

# UC Davis Policy and Procedure Manual

## Chapter 210, Instruction

### Section 65, Postdoctoral Study

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Responsible Department: Graduate Studies

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#### I. Purpose

This section includes policy and procedures regarding enrollment, privileges of appointment, and financial supplementation of postdoctoral scholars and trainees.

#### II. Definition

Postdoctoral scholar--one who:

- A. Has been awarded or who has completed the requirements for a doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., Pharm.D., D.V.M., D.P.H., D.N.S., or foreign equivalent) where at least 3 years of undergraduate study are prerequisite to admission to the graduate degree program;
- B. Has been awarded a fellowship or traineeship, or equivalent support (such as appointment in the Non-Student Postgraduate Research series) for research and training at the postdoctoral level;
- C. Will train under the direction of a (research) mentor who will provide advanced training to prepare the postdoctoral scholar for his/her subsequent career;
- D. Will have the expectation of and the opportunity for research and publication of findings as determined by mutual agreement of the postdoctoral scholar and the mentor; and
- E. Will pursue a substantially full-time program of research and training approved by a department or research unit, except by mutual agreement.

#### III. Office of Record

- A. The Office of Graduate Studies is the administrative home and office of record for postdoctoral scholars.
- B. As the office of record and administrative home, Graduate Studies will maintain current policies, procedures, and forms on a portion of its Web site dedicated to postdoctoral scholars.
- C. Graduate Council shall monitor postdoctoral affairs and shall review policies and practices annually.

#### IV. Mentoring

- A. Mentoring is recognized as an essential component of the postdoctoral training experience.
- B. A mentoring document, available on the Graduate Studies Web site (<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu>), shall be included with the offer letter.
- C. The goal of the mentoring document is to address the mentoring relationship that is expected to

exist between a postdoctoral scholar and his/her principal investigator (PI). These issues are what distinguish this relationship from that of an employer/employee relationship.

- D. An additional goal of the mentoring document is to increase dialogue and communication and reduce conflict and misunderstandings between postdoctoral scholars and PIs.
- E. This document shall be periodically reviewed by Graduate Council and updated as deemed appropriate.

## V. Policy

### A. Offer letter

1. An offer letter must be sent to the postdoctoral scholar prior to that person's acceptance of a position. The letter must be signed by the postdoctoral scholar, indicating acceptance of the offer, and returned to the PI who will forward a copy to the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. The elements of the offer letter must:
  - a. Describe the formal offer of a postdoctoral position, with a brief explanation of the research project and the postdoctoral scholar's role in it.
  - b. Include the name of the department (or equivalent unit) where the appointment is located and inform the prospective postdoctoral scholar that the Office of Graduate Studies is the office of record/administrative home for postdoctoral scholars.
  - c. Indicate the effective date of appointment, amount of compensation, source and expiration date of funding, title code, and percent time of appointment if work hours are less than 100%.
  - d. Indicate the end date of appointment (e.g., annual, with reappointment contingent on satisfactory performance).
  - e. Provide Web site information about the UC Davis Postdoctoral Scholars Association.
  - f. Provide health insurance information and requirements and a description of the other benefits provided and not provided.
  - g. Provide a statement of employment status relevant to University policies and procedures (i.e., a statement that postdoctoral scholars are classified as non-Senate academic appointees) and information regarding relevant sections of the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) regarding grievances (APM-140 and UCD-140); layoff and involuntary reduction in time (APM-145 and UCD-145), and corrective action and dismissal (APM-150).
  - h. Provide a copy of the postdoctoral mentoring document.
  - i. Briefly discuss the UC intellectual property policy and agreement, and enclose a copy of the agreement for the postdoctoral scholar's signature.
  - j. Provide work eligibility requirements for U.S. citizens and foreign nationals.

