

Research Postdoctoral Policies

Baylor College of Medicine

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Policies

1. Administration

1.1 Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

The Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is the administrative officer of the College responsible for postdoctoral administration.

1.2 Associate Dean for Office Postdoctoral Affairs

The Associate Dean (vacant) for Office Postdoctoral Affairs in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences chairs the Postdoctoral Advisory Committee (section 1.3) and is responsible for implementing policies governing postdoctoral appointments and for administering the postdoctoral career-development program.

1.3 The Postdoctoral Advisory Committee

1.3.1 Authority

The Postdoctoral Advisory Committee will consist of one faculty representative and one research postdoctoral representative appointed by the Chair of their Department or their Center Director for those Departments and Centers who have research postdoctoral appointees in their unit. This committee, by action of the Academic Council (10-15-07), is responsible for developing all policies governing research postdoctoral appointments, overseeing the career-development of postdoctoral researchers, and advising the Dean on other matters related to research postdoctoral training. Proposed changes to the policies for postdoctoral researchers must be approved by a majority vote of this committee.

1.3.2 Approval by Academic Council

Policies approved by the Postdoctoral Advisory Committee that affect stipend, terms of appointment, or benefits must also be approved by the Academic Council.

1.4 The Postdoctoral Association

The Postdoctoral Association is an affiliation of research Postdoctorals at Baylor College of Medicine. The Postdoctoral Association is administered by the Executive Committee, which is composed of the postdoctoral representatives to the Postdoctoral Advisory Committee. The Postdoctoral Association may develop their own policies and programs as long as they are consistent with the policies of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Baylor College of Medicine.

1.5 The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is an office within the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences that is responsible for implementing the appointment policies and procedures and developing programming for research postdocs.

2. Titles and Descriptions

2.1 Definition of a Research Postdoctoral

A Research Postdoctoral is a trainee who holds a graduate degree (or equivalent) and who is engaged in a limited period of full-time, advanced, mentored research to develop advanced research skills and independence that will enable them to pursue a career path of their choice.

Those advanced trainees who are participating in full-time research as a part of a Graduate Medical Education residency or fellowship will be appointed by the Office of Graduate Medical Education.

2.2 Titles

Research Postdoctorals will be appointed for a period of no more than one year with the titles Postdoctoral Fellow, Postdoctoral Associate, or Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow.

2.2.1 Postdoctoral Fellow

A Postdoctoral Fellow is a research postdoctoral who receives a stipend from a specific fellowship or traineeship to support their training at Baylor College of Medicine.

2.2.2 Postdoctoral Associate

A Postdoctoral Associate is a research postdoctoral who receives a stipend through grants or other funds that are not specifically designated fellowships or traineeships.

2.2.3 Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow

A Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow is a research postdoctoral who holds a primary appointment at another institution but is visiting Baylor College of Medicine for research training. Visiting Postdoctoral Fellows receive a stipend and benefits from their primary institution.

2.3 Appointments

2.3.1 Initial Appointment

On recommendation from a Department Chair or Center Director, appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow, Postdoctoral Associate or Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow will be made in writing by the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences for a period of up to one year. Applications for appointment are available through

the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. The appointment must be accepted and signed by the research postdoctoral.

2.3.2 Appointment Renewal

On recommendation from a Department Chair or Center Director, appointments as a Postdoctoral Fellow, Postdoctoral Associate, or Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow may be renewed for a period of up to one year in writing by the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Requests for reappointment should be made to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. The appointment must be accepted and signed by the research postdoctoral.

2.3.3 Title Changes

On the recommendation of a Department Chair or Center Director, the title of a postdoctoral trainee may be changed to another research postdoctoral title if it meets the criteria of appointment. Requests for title changes should be made to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

2.3.4 Stipend Amount

The stipend amount will be stipulated in the appointment and reappointment letters from the Dean and signed by the research postdoctoral. Effective July 1, 2015, all Postdoctoral Fellows, Postdoctoral Associates, and Visiting Postdoctoral Fellows must be appointed with a stipend of at least the minimum National Institutes of Health National Research Service Award (NRSA) stipend for zero years of experience.

2.3.5 Term limits

A non-binding recommendation for a total of 5 years appointment as a research postdoctoral (beginning with the Ph.D. or with the end of residency training for M.D. appointments) is suggested for new appointments.

3. Benefits

3.1 Core Fringe Benefits

Core Fringe Benefits established by Human Resources include basic life insurance, basic accidental death and dismemberment insurance, business travel accident insurance, long term disability insurance, holidays, and the employee assistance program

3.2 Medical Plans

Health insurance coverage is a fringe benefit available to research postdoctorals. Postdoctorals on a visa are required to participate in one of the BCM plans; however, others may elect to waive coverage. BCM contributes to the cost of the health insurance premium. The cost of the research postdoctorals contribution, for participation in one of the BCM medical plans, including dental and vision coverage is established annually by Human Resources. Family or dependent coverage is available at additional cost.

3.3 Elective Benefits

Research Postdoctorals may elect to participate in supplemental life and dependent life insurance, supplemental accidental death and dismemberment Insurance, flexible spending accounts, and to make voluntary contributions to a 403(b) tax-deferred investment plan.

3.4 Vacation

Research Postdoctorals are awarded three weeks (15 days) vacation per year on their initial appointment and annually on the anniversary of their appointment. For research postdoctoral during their first BCM appointment, vacation cannot be scheduled during the first six months. The research postdoctoral will continue to receive their stipend during vacation. Vacation does not accrue and unused vacation is lost at the end of the appointment period. For appointments or reappointments with less than a one-year term, vacation time will be prorated at rate of fifteen days per year. Vacation time should be scheduled in advance and with the permission of the mentor. Any disputes regarding the scheduling of vacation should be directed to the Associate Dean for the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and the Employee Relations area of Human Resources.

3.5 Sick Leave

On the initial appointment date or upon the date of reappointment, research postdoctorals are awarded twelve (12) days of sick leave per year. The research postdoctoral will continue to receive their stipend during sick leave. Sick leave does not accrue. Any unused portion is lost at the end of the appointment period. For appointments with less than a one-year term, sick leave will be prorated at rate of twelve days per year.

3.6 Family Leave (FMLA)

If the research postdoctoral has been appointed at BCM for at least one year, they are eligible for family leave as defined by the Family Medical Leave Act and covered by BCM Human Resources Policy 02.8.25 (Family and Medical Leave Act). Unused paid vacation and sick/personal leave may be used as a part of the leave. All leaves must be approved by Human Resources.

4. Training Program

All BCM research postdoctorals are eligible to voluntarily participate in the professional development curriculum offered to research postdoctorals.

5. Termination of Appointment

5.1 Expiration of Appointment.

Research postdoctorals should be given at least two months notice in writing if their reappointment will not be requested.

5.2 Termination for financial exigency

Research Postdoctoral appointments can be terminated for reasons of financial exigency caused by the loss of funding or other support available to the mentor.

A two month written notice should be given if the appointment is to be terminated.

5.3 Termination for non-performance

Research Postdoctorals are expected to exhibit a professional commitment to their research training and a high level of technical skills. Research Postdoctoral appointments may be terminated for non-performance of assigned duties. A two month written notice should be given that outlines the basis for non-performance if the appointment is to be terminated before its expiration date.