

Postdoctoral Employees

UNCOA-009

Effective Date: **May 1, 2017**

Supersedes: N/A

Office of Origin/Approval Authority: Office of Research/Provost

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish university policy for postdoctoral employees (postdocs). The guidelines that follow were developed with input from the Provost and Senior Vice President, Provost's Leadership Team, the Director of Human Resources, the Assistant Vice President for Research, the Research Advisory Council, and college deans. The principles for development included aspirations for fairness and equity of treatment of postdocs at UNC, and consistency of postdoctoral appointments within the university and with peer institutions of higher education.

Detailed Policy Statement

1. Postdoc Definition

Postdoctoral employees at UNC are individuals who have received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and are engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path. Teaching may not constitute more than 40% of the postdoc's duties as defined in their position description.

2. Postdoc Titles

Postdoctoral appointees may be appointed by or affiliated with a department or other academic unit. There are two categories of appointees: Postdoctoral Scholars and Postdoctoral Fellows. The difference arises from the requirements of the funding source.

- A. Postdoctoral Scholar: The UNC title of Postdoctoral Scholar applies to those who are paid salary by UNC. Their salary is usually charged to a grant or contract secured by their faculty mentor.
- B. Postdoctoral Fellow: The UNC title of Postdoctoral Fellow applies to scholars who receive financial support in the form of a fellowship or stipend from an outside agency, either directly or distributed through UNC on behalf of the sponsor.

3. Terms of Employment

Postdoctoral employees will be hired in the exempt administrative classification with all benefits afforded to that employment classification. Postdocs will be exempt from salary banding procedures due to the unique nature of postdoctoral positions across different disciplines. Postdoctoral appointments are one-year assignments which can be renewed on an annual basis up to a total of five years. Previous time in a postdoctoral position (whether paid or unpaid) at UNC or at any other university counts towards this time limitation. At the end of the five-year time limit, the postdoctoral employee must either (1) be hired through a competitive process into a non-postdoctoral position, or (2) be separated from the university with appropriate notice of at least 60 days prior to renewal date. Any exceptions must be appealed through the Office of Research to the Chief Academic Officer for an exception to the policy. Extensions will be for defined periods not to exceed one year, and only in rare cases where sufficient justification for specific project-related objectives are delineated. Postdoctoral employees are not eligible for tenure and promotion. All postdoctoral employees are subject to annual reviews and renewals by their faculty mentors using established university and college procedures.

4. **Postdoc Mentoring**

All postdoctoral employees are mentored by their faculty sponsors. The postdoctoral mentoring relationship with the faculty mentor provides the postdoc with guidance and encouragement that contributes to their professional development

Applicability

All UNC personnel with the title of Postdoctoral Scholar or Postdoctoral Fellow.

Contact Information

The Office of Research: 351-4767, research@unco.edu.

Human Resources: 351-2718.

Policy Authority

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs has authorized this policy, which is in force until specifically changed.

Related Policies/References

University Regulations: www.unco.edu/trustees

Human Resources: www.unco.edu/human-resources

Office of Research website: www.unco.edu/research

PI/Co-PI Eligibility policy: www.unco.edu/research/office-of-sponsored-programs/policies-procedures-and-forms/

Implementation Procedures

Additional procedures and guidelines for postdoc appointments will be provided by Human Resources.