

Policy for Postdoctoral Fellows Emory University School of Medicine

This document provides the policy of Emory University School of Medicine for the appointment and retention of postdoctoral fellows. For the purposes of this policy, a *Postdoctoral Fellow* in the School of Medicine is an individual holding a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree, who is appointed primarily to receive advanced research training under the guidance of a mentor holding a primary faculty appointment in the School of Medicine. Policies applicable to all postdoctoral trainees of Emory University are stated in the Emory University Postdoctoral Appointment and Retention Policy.

Eligibility for Appointment

To be eligible for appointment as a postdoctoral fellow, an individual must hold a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent degree from a recognized institution of higher learning. The fellow will provide a certified copy of a transcript, diploma, or certificate of completion documenting the degree. If degree requirements have been met but the degree is not yet conferred, trainees of *domestic institutions only* may provide official documentation of thesis approval and anticipated date of degree award from an appropriate official of the awarding institution. These documents will be reviewed by the faculty mentor, filed with the letter of appointment, and maintained by the department/center.

Letter of Appointment

Postdoctoral appointments will be made in an appointment/offer letter from the faculty mentor stating terms of the appointment. At minimum this letter will include the term of appointment, typically a renewable one year appointment; the level of financial support; information regarding potential termination of the appointment; the benefits available to the fellow, and a brief overview of the research project and other fellow responsibilities. A copy of the Policy for Postdoctoral Fellows will also be provided to the fellow. The fellow should provide written acceptance of the appointment. The letter and other appointment documents will be filed with the department/center, copies retained by the fellow, and copies forwarded to the Office of Postdoctoral Education (OPE). A progress report and goals for completion of training should be submitted annually. During the first year of training an Individual Career Development Plan should be submitted and annually a Progress Report containing goals for completion of training. Notice of non-renewal of appointment should be given in writing at least three months prior to the end of appointments with copies to the department and Office of Postdoctoral Education. Postdoc appointments are subject to termination at any time for reasonable justification, including but not limited to misconduct in violation of Emory policies, poor performance, or lack of funding to support continued employment. Notice of termination for poor performance or lack of funding should be given in writing at least three months before the effective date of termination. Termination for unacceptable conduct is subject to University guidelines and appeal mechanisms.

Term of Appointment

The *maximum* term of appointment in the School of Medicine under the title of Postdoctoral Fellow will be five years. Appeal of this term shall be addressed to the departmental chair with oversight of the Office of Postdoctoral Education and will be considered in compelling circumstances.

Level of Financial Support

The recommended *minimum* level of annual full-time financial support for postdoctoral fellows in the school of Medicine is recommended by the Faculty Advisory Committee on Postdoctoral Education and approved by the Dean and Council of Chairs. The minimum salary will depend on the number of years of Postdoctoral training. The current level is available in the Office of Postdoctoral Education and in the policy Appendix. There will be no maximum salary for each year of training but salary recommendations and approvals will follow certain guidelines. Fellows whose support level is mandated by national professional training programs are not subject to this requirement.

Benefits

Health insurance is required of all postdoctoral fellows. Single person coverage with family option is available through Emory programs as an employee benefit with University or other contribution. If the trainee elects to waive health insurance coverage through the University, he/she must certify that they have at least comparable coverage. Postdoctoral fellows are eligible for vacation, disability, and family

leave according to University or applicable granting agency guidelines. Additional institutional benefits are available and are described in the Summary of Benefits: Postdoctoral Fellows.

Postdoctoral Fellow Obligations

An outline of fellow obligations will be provided with the letter of appointment. Common obligations ordinarily include at minimum: to participate in the research project outlined in discussions with the faculty mentor and to regularly inform the mentor of the fellow's research activity; to exercise ethical standards of the profession and of the University and School of Medicine; to exhibit good laboratory practice and comply with guidelines for the use of human subjects and animals in research; to exhibit collegial conduct to his/her mentor, coworkers, and members of the University community; and to comply with University, School of Medicine, departmental, and funding agency policies and procedures. Additional obligations or training activities such as fellowship preparation or teaching should be stated. Changes in these responsibilities should be indicated in the renewal of appointment. Fellow application for training and other awards should receive prior approval by the mentor, departmental chair, and other appropriate university officials. Fellows should participate in annual review of their research and career progress with their mentor and with other designated individuals. Fellows shall also submit a completed Postdoc Information Form to the Office of Postdoctoral Education upon arrival and provide updates as required throughout his/her appointment.

Intellectual Property

University guidelines on Intellectual Property, contained in the Emory University Intellectual Property Policy, apply to all Emory personnel including postdoctoral fellows and will be made available to the fellow at the time of appointment. As stated in detail in this policy, all technology and scholarly works generated within the scope of assigned work, studies, research or scholarship, or made with use of Emory support is the property of the University, unless released by written consent of an authorized University official. This policy does not imply prohibition against publication of the fellow's research or scholarship.

Mentor Obligations

Postdoctoral research opportunities at Emory University School of Medicine are intended to foster the training of basic and clinical research scientists. Included within this goal is the concept that postdoctoral fellows, with the guidance of their mentors, will develop a scientific project that utilizes the creativity and independence of the fellow. In this spirit, the mentor will provide adequate facilities and other support and the appropriate guidance to achieve the agreed upon goals of the project. In addition, mentors should provide guidance in critical review of scientific information, grant writing, manuscript writing and preparation, presentation of scientific information, and in the art of performing research. Mentors should also advise and as possible, aid fellows in decisions regarding future employment potential and career paths. Mentor review of fellow performance and career development should be conducted at least once per year. A member(s) of the departmental senior faculty should be designated to serve as liaison with departmental postdoctoral fellows, faculty and the Office of Postdoctoral Education and its advisory committees.

Grievances

If disputes arise between postdoctoral fellow and mentor or others of the University community, resolution should first be attempted by informal processes at the departmental or center level and if unsuccessful the process should involve the Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Education. Mediation services will be available through the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. If not resolved, the grievance may be pursued through established formal grievance procedures initiated through the departmental chair or center director, as outlined in Emory University Human Resources Policies & Procedures: Procedure for Handling Complaints and Grievances Not Involving Discrimination. Resolution may be sought for matters that are not otherwise covered by grievance procedures of the University through the Office of the Dean, School of Medicine.

Complaints of discriminatory harassment are initially directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs of the University for assistance with informal resolution. If not resolved, the grievance may be brought to the Dean of the School of Medicine through the formal complaint procedure outlined in the Emory University Faculty Handbook.

Approved and effective, Council of Chairs, 5/1/2000

Revised and effective, Council of Chairs, 5/20/2002

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