

University Policy No: HR6310
Classification: Human Resources
Approving Authority: Vice-President Research and Innovation
Effective Date: December 2023
Supersedes: August 2010
Last Editorial Change:
Mandated Review: December 2030

Post-Doctoral Fellows

Associated Procedures: [Procedures for the Appointment of Post-Doctoral Fellows](#)

Purpose

1.00 The purpose of this policy is to:

- define the eligibility requirements for a Post-Doctoral Fellow appointment at the university;
- distinguish between a Post-Doctoral Fellow who is funded through a grant, contract, or internal funding mechanism which is held by either a faculty member or the University, and a Post-Doctoral Fellow who is funded through a fellowship provided by an external agency.
- establish the responsibilities of the Faculty Member as the supervisor of a Post-Doctoral Fellow;
- establish the responsibilities of the Post-Doctoral Fellow; and
- outline the responsibilities of the university and support provided by the university.

Definitions

2.00 For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Post-Doctoral Fellow (“PDF”) is a member of the university community who has completed a doctoral degree and who has been appointed by the university for a limited period of time to undertake advanced research and further academic development in association with one or more of the university’s Faculty Members.

Faculty Member means a person who holds a regular academic appointment at the University of Victoria as defined in the collective agreement with the Faculty Association, and who supervises a Post-Doctoral Fellow.

Funding Agency means a legal entity that has a legal status that is separate and distinct from the university and includes, but is not limited to, an institute, foundation, granting council, or other agency funding Post-Doctoral Fellows, directly or indirectly through a Faculty Member.

Letter of Offer means an offer of employment and appointment containing the terms and conditions, for an Internal Post-Doctoral Fellow; or an offer of appointment containing the terms and conditions for an Award Recipient Post-Doctoral Fellow.

Academic Unit means the Faculty, Department or School, or Division of a Faculty Member who is supervising a Post-Doctoral Fellow, as appropriate in the context.

Scope

- 3.00 This policy applies to all Faculty Members, PDFs, the University of Victoria, and the relationships between them.

Policy

- 4.00 Relationship Between Post-Doctoral Fellows and the University

There are two appointment categories for PDFs:

- 1) **Internal PDF:** A PDF whose salary is paid from funds held by a university Faculty Member or from the university's financial resources, or a combination of the two, will be appointed as an Internal PDF. An Internal PDF is supervised by one or more Faculty Members, is an employee of the university, and holds an appointment as a PDF at the university.
- 2) **Award Recipient PDF:** A PDF who has secured funding from a Funding Agency which is external to the university and who is paid mainly from such funding will be appointed as an Award Recipient PDF. An Award Recipient PDF is not a university employee. They are members of the university community who work independently under the mentorship of one or more supervising Faculty Members at UVic. Use of the university's facilities to manage and account for an Award Recipient PDF's funding, including processing of payroll or fellowship payments and administration of benefits, does not alter the status of an appointment as an Award Recipient PDF. Guidelines for the benefits eligibility for Award Recipient PDFs who are also paid using some amount of internal funding are provided in Procedures for the Appointment of Post-doctoral Fellows.

- 5.00 Unless otherwise specified, both Internal and Award Recipient PDFs will be referred to in this policy simply as PDFs.

Post-Doctoral Fellows Appointment Eligibility Terms and Conditions

- 6.00 The PDF will have completed a PhD prior to commencing their appointment.

- 7.00 The appointment of a PDF is normally for a term of up to three years, with the possibility of renewal for up to a further three years. All appointments are dependent on the existence of secured funding for the duration. The total term length for a PDF's appointment will not normally extend beyond six years past the date of their PhD. An exception to this requirement due to career delays of up to three years may be made by the Vice-President Research and Innovation ("VPRI"), or delegate, on application but only when such an application is made in advance and in writing. In the case where the PDF has taken a leave provided for or required by law, including a parental or disability-related leave, the exception will be granted up to a maximum of three years.

Post-Doctoral Fellow Responsibilities

- 8.00 The primary role of a PDF is to engage in research.

