

Postdoctoral Training Policy

Department of Behavioral Neuroscience Policy on Postdoctoral Research Training

[Approved 03/02/2009]

A. Purpose

This document outlines policies and procedures related to the appointment and training of Postdoctoral Appointees in the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience. These policies and procedures are intended to incorporate and expand upon School of Medicine and OHSU policies related to postdoctoral appointments. They are also intended to complement and be consistent with NIH Grant Policy on individual and institutional National Research Service Awards (NRSAs).

B. Coverage

These provisions apply to all individuals holding postdoctoral research training appointments administered through the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience. These individuals will normally hold the title "Postdoctoral Fellow", "Postdoctoral Trainee", or "Postdoctoral Researcher", and the conditions of their position must meet the definition of a postdoctoral appointment described below (see Section C). The exact source of stipend funding (e.g., NRSA award, faculty research grant or contract, foundation grant) does not matter, only whether the funds are administered through the department. This policy does not apply to a postdoctoral appointment whose primary purpose is clinical training.

This policy also applies to all Faculty Mentors of Postdoctoral Appointees covered by the policy, regardless of where they hold their primary faculty appointment.

C. Definition of a Postdoctoral Appointment

In general, postdoctoral research appointments are to be considered temporary training positions with a primary purpose of providing additional research or scholarly training for an academic or research career. Postdoctoral appointments must meet the following conditions:

(a) The appointee was awarded a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent doctorate degree (e.g., Sc.D.) in an appropriate field less than 5 years from the time of initial appointment in the department.

(b) The overall duration of the appointment must be limited in a manner consistent with the definition of postdoctoral appointments as temporary. Under this policy, the upper limit for appointment to a postdoctoral position is 6 years, regardless of whether that training has occurred at OHSU or elsewhere.

(c) The appointment involves substantially full-time research or scholarship (100% effort) under the supervision of a mentor with a faculty appointment at OHSU.

(d) The appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic and/or research career.

(e) The postdoctoral appointee has the freedom, and is expected, to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of appointment.

(f) Exceptions to the above time limits or other provisions of this definition will be made only in extenuating circumstances after review and approval by the Postdoctoral Training Committee, the Postdoctoral Training Coordinator and the Department Chair. Such exceptions may require additional approvals specific to the funding source (e.g., training grant director, granting agency). The total duration of postdoctoral appointments at OHSU may not exceed 5 years without approval from the VP for Research.

OHSU distinguishes between two classes of postdoctoral appointees based on source of funding. Postdoctoral Researchers receive a salary from their mentor's research funding, are employees of OHSU, and are considered "at-will" and thus do not receive annual contracts. Postdoctoral Trainees receive a stipend funded from a training grant or individual external fellowship, are not OHSU employees, and are generally given appointments of one year, reviewed annually for reappointment.

D. Responsibilities of Postdoctoral Appointees

Postdoctoral Appointees are expected to engage in research and scholarly activity that has been jointly planned with the Faculty Mentor. The Appointee is expected to communicate regularly with the Faculty Mentor concerning the results of the research and to discuss with the Faculty Mentor any proposed change in the research plan. Postdoctoral Appointees should maintain adequate research records and should discuss with their mentor disclosure of findings or techniques privately or in publication as well as distribution of research materials, reagents or records. Postdoctoral Appointees are expected to conform with ethical standards of research and to observe institutional policies and guidelines regarding expenditure of research funds and the use

of radioisotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, animals, and human subjects. Postdoctoral Appointees should show cooperation, responsibility, and respect in working with other members of the university community and respect the cultural and individual diversity of their colleagues. All Postdoctoral Appointees must take the course CON 650: *The Practice and Ethics of Science* during the first fall term after their initial appointment date. Postdoctoral Appointees in their 2nd year or beyond must complete the continuing training in ethics seminar administered through the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience. All Postdoctoral Appointees are also expected to present the results of their research annually in the departmental seminar series. Additional responsibilities may be specified by the Appointee's training program or the granting agency.

Postdoctoral Appointees are expected to devote full-time effort to research and research-related training activities during the period of their appointment. Nevertheless, the department recognizes that teaching may be an important part of an Appointee's future career goals and encourages participation in activities that may enhance teaching skills (e.g., guest lectures and classroom/laboratory demonstrations). However, Appointees should consult with their Mentor (and Training Grant Director if applicable) before making a major commitment to outside teaching or outreach activities (e.g., teaching one full course or more). Decisions to participate in such activities must always be tempered by the need to devote a major portion of effort toward achieving excellence in research and the goals of the research training program.