- k. Be signed by the PI or mentor.
  - l. Be signed by the department chair to assure proper preparation of the offer letter.
  - m. Request proof of doctoral degree (diploma or registrar's statement).
  - n. Request the postdoctoral scholar's signature and the return of the signed letter by given date.
3. To avoid delays in making offers, the PI needs only to send a copy of the offer letter, signed by the PI and postdoctoral scholar, to the Office of Graduate Studies. This will facilitate the tracking of postdoctoral scholars in the employment system and the monitoring of compliance with the spirit of this policy. If necessary, Graduate Studies will remind hiring units of the terms and conditions of this policy.

B. Appointment

- 1. A Postdoctoral Appointment Data Sheet must be submitted upon appointment, by the hiring unit, to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- 2. Appointment as a postdoctoral scholar is limited to a period not to exceed 5 years.
- 3. Exceptions to the 5-year limit may be granted by the Dean--Graduate Studies if the postdoctoral scholar is pursuing the same course of training or research beyond that time.
- 4. Registered students (either full-time or part-time), candidates for a degree, interns, residents, and visiting scholars who are pursuing an independent program of research may not be appointed to postdoctoral status.
- 5. No fee for appointment of postdoctoral scholars is charged.

C. Conditions of employment

- 1. Effective for appointments commencing after July 1, 2003, appointments to postdoctoral scholar titles should be made at 100% time, reflecting the level of commitment required by postdoctoral training. Appointments should be made for not less than 12 months.
- 2. Occasionally, appointments may be made at less than 100% time at the request of the postdoctoral scholar. All appointments, however, should be at least 50% time or greater and for at least 6 months, so as to ensure the postdoctoral scholar receives minimum health benefits.
- 3. Less than 100% appointments or less than 6-month appointments:
  - a. It is recognized that postdoctoral scholars may request appointments at less than 100% time or less than 6 months for various personal reasons.
  - b. Appointments at less than 100% time or appointments for less than 6 months duration must first be approved by the Dean--Graduate Studies before the postdoctoral scholar is hired. The postdoctoral scholar must initiate the process by filing a petition for exception to policy with the Office of Graduate Studies. A form is

available in the Office of Graduate Studies.

- c. The petition for exception to policy should explain the expected percentage appointment and/or the abbreviated term of appointment, and provide an explanation why the appointment is being requested.
- d. The petition for exception to policy must include a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the postdoctoral scholar and the PI outlining the expectations and responsibilities of the less than 100% appointment. The designated percentage appointment will be taken to define the time that the postdoctoral scholar will be expected to work on assigned research tasks.

D. Minimum salary

1. Effective July 1, 2003, a minimum salary will be in effect for all new postdoctoral scholar appointments. This includes appointments in all title codes used for the appointment of postdoctoral scholars. Appointments covered by this provision are those that will be based on funding received after the implementation of these policy changes, but no later than July 1, 2003. PIs are expected to respect and consult this policy when preparing applications for research or training funding that will commence after July 1, 2003.
2. For their initial appointment, the minimum salary for postdoctoral scholar appointments will be the equivalent of that earned by a Non-Student Postgraduate Researcher, Step 1, at 100% appointment. (Salary scales are available at <http://manuals.ucdavis.edu/apm/690.htm>.) Reappointments based upon funding received after July 1, 2003, must also respect the minimum salary provision.
3. Appointments made or negotiated prior to July 1, 2003, are exempt from this provision. Positions funded by grants with a start date prior to July 1, 2003, are also exempt from this provision. However, PIs are urged to review the availability of resources to increase salaries of existing postdoctoral scholar appointments to this minimum.
4. Postdoctoral scholars who are self-funded are exempt from this provision. PIs and/or sponsoring University departments are urged to review resources and provide supplementation to bring the total compensation of self-funded postdoctoral scholars to the campus minimum. (See V.I, below.)

E. Evaluations

Postdoctoral scholars shall receive yearly written evaluations from the principal investigator and/or mentor.

F. Merit

1. Merit increases must conform to the steps established in the salary scales. Merit increases may be considered after 2 years' service and should be based upon performance as reflected in the annual evaluation.
2. Quality of work performance should be the principal determinant for merit increases. For postdoctoral scholar appointments at less than 100% time, the MOU between the postdoctoral scholar and the PI must serve as the basis of expectations for performance.