- 9.00 PDFs are required to comply with all regulations and policies of all Funding Agencies that are providing the PDF with funds for research support, either directly or indirectly, through a Faculty Member's research funding agreement.
- 9.01 In the case of funds held directly by the PDF, the PDF is responsible for compliance with the relevant Funding Agency requirements and may request assistance in obtaining this information from the PDF Administrator in the Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation (OVPRI).
- 9.02 At all times, both the offer and the continuation of the appointment as a PDF will be subject to the availability of sufficient funding.
- 10.00 A PDF is subject to and must comply with the policies and procedures of the university that are relevant to their appointment, including those specific to the Academic Unit in which they are appointed.
- 11.00 A PDF must meet residency requirements for study or work in Canada and notify their supervisor immediately of any and all changes to their immigration and residency status.
- 12.00 If a PDF wishes to be involved in teaching or laboratory instruction, the PDF is responsible for obtaining their Faculty Member supervisor's written agreement. Both the Faculty Member and the PDF are responsible for determining that the additional teaching activity is permitted under the terms of the PDF's funding support. The appointment of sessional lecturers, teaching assistants, and laboratory instructors is subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the appropriate collective agreement and the relevant Academic Unit policy.

Faculty Member Responsibilities

- 13.00 Faculty Members are responsible for recruiting and onboarding PDFs.
- 14.00 Before making an offer of employment or appointment to a PDF, the Faculty Member must demonstrate to the university that there is sufficient funding to pay the salary, and, for Internal PDFs, the mandatory employment-related costs (employer's portion of CPP, EI, etc), and the employer's portion of extended health and dental benefits, and that the space and facilities required for the PDF's research will be available. Signed approval must be obtained from the relevant Academic Unit head, and the person responsible for allocating space in the Academic Unit (e.g., the relevant Dean or Centre Director, or the Vice-President Research and Innovation). The [Procedures for the Appointment of Post-Doctoral Fellows](#) contain additional information on this process and a link to the appropriate form.
- 15.00 Faculty Members must use a Letter of Offer Template that is available from the Office of Research Services when appointing PDFs. The Letter of Offer serves as the agreement between the Faculty Member, the university, and the PDF. The [Procedures for the Appointment of Post-Doctoral Fellows](#) contain the terms and conditions that must be in the Letter of Offer, including those that pertain to immigration requirements if the PDF is not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.

- 16.00 Faculty Members are responsible for ensuring that PDFs are made aware of the policies and other governing documents of the university applicable to PDFs including, but not limited to, the documents listed under the [Related Policies and Documents](#) section of this policy.
- 17.00 In the case of funds held by the Faculty Member, the Faculty Member providing the funds is responsible for providing the PDF with the Funding Agency's information on regulations, policies, and reporting.
- 18.00 The Faculty Member will act as a mentor and support the PDF's professional development towards achieving a career as an independent researcher. Faculty Members are encouraged to support PDFs who wish to gain experience in teaching courses and/or laboratory supervision.
- 19.00 Faculty Members and PDFs are subject to the university [Policy on Intellectual Property \(GV0125\)](#). To the extent that a PDF participates in the development of intellectual property while working under the supervision of a Faculty Member, the intellectual property rights of a PDF under the policy are subject to the conditions stated in the Letter of Offer and any additional written agreement.
- 20.00 Faculty Members, PDFs, and other researchers are expected to provide appropriate acknowledgement and recognition to contributions to research made by each other in publications and public presentations as outlined in the applicable [Scholarly Integrity Policy \(AC1105A\)](#) and [AC1105B](#)).

University Serving as Paymaster

- 21.00 Where an Award Recipient PDF is appointed by a Faculty Member, the university will act as the paymaster on behalf of the Faculty Member. The payment of an award to a PDF will be in accordance with instructions given by the Faculty Member.

Dispute Resolution

- 22.00 The Faculty Member and PDF will engage in mentor/mentee relations with the intention of both advancing research and promoting the career development of the PDF.
- 23.00 If a dispute arises with regards to the terms and conditions of the employment, appointment of the PDF, or the mentor/mentee relationship, such matters must be dealt with by the relevant parties in the first instance, namely, the Faculty Member and the PDF. Refer to the *Procedures for the Appointment of Post-Doctoral Fellows* for the dispute resolution process.