E. Responsibilities of Faculty Mentors

The Faculty Mentor is generally expected to provide intellectual and financial support for the research training of the Postdoctoral Appointee. The Mentor works with the Appointee to develop a research plan and goals for the training period. The Mentor approves the research plan and ensures that adequate research supplies and laboratory space are available to conduct the research. The Mentor is expected to encourage and facilitate presentation of the Appointee's research findings in peer-reviewed journals and at national scientific meetings. The Mentor provides ongoing advice concerning the research plan as well as career development guidance. The Mentor must also provide an annual written performance evaluation to the Appointee and to the Postdoctoral Training Committee (see section F).

F. Responsibilities of the Department

In addition to administrative support for appointment of Postdoctoral Appointees, the department provides oversight of postdoctoral training within the department, including a process for annual review of research progress and career development. The primary mechanism for providing this oversight is through the activities of the Postdoctoral

Training Coordinator and the Postdoctoral Training Committee, which are described below.

F.1. Postdoctoral Training Coordinator

The Department Chair shall appoint a senior faculty member holding an appointment in Behavioral Neuroscience as the department's Postdoctoral Training Coordinator. This individual should have experience as a mentor at the postdoctoral level and, ideally, previous experience administering a postdoctoral training program (e.g., as the current or previous director or associate director of a postdoctoral training grant). This individual is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the department's postdoctoral research training activities, and for convening and chairing meetings of the Postdoctoral Training Committee. This individual is expected to work closely with the directors of the department's training grants to minimize duplication of effort and to enhance the overall training experience for Postdoctoral Appointees. The term of appointment shall be 3 years and may be renewed at the Chair's discretion.

F.2. Postdoctoral Training Committee

This Committee shall consist of the Postdoctoral Training Coordinator (who will serve as the Committee's Chair) and four other faculty members appointed by the Department Chair. These appointments should be such that committee includes either the director or associate director from each institutional training grant administered by the department. The primary responsibilities of this committee are to conduct the annual reviews of postdoctoral appointees (see Section G) and to assist in the overall coordination of the department's postdoctoral training activities. As noted earlier, this committee will also provide advice and make recommendations to the Department Chair related to implementation of the postdoctoral training policy. The term of appointment shall be 3 years and may be renewed at the Chair's discretion.

G. Letter of Appointment

Offers of postdoctoral appointments must be made in a letter written to the candidate prior to starting date of the appointment. This letter must include dates of appointment, the stipend level and benefits, the source of funds for salary or stipend, and contingency funding, if any. The letter must indicate that the appointment is subject to all applicable university policies, and should be accompanied by a copy of this document outlining departmental policies. Any additional information related to conditions of the appointment must also accompany the letter (e.g., NRSA Payback Agreement, contingencies related to future availability of stipend or research funds). The letter must be signed by the Faculty Mentor (or Training Grant Director in the case of training grant appointments) and co-signed by the Department Chair. The candidate for the Postdoctoral position must countersign the letter to indicate acceptance of the conditions of the appointment. A copy of the countersigned offer letter must accompany the appointment forms and will be kept in the Department's files.

Initial appointments for Postdoctoral Trainees will be for 12 months, renewable for additional 12-month periods subject to the availability of funds and other provisions of this policy. However, the total time of appointment as a postdoctoral appointee at OHSU and other institutions shall not exceed 6 years. Exceptions to the 6-year limit will be made only in extenuating circumstances after review and approval by the department's Postdoctoral Training Committee, the Postdoctoral Training Coordinator and the Department Chair (and Training Grant Director if applicable). If an appointment is not to be renewed, a notice of termination should be given at least 2 months prior to the end of appointment. The total duration of postdoctoral appointments at OHSU may not exceed 5 years without approval from the VP for Research.

Reappointment of Postdoctoral Trainees must be accompanied by a letter of reappointment that briefly reviews the Trainee's progress in research and career development, and that is signed by the faculty mentor and department chair.

