

Effective Date: **March 1, 2016**

POLICY

ACADEMICS, RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

Postdoctoral Scholars Policy

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

Office of the University Provost

1. Purpose:

Boston University is committed to providing a supportive and productive training environment for our community of postdoctoral scholars. This Policy and accompanying Procedures (*in development*) defines the postdoctoral scholar role and guides the appointment process, creating consistency across our Schools and Colleges and Research Centers and Institutes.

2. Covered Parties:

All postdoctoral scholars at Boston University and any member of the Boston University community who sponsors postdoctoral scholarship are responsible for acting in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and the accompanying Procedures (*in development*).

3. Defined Terms:

“Postdoctoral scholar”. Postdoctoral scholars at Boston University are individuals who have fulfilled the requirements for a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and are engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and/or research independence needed to pursue their chosen career paths. Postdoctoral scholars are actively involved in research and/or teaching at Boston University, but are formally considered non-faculty research staff as part of the Academic Research Job Family.

“Years of service”. Number of years of a postdoctoral scholar’s appointment, calculated by the start date of his or her first postdoctoral position at Boston University.

“Salary”. Financial compensation for research or scholarship performed at Boston University, either paid via University funding sources (e.g. grants, departmental funds) through payroll or paid via external funding sources (e.g. training grants, foreign/private fellowships) as a stipend.

“Benefits”. Programs provided to eligible Boston University employees in addition to their wages or salary.

4. University Policy:

4.1 Categories of a postdoctoral scholar

Boston University has three appointment categories for postdoctoral scholars. Postdoctoral scholars compensated via Boston University funding sources (e.g. grants, departmental funds) are University employees and should be appointed as either postdoctoral associates or senior postdoctoral associates. The postdoctoral associate title should be given to individuals with fewer than three years of professional experience after the completion of their doctoral degree, and the senior postdoctoral associate title applies to scholars who have three years or more of professional experience postdoctorate.

Postdoctoral fellows at Boston University are scholars that are compensated but via external sources (e.g. training grants, private/foreign fellowships). These individuals are not employees, but are given non-compensated appointments at Boston University. In connection with such appointments, postdoctoral fellows are expected to adhere to all policies that govern members of the University research community.

4.2 Salary

All postdoctoral scholars will be paid at least the minimum salary set forth by Boston University. On an annual basis, the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research will communicate the salary minimum to all units sponsoring postdoctoral scholarship.

4.3 Benefits

As employees of Boston University, postdoctoral associates and senior postdoctoral associates are eligible for University--based benefits associated with their salary grade and percent time.

Postdoctoral fellows are not generally eligible for University-based benefits, as they are not compensated employees of Boston University. However, they are eligible to enroll in equivalent healthcare coverage as of July 1, 2016.

4.4 Years of service

An individual can hold postdoctoral positions at Boston University only for a period of five years, regardless of the number of unique postdoctoral appointments held within the University. However, previous postdoctoral experience at other institutions is not considered to be part of a postdoctoral scholar's years of service at Boston University.

5. Responsible Parties:

The **Vice President and Associate Provost for Research** is responsible for annually communicating the salary minimum to all units sponsoring postdoctoral scholarship and for considering any exceptions to the salary or term limit policy guidelines, as outlined in the accompanying Procedures (*in development*). Any such exceptions require written approval. Only in compelling circumstances can the five-year term limit be extended.

Human Resources, the **International Students and Scholars Office**, and **Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs** are jointly responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy and procedures by all departments, centers, and institutes that appoint non-

faculty research staff.

Faculties and administrators are responsible for ensuring that all postdoctoral appointments meet policy guidelines and that appropriate procedures are followed. Typically, this oversight will occur in the context of usual department, center, or institute processes for appointing non-faculty research staff.

6. Related Policies and References:

There are no University-wide policies that address all postdoctoral scholars specifically. However, the [Employee Handbook](#) and the [Academic Research Job Family Matrix](#) contain information related to these policies. Individual Schools and Colleges and/or Research Centers and Institutes may have guidelines related to the appointment of postdoctoral scholars that will need to be updated to ensure compliance with these policies and procedures.

7. History:

This proposal was drafted by the Research and Scholarly Activities Committee:

Co-Chairs

Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research

James Hamilton, Professor, MED

Thomas Bifano, Professor, ENG

Andrew Cohen, Professor, CAS

Matthew Fox, Associate Professor, SPH

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Sarah Hokanson, Program Director, Professional Development and Postdoctoral Affairs (ex-officio)

Robert Hudson, University Librarian

Linda Hyman, Associate Provost, Division of Graduate Medical Sciences

Ronald Killiany, Associate Professor, MED

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October 2015:

Committee convened to draft policy

December 2015:

Committee completed draft policy

END OF POLICY TEXT

Categories: Academics, Registration and Attendance, Research and Scholarly Activities,
Student Academics