G. Privileges of appointment

Upon presentation of their letter of appointment, postdoctoral scholars are entitled to:

1. Obtain a library card with research privileges.
2. Audit University courses with the consent of the instructor. No fee is charged, and no credit is given.
3. Purchase student health coverage and health insurance for dependents.
4. Purchase a Faculty Athletic Privilege Card.

H. Patent Acknowledgment

Postdoctoral scholars are required to execute a Patent Acknowledgment (Form UPAY585) at the time of their appointment unless:

1. A Patent Acknowledgment has already been signed in connection with University employment; or
2. A Patent Acknowledgment has already been signed in connection with appointment as a Public Health Service trainee.

I. Supplementation for postdoctoral scholars

1. Supplementation is defined as additional compensation that a postdoctoral scholar may earn over and above the stipend provided by a fellowship or granting agency.
2. Supplementation may be permitted provided all the following conditions are met:
  - a. It is allowed by the granting agency.
  - b. It does not detract from or prolong the completion of the scholar's or trainee's training.
  - c. Stipend does not exceed 25% of full-time salary.
3. Exceptions to the provisions in 2.b-c, above, may be granted under certain circumstances.
  - a. Examples of reasons that may be acceptable for an exception are:
    - 1) Financial hardship (supported by detailed documentation).
    - 2) Provision of a ceiling income level commensurate with the training and experience of the individual.
  - b. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing to the Dean--Graduate Studies by the faculty sponsor of the scholar or trainee. All requests must include adequate justification and documentation for the request.

J. Comprehensive health benefits

Postdoctoral scholars should receive comprehensive health benefits equivalent to that of the Non-Student Postgraduate Researcher appointed at 100% time for at least 6 months. Postdoctoral scholars that cannot be appointed as employees, as a consequence of their funding source, may either pay into the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) or purchase an independent health plan.

K. Approval authority

1. All postdoctoral appointments must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. All exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Dean--Graduate Studies.

**VI. Appointment Procedures**

Responsibility	Action
Department	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obtains informal approval of dean of college or school prior to arrival of scholar.</li> <li>2. Requests visas for foreign postdoctoral scholars prior to their arrival in the United States. (See APM Sections 530 and UCD-530.)</li> <li>3. Obtains formal approval of appropriate dean for postdoctoral scholar to be appointed in School of Veterinary Medicine or School of Medicine prior to arrival of postdoctoral scholar.</li> </ol>
PI or mentor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Sends offer letter, signed by PI/mentor and department chair, to postdoctoral scholar.</li> <li>5. Upon receipt of offer letter signed by postdoctoral scholar, sends copy to Graduate Studies.</li> </ol>
Department	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Submits Postdoctoral Appointment Data Sheet to Student Support Section, Office of Graduate Studies, within 2 weeks of postdoctoral scholar's arrival at UCD.</li> </ol>
Graduate Studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Approves and processes Postdoctoral Appointment Data Sheet; issues letter of appointment to enable appointee to obtain UCD privileges outlined in V.G, above.</li> <li>8. Reports annually the number of postdoctoral scholars enrolled at UCD to the UC Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President--Academic Affairs.</li> </ol>

**VII. Further Information**

Further information and supplies of Patent Acknowledgment and Postdoctoral Appointment Data Sheets may be obtained from the Student Support Section, Graduate Studies.

**VIII. References**

- A. Academic Senate Bylaws 180 and 330 (<http://www.ucop.edu/senate/manual/mantoc.html>).
- B. University of California Patent Policy, 9/4/97, effective 10/1/97 (<http://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/coordrev/policy/09-04-97patent.html>).
- C. Postdoctoral Education at the University of California, Report of the UC Council of Graduate Deans, Fall 1998, issued 1/6/99 ([http://www.ogsr.ucsd.edu/reports/postdoc\\_report/index.htm](http://www.ogsr.ucsd.edu/reports/postdoc_report/index.htm)).
- D. Office of Graduate Studies: Graduate Studies Handbook (<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/dean/gah.pdf>), Academic Appointment of Students and Postdoctoral Researchers.