H. Annual Review

All Postdoctoral Appointees who wish to be reappointed shall submit a written progress report to the Postdoctoral Training Coordinator 3 months prior to the anniversary date of their appointment. The progress report should summarize training-related activities, including research projects, courses, meetings/presentations, and publications. The progress report should also outline plans for the coming year if the reappointment is approved. The exact format of the report will be specified by the Postdoctoral Training Committee. The mentor shall also provide a written report to the Appointee and to the Postdoctoral Training Committee in which the Appointee's performance is evaluated and career development plans and goals for the period of reappointment are described. The Postdoctoral Training Committee will make a recommendation to the Department Chair (and to the Training Grant Director, if applicable) regarding reappointment in a timely manner so that reappointment can be approved or disapproved by the Chair at least 2 months prior to the end of appointment.

I. Compensation and Benefits

In general, because they occupy training positions, postdoctoral appointees are considered to fall into the "student" category rather than the "employee" category with respect to compensation and benefits.

I.1. Stipend

The minimum stipend for Postdoctoral appointments is the NIH NRSA stipend level in effect on the starting date of the appointment. Payment of stipends at higher rates (or supplementation of stipends) is subject to policies of the funding source (e.g., NIH Grant

Policy) and must be approved by the Department Chair (and Training Grant Director if applicable).

I.2. Health Care

Postdoctoral Appointees and their families shall have access to a comprehensive health care plan consistent with coverage provided to other individuals in similar training positions at OHSU. The basic costs for access to the health care plan will be covered by the individual or institutional training grant or from the Mentor 's research funds.

1) Beginning January 1, 2008, postdoctoral appointees will participate in the same benefit plan made available to Unclassified Employees at the University. The University will contribute benefit dollars to help offset the costs of health insurance and dental insurance. Postdoctoral appointees will receive a University contribution towards their benefits in line with the monthly contribution for Unclassified University Employees.

(2) In addition to the University's contribution, the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience will contribute Departmental funds to help cover benefit costs for Postdoctoral appointees with dependents.

(i) Postdoctoral appointees requesting a Departmental contribution towards their benefits must demonstrate that they cannot obtain similar health and dental coverage through a spouse.

(ii) The Department will contribute the amount equal to the difference between the University contribution for Unclassified Employees and the total necessary to obtain coverage for the Postdoctoral appointee and dependents through the lowest-cost medical and dental plans available to OHSU employees.

(iii) Postdoctoral appointees may elect to enroll in more costly health and dental options, but the Department's contribution will be capped at that amount necessary for them to obtain coverage through the lowest-cost plans. Any additional premiums will be paid by the Postdoctoral appointee.

(3) Postdoctoral Researchers (appointees paid by the University as employees, not via training grant or fellowship stipend) are also eligible to enroll, at their own expense, in other programs available to Unclassified Employees (short and long-term disability insurance, dependent care spending accounts, etc), and may contribute to the University Voluntary Savings Program (403.b.)

I.3. Retirement benefits

Because these are temporary training positions, postdoctoral appointees are not eligible for retirement benefits.

I.4. Holidays, Vacation and Leaves

Appointees receive the same paid holidays as OHSU faculty employees. In addition, Appointees may take up to 10 paid vacation days per appointment year (start date to end date). Scheduling of vacation days must be approved by the Faculty Mentor. Appointees and Mentors are expected to be both reasonable and flexible in making decisions about the student's commitment of time to laboratory work as well as other training-related activities when scheduling vacations. The time period between academic terms is considered to be active part of the training period. Unused vacation days may be carried over from one appointment period to the next. However, Appointees will not receive payment for unused vacation days when their appointments end.

Appointees may take up to 12 days of paid sick leave per appointment year. Sick leave accrues at the rate of 1 sick day per month. Additional sick leave is without pay. Whenever the number of days of sick leave in an appointment year exceeds 12, the Appointee must provide written notification to the Mentor and Training Program Coordinator (and Training Grant Director if applicable) and consideration must be given to whether the Appointee is able to maintain his/her training responsibilities. If it appears that continued leave will interfere with satisfactory completion of the training program, the Appointee may be terminated from the program. A period of terminal leave is not permitted, and payment will not be made for sick leave that is not taken.