Authorities and Officers

- i) Approving Authority: Vice-President Research and Innovation
- ii) Designated Executive Officer: Vice-President Research and Innovation
- iii) Procedural Authority: Vice-President Research and Innovation
- iv) Procedural Officer: Associate Vice-President Research

Relevant Legislation

- [University Act](#)

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- [Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality GV0210](#)
- [External Research Funding Agreements RH8200](#) and associated procedures
- [Intellectual Property GV0125](#)
- [Protection of Privacy GV0235](#)
- [Procedures for the Management of Personal Information](#) (see [Protection of Privacy GV0235](#))
- [Research Policy RH8100](#)
- [Acceptable Use of Electronic Information Resources IM7200](#)
- [Policy on Scholarly Integrity AC1105A](#) and [AC1105B](#)

Procedures for the Appointment of Post-Doctoral Fellows

Procedural Authority: Vice-President Research and Innovation

Procedural Officer: Associate Vice-President Research

Parent Policy: Post-Doctoral Fellows (HR6310)

Effective Date: December 1, 2023

Supersedes: August 2010

Last Editorial Change:

Purpose

- 1.00 The purpose of these procedures is to set out the appropriate processes for appointing and supervising Post-Doctoral Fellows (PDFs) and the administration of Post-Doctoral Fellow appointments.

Definitions

- 2.00 The definitions contained within the *Post-Doctoral Fellows* policy (HR6310) apply to these procedures.

Scope

- 3.00 These procedures apply to the employment and appointment relationship between PDFs, Faculty Members, and the university.

Procedures

- 4.00 The Post-Doctoral Fellow (PDF) Administrator in OVPRI will facilitate the appointment of PDFs at the university and serve as the point of contact for PDFs and their supervisors on issues of PDF appointment or employment, university research policy and relationships with funding and other external agencies. Academic Units and the offices of the Deans of Faculties also have responsibilities under the policy and these procedures for the registration and administration of PDFs at the University.

Recruitment and Appointment of Post-Doctoral Fellows

- 5.00 Faculty Members are responsible for recruiting PDFs. Any postings or advertisements should contain language that clearly identifies the appointment category — Internal PDF or Award Recipient PDF.
- 6.00 Postings or advertisements seeking candidates for PDF positions must be in compliance with the [Employment Equity Policy \(HR6100\)](#).
- 7.00 Before providing a Letter of Offer to a PDF, the Faculty Member must complete the *PDF Confirmation of Space and Facilities form* to demonstrate to the university that there is sufficient funding, and that the space and facilities required for the PDF's research will be available. Signatures are required from the relevant Academic Unit head and the person responsible for allocating space in the department, school, Faculty, or centre (i.e. the relevant Chair, Dean, or Centre Director, or the Vice-President Research and Innovation or designate).

8.00 Faculty Members must provide Letters of Offer to PDFs as part of the appointment process. The Letter of Offer contains the terms and conditions of a PDF's appointment (including items 10.00–30.00) and serves as the agreement between the Faculty Member and the PDF. Letter of Offer templates must be used by Faculty Members and are available from the OVPRI website. Prior to the offer being issued to the PDF, Letters of Offer must be reviewed and approved by the PDF Administrator who will also facilitate review by the Immigration Coordinator for international PDFs. The PDF must indicate acceptance of the Letter of Offer by returning a signed copy.

9.00 To appoint the PDF, the Faculty Member must complete the *PDF Appointment form*, obtain the required approvals, and submit to payroll using the process specified on the form. The Faculty Member must also send the signed *Letter of Offer*, the *PDF Confirmation of Space and Facilities form*, and a copy of the *PDF Appointment form* to the PDF Administrator.

Relocation Assistance

10.00 At the time of appointment, relocation assistance or travel assistance may be provided from external funding by the grant-holder to eligible new PDFs to assist with the cost of their relocation. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Member to ensure that their external funding agency deems relocation assistance as an eligible expense. While the [Relocation Assistance Policy \(HR6405\)](#) only applies to relocation assistance provided from university funds to certain other categories of UVic employees, its guidelines on eligibility of expenses and maximum eligible amounts are invoked here to provide consistency for relocation assistance across the institution.

11.00 Relocation assistance in the form of a lump sum or reimbursement for eligible PDFs will be documented in the Letter of Offer and offered in accordance with the [Relocation Assistance Procedures](#) attached to policy HR6405, and subject to the following categories of eligibility:

- (a) PDFs relocating from within Canada: relocation assistance may, in the discretion of the administrative authority, be paid either in the form of a lump sum, or reimbursement upon submission of receipts; and
- (b) PDFs relocating from outside Canada: relocation expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of receipts.

12.00 All forms of relocation assistance are intended to assist with the PDF's move, and are not intended to cover all expenses that may be incurred.

