maximum term. Re-appointments are contingent upon availability of funding and research productivity. If at the end of the initial appointment it is apparent that the postdoctoral fellow would benefit from additional experiences, application for an extension can be made to the ADR.

Continuing in a postdoctoral capacity exceeding the initial appointment period will be contingent upon the fellow demonstrating that he/she will be continuing their research development by gaining exposure to a significantly different area of investigation or furthering accomplishments in the area of investigation carried out during the first period. In no case will a postdoctoral appointment exceed a total of six years, regardless of the sites at which the positions were held.

If the fellow and UMSON wish to continue their established working relationship beyond the initial appointment and any approved extension(s), the fellow should be hired according to standard UMB practices that cover employees and be provided with a full package of University benefits.

Compensation: The minimum salary for all full-time postdoctoral appointees is the lowest (0 Years of Experience) NIH postdoctoral stipend level. Postdoctoral fellows who obtain their own funding for their salaries and/or research activities are eligible for salary augmentation of up to \$10,000 annually. The amount of the augmentation will be determined based on the size/duration of the grant and the funds UMSON will need to contribute to the successful completion of the postdoctoral fellowship. In no case will the salary augmentation extend beyond the grant award period or the period the salary is provided by the grant or exceed the amount (including fringes) of the funds provided by the grant. Salary augmentation must be approved by the dean, faculty mentor, and the UMSON ADR. Postdoctoral appointees shall receive annual increases at reappointment that are consistent with the NIH salary ladder and any periodic adjustments to salary by NIH (employee class 19 ANNLIL).

Benefits:

Postdoctoral fellows will obtain employee benefits.

The fellow is entitled to employee health insurance, including the ability to purchase subsidized insurance for dependents; the employee must select health coverage offered by UMB and in accordance with USM policies.

Leave will be earned on a prorated basis, based on the percentage of employment, over the period of a calendar year and consistent with the UMB annual leave package for employees. There will be no payment for unused leave when employment as a postdoctoral fellow is terminated. Postdoctoral fellows will not be eligible to participate in the state retirement plan and will not be offered other University retirement plan options. The employee is also entitled to all other benefits as defined by UMB policies.

Parental Leave and Family Medical Leave:

Postdoctoral fellows are eligible for parental leave and family and medical leave if they meet the eligibility requirements under the appropriate UMB benefits policy. Parental and family medical leave under the appropriate UMB benefits policy must meet or exceed the benefits outlined in NIH NRSA policies (NOT-OD-18-154). If they do not, the postdoctoral fellow is eligible for parental and family medical leave in accordance with the NIH NRSA policies (NOT-OD-16-105).

Jury Duty:

Postdoctoral fellows are eligible for jury duty leave. Verification of service on jury duty must be provided by the postdoctoral fellow to the University upon request. Pay for jury duty will not continue beyond the end date of the postdoctoral fellow's appointment.

Military Leave:

The University provides military leave without pay for postdoctoral fellows who are called to active U.S. military service, according to applicable University military leave policy.

Taxes and Benefits:

Postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows, and research fellows are employee/trainees and are treated as employees of the University for purposes of federal and state taxation, but not for all purposes. They are subject to income tax withholding and FICA withholding unless their incomes are exempted by tax treaty, by Act of Congress applicable to a specific program, or for other reasons. In other words, they are almost never exempted from taxation.

Appointment/Termination:

Prior to their employment, each postdoctoral appointee will receive an appointment letter, signed by the dean, with copies to the ADR, faculty mentor, and AD PhD detailing the period of the appointment, compensation, and benefits. Postdoctoral fellows paid by entities other than UMSON need to comply with these appointment policies and approval processes. Copies of the applicable UMSON policies and guidelines should accompany the letter. Every effort will be made to notify a trainee at least 60 days prior to termination of their appointment.