Postdoctoral Appointees may take pregnancy, parental or family leave as these terms are defined by the OHSU Administrative Policy Manual. Up to 12 days of such leave may be taken each academic year as paid sick days in accord with the sick leave policy described above. Any additional leave is without pay, unless allowed by the granting agency or funding source. Postdoctoral appointees are entitled to take up to 12 consecutive calendar weeks of pregnancy, parental, or family leave per academic year. Individuals intending to take such leave must provide advance written notice of their intent to the Mentor and Training Program Coordinator (and Training Grant Director if applicable). Extended leave for Trainees is subject to final approval by the granting agency. Postdoctoral Appointees who return from pregnancy, parental, or family leave within 12 weeks will be reinstated at the same stipend level in effect when the leave began.

There may be additional restrictions or requirements for Trainees who receive stipend support from individual or institutional traineeship or fellowship awards from NIH or other sources. Students should consult their training program director and the awarding agency for additional information.

I.5. Travel and Research Expenses

The department does not specify amounts of funding for travel to scientific meetings or research expenses of Postdoctoral Appointees. However, it is expected that some funding will be provided annually for both purposes from the individual or institutional training grant, or from the Mentor 's research funds. The department and training programs do not provide funds for moving expenses.

J. Postdoctoral Representation at Faculty Meetings

In order to facilitate communication between department faculty and Postdoctoral Appointees, the Department Chair shall designate one Appointee to serve as a representative at the monthly departmental faculty meetings. The term of appointment shall be 6-12 months and may be renewed at the Chair's discretion.

K. Grievances

Postdoctoral Appointees have the right to grieve matters related, but not restricted, to the following areas: rights of authorship on scientific publications, appointee-mentor relationships, laboratory safety concerns, and discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. If the grievance involves discrimination, it will be referred to the OHSU Office of AffirmativeAction/Equal Opportunity.

K. 1. Informal Procedure

Postdoctoral Appointees who wish to grieve a matter are encouraged to first discuss the problem with the individual(s) directly involved in the issue and see whether the matter can be resolved informally. Appointees who do not feel comfortable doing so, or otherwise choose not to, should discuss the potential grievance with the Training Program Coordinator, a Training Grant Director or Associate Director, any member of the Training Review Committee or the Department Chair. Whichever individual is initially approached will meet with the grievant and/or the person or persons complained against and try to reach an informal resolution of the matter.

K.2. Formal Procedure

If the parties are unable to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction through the informal resolution process, the grievant may file a written grievance with the Dean of the School of Medicine in accord with the School's grievance procedures.

K.3. Appeal Procedure

The grievant may appeal the final decision of the School of Medicine Dean to the University Provost according to procedures described in the OHSU Policy Manual. As specified by OHSU Policy, the decision of the Provost is final.

Addendum to Behavioral Neuroscience Postdoctoral Research Training Policy

Additional Expectations for NIDA/NIAAA training grant-supported postdoctoral trainees

NIDA/NIAAA training grant-supported postdoctoral trainees are expected to participate in several activities as part of the training program, in addition to the responsibilities specified by the departmental postdoctoral research training policy. Postdoctoral appointees supported by other sources are also invited to participate in these training program activities, although their participation is optional.

Journal club : Trainees are expected to attend monthly and to lead journal club once each academic year. Most trainees will be asked to serve as a co-organizer of the journal club (along with one other trainee) for one year.

Annual retreat : Trainees are expected to attend and present their work in the format requested by the retreat organizer (e.g., poster, datablitz).

Seminars : Trainees are expected to attend the seminars sponsored by the department and/or the NIDA/NIAAA training program.

Six-month review : Approximately 6 months after the initial appointment, short progress reports will be requested from the trainee and mentor, after which the trainee will meet briefly with the DART committee. The goal of the 6-month review is to verify that we have a good match between trainee and mentor and to maximize the likelihood of this being a successful training experience. The 6-month review will take place only in the first year of appointment to the training program, and is in addition to the annual review.

Other activities that are optional for all departmental postdoctoral appointees:

Monday morning seminar : Faculty and postdocs make short presentations, usually of work planned or in progress, every other Monday during the fall, winter, and spring terms in Room 433/101 at the VAMC. All are invited to attend and to get on the schedule to make a presentation. Contact John Crabbe to get on the email list.

Issues in Behavioral Neuroscience : Weekly seminar class led by students, Wednesday in MRB 735. Contact BEHN Office Staff to get on the email list.