13.00 Relocation assistance is subject to the limits set out in the Relocation Assistance Procedures attached to policy HR6405. Eligible and ineligible relocation expenses are outlined in these procedures.

14.00 Exceptions to eligibility or the relocation assistance maximums may be considered by the Associate Vice-President Research on a case-by-case basis.

15.00 All forms of relocation assistance are subject to the income tax laws of Canada.

Benefits

16.00 Internal PDFs with appointments of at least 35 hours biweekly (0.5 FTE) and with a duration of at least one year are eligible at the time of appointment to enroll in the Medical and Extended Health Benefits Plan and Dental Plan effective from the first of the month following appointment. PDFs will enroll in benefits plans as indicated below by using the University benefit enrolment procedures and will be responsible for the employee's portion of the cost-shared benefits plans. PDFs who choose to enroll are required to stay in these Plans until the end of their term or contiguous terms.

17.00 In all cases involving an Internal PDF, the Faculty Member's funding source will be required to fund the employer's portion of mandatory employment-related costs (CPP, EI, etc) and the above-noted extended health and dental benefit plans.

18.00 Award Recipient PDFs typically have a full-time appointment through their Award. Those with additional UVic appointments of ≥ 0.5 FTE will be eligible for enrolment in the university-sponsored Extended Health Plan and Dental Plan on the basis of their additional UVic appointment(s) where applicable, and with the cost of benefits borne by their additional UVic appointment(s). Those who have additional UVic appointments of < 0.5 FTE will be eligible for enrolment in the university-sponsored Extended Health Plan and Dental Plan on the same basis as an Internal PDF if:

- (a) their Award Recipient PDF appointment is at least 35 hours biweekly (0.5 FTE);
- (b) the duration of their Award Recipient PDF appointment(s) at the University is a minimum of one year;
- (c) their compensation from an external funding agency is wholly or partially paid through the UVic payroll system;
- (d) the Award Recipient elects at the beginning of their PDF appointment to opt-in to benefits while using their own Award-derived compensation administered through the UVic payroll system to cover the full cost of the benefit plans; and
- (e) the payment of such benefits is deemed eligible by the relevant external funding agency.

Leaves and Vacations

19.00 The number of days of vacation entitlement must be specified in the Letter of Offer and be consistent with the regulations governing the source of funding and, in the case of Internal PDFs, meet the minimums established in the [BC Employment Standards Act](#). At appropriate intervals, the Faculty Member and the PDF must discuss the timing of and arrangements for use of the PDF's vacation entitlement. The Faculty Member is responsible for ensuring that a PDF's vacation entitlement is used in a timely manner.

20.00 Internal PDFs are eligible for up to ten (10) days of sick leave with pay in each calendar year of their appointment. This benefit is pro-rated for partial years of service or part-time employment. Faculty Members can choose to provide longer paid sick leaves as long as such use of funds complies with the funder's guidelines.

Self-identifying Indigenous Internal PDFs are eligible for a leave of absence without loss of pay of up to two (2) days per calendar year, to attend an Indigenous ceremonial gathering or cultural activity. The PDF will apply for the leave in writing to the supervisor or designate, and the leave request will not be unreasonably denied.

- 21.00 An Internal PDF requiring Bereavement leave will, on request, be granted a leave of absence without loss of pay for up to five (5) days in the case of death of a close family member or individual permanently residing in the employee's household. For self-identifying Indigenous Internal PDFs, this leave will also be granted for the passing of an Elder close to them and/or their community, as well as any individual the PDF considers a close family member consistent with the cultural norms of their community (e.g. aunt or uncle).
- 22.00 All other forms of leave for Internal PDFs are available as determined by the [BC Employment Standards Act](#), and in the case of leaves that are specified as paid leave (e.g. sick leave) the salaries must be paid using the Faculty Member's source of funding.
- 23.00 Maternity/parental/adoption leave salary for Internal PDFs: Internal PDFs will be contributing to Employment Insurance (EI), and as such are entitled to such partial salary support during maternity/parental/adoption leave as is available directly from EI. In cases where the grant holder's Funding Agency provides supplemental funds for a PDF's maternity/parental/adoption leave salary (e.g. Tri-Agency operating grants), that supplemental funding shall constitute the salary top-up to the PDF. In cases where such supplemental funding is available from the Funding Agency in amounts less than 95% of the PDF's salary, salary top-ups to 95% of an Internal PDF's salary will be paid according to the guidelines, eligibility, and duration described for UVic PEA employees. Funding for such PDF salary top-ups will be provided by UVic central administration and not by Faculty Members.
- 24.00 Maternity/parental/adoption leave for Award Recipient PDFs: Funding for paid maternity/parental/adoption leaves for Award Recipient PDFs will not be provided by UVic sources. It is normally available directly from the award's Funding Agency, as is true (for example) for holders of Post-Doctoral Fellowships from Canada's Tri-Agencies and the Banting Post-Doctoral Fellowships program.