International Postdoctoral Fellows:

In addition to all traditional rules of employment, international postdoctoral fellows will require a valid visa to enter and work in a United States academic institution. To fulfill document requirements that provide a lawful entry of international postdoctoral fellows into the United States, the faculty member hiring the postdoctoral fellow(s) will inform and work with a representative of the UMB Office of International Services to provide all information necessary for obtaining an appropriate visa. The visa(s) requested are then sent to the UMB Office of Records and Registration. They will prepare and provide the necessary documents for the postdoctoral fellow(s) to apply for a visa. For more information on international students/exchange visitors, see:

- [University Student Financial Assistance – International Students](#)¹⁸
- [UMB International Students, Scholars, and Employees](#)¹⁹

Contact the Office of International Services by email at ois-info@umaryland.edu.

The postdoctoral fellow may not begin work until all I-9 forms have been completed and/or until all required visa documents are in place.

Application for Faculty Appointment:

If a postdoctoral fellow desires to apply for a faculty position, he/she is allowed to apply through the standard faculty recruitment and appointment process. UMSON reserves the right, with the permission of the provost, to appoint an applicant identified through a national search for a faculty position as a postdoctoral fellow. Pending the productivity of the postdoctoral fellow, he/she may then be appointed as a faculty member without an additional national search.

Permission to Apply for a Grant:

If a postdoctoral fellow desires to apply for a grant, the faculty mentor, AD PhD, and the ADR must agree that the postdoctoral fellow is ready to apply for mentored or independent faculty research funding, such as an NIH R (R03, R21, or R01), NIH K (K03, K08, K99), or an independent research project grant from a foundation (e.g., AHA or ACS faculty research grant) that requires a faculty appointment as a criterion for submission.

- The fact that a postdoctoral fellow may technically meet the qualifications to apply for external funding should not be interpreted as an entitlement to apply for the grant, as UMSON resources may not be available and/or the grant may require a commitment to advancing the postdoctoral fellow to faculty status.
- If application for a grant requires a commitment to advancing the postdoctoral fellow to

¹⁸ www.umaryland.edu/fin/current-students/international-students/

¹⁹ www.umaryland.edu/ois

faculty status:

- It is the dean's discretion whether to support the postdoctoral fellow's candidacy for a faculty appointment in consultation with the UMB provost.
- The fellow's career plan and proposed faculty title (e.g., instructor, research associate) are discussed and agreed upon with the ADR and appropriate department chair, and a faculty mentoring plan is developed.
- Support must be conveyed in writing as a condition for routing and approval of the grant application by UMSON.
- In doing so, the dean/ADR stipulate the space and institutional support and duration of support, including a recommendation for a faculty appointment, if applicable to the grant submission.
- If departmental support for faculty appointment is conditional upon the outcome of the grant application process, this condition must be disclosed in writing to the postdoctoral fellow and the candidate's faculty mentor.
- Upon receipt of a Notice of Award or other advice indicating that the postdoctoral fellow's independent grant application will be awarded, and as a prerequisite to routing of the grant award by UMSON, a request for faculty appointment is routed through UMSON Human Resources for approval through standard channels.
- Each decision by UMSON regarding grant submission, award acceptance, and faculty appointment is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Post-fellowship Preparation:

- At the conclusion of the fellowship or upon separation from the UMSON, postdoctoral fellows will be permitted to take copies of data from projects they completed at UMB with them, pending all data use agreements are completed and approved. All biospecimens will be retained at UMB for the duration of the time specified in the respective protocol.
- If data produced by the postdoctoral fellow are included in publications by their faculty mentors and/or colleagues of any rank at UMB, the fellow will be invited to participate as an author in the development and dissemination of the output; likewise, postdoctoral fellows are expected to include their UMB-based collaborators on such publications, following [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors authorship guidelines](http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html)²⁰.
- The postdoctoral fellow will be entitled to use data they produced as preliminary data for future grant submissions with the acknowledgement of the contribution from other members of the research team, pending all data use agreements are completed and approved.

PROCEDURES

Procedures for this policy are covered under Responsibilities and Terms of Appointment above.

DATE AND SIGNATURE

Date: August 15, 2022



Approved by the Dean:

²⁰ <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>
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