Intellectual Property

- 25.00 Any restrictions on the ownership of intellectual property developed by the PDF while at the university must be specified, failing which the University's policy on [Intellectual Property \(GV0125\)](#) will apply.

Termination of Employment or Appointment for Just Cause

- 26.00 The employment of an Internal PDF or appointment of an Award Recipient PDF may be terminated for just cause (in accordance with applicable employment law) at any time and without notice. Just cause may include, but is not limited to, non-performance and violation of university policies and procedures.

Termination of Employment due to Insufficient Funds

- 27.00 Where the terms of employment of an Internal PDF include an option to renew, and where the Faculty Member has insufficient funds to renew the employment of the PDF, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Member to terminate the employment of the PDF by providing at least three months' written notice, or pay in lieu of notice, to the PDF. The Faculty Member is responsible for any financial costs related to termination.
- 28.00 During their appointment period, PDFs are eligible to:
- (a) hold university identity cards that provide access to library facilities;
 - (b) be granted information systems access as necessary to their work;
 - (c) access programs offered by Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation;
 - (d) apply for and, upon payment of the required fees, use university athletic facilities on campus;
 - (e) receive career advice and job placement services offered by Career Services.
- 29.00 Before a PDF commences their appointment at the university, the Faculty Member must obtain documented proof of the PDF having completed their PhD, and that the PhD was completed within the five-year period immediately prior to the start of the appointment. Extensions of this five-year period for leaves are as described in the Policy.
- 30.00 Faculty Members are required to comply with Canadian immigration requirements where a PDF is neither a Canadian citizen nor a permanent resident of Canada. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Member to provide a PDF with a confirmation letter (in most cases the Letter of Offer) that will establish the relationship between the PDF and the Faculty Member and enable the PDF to obtain the required federal immigration and employment permits and visas. The Immigration Coordinator and PDF Administrator will facilitate these processes. If further assistance is required with immigration requirements, the Faculty Member should seek guidance from the federal agency responsible for immigration and citizenship.
- 31.00 Academic Units shall act as the primary point of contact between the PDF and the university. The Academic Unit shall make reasonable effort to include PDFs in the orientation and information sessions that are normally made available to new faculty and staff. The Faculty Member is responsible for ensuring that the PDF has received the training from [Occupational Health and Safety](#) that is relevant to their research.
- #### Violation of University Policies and Procedures
- 32.00 An allegation of a violation of a university policy by either the PDF or supervising Faculty Member should be made as indicated within the relevant policy or procedure and will be addressed according to the relevant university policies and procedures.
- #### Dispute Resolution Procedures
- 33.00 If a dispute arises with regards to the terms and conditions of the employment, appointment of the PDF, or the mentor/mentee relationship, such matters must be dealt with by the relevant parties in the first instance, namely, the Faculty Member and the PDF.

It is the responsibility of the Faculty Member to ascertain whether a resolution of the dispute can be accomplished as soon as possible following the identification of the dispute.

34.00 If the Faculty Member acting as supervisor and PDF are unable to resolve the dispute the following dispute resolution process should be used:

- (a) The unresolved dispute should be brought to the attention of the head of the Academic Unit who will assist with dispute resolution (if the head of the Academic Unit is not the supervisor).
- (b) Where the dispute is not resolved at the Academic Unit level, it may be submitted to the Dean (if the Dean is not the supervisor or the head of the Academic Unit).
- (c) Where the dispute is not resolved by the Dean, it may be submitted to the PDF Administrator in the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation, who will engage in a dispute resolution process that includes the opportunity for written submissions from each party and/or mediated discussions between the parties.
- (d) Where the dispute is not resolved by the PDF Administrator-mediated process, the Vice-President Research and Innovation may act to resolve the problem, including the delegation of this authority to an Associate Vice-President Research.
- (e) The decision of the Vice-President Research and Innovation is final within the university.