

Postdoctoral Policy

Postdoc Definition and Duration of Training Period

In accordance with NIH and NSF definition of a postdoctoral scholar, the titles of Postdoctoral Fellow, Postdoctoral Training Fellow or Postdoctoral NIH NRSA Training Fellow (herein generically referred to "Postdoctoral Fellow") apply to "an individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path."

Postdoctoral eligibility is contingent upon evidence of a doctoral degree, and the title is reserved for individuals who are generally within three years of receiving their qualifying degree. It is the obligation of the School, and the department to provide training and mentoring. Postdocs are considered "academic support staff" and, as such, are not covered by some of the policies for other staff, students, and faculty.

The School views that postdoctoral fellows will:

- primarily conduct basic science research in a laboratory
- participate in advanced scientific training programs under the mentorship and supervision of a faculty member who is typically a Principal Investigator.
- pursue testing of hypotheses by developing experimental designs, managing and processing data and interpreting and preparing the results.
- "be trained" at NYU School of Medicine for the principal purpose of engaging in full-time academic research to further her/his personal development. The position is meant to provide additional research and scholarly training in preparation for a position in academia, industry, or government.

The position title can only be held for up to a maximum total of five years - including postdoctoral positions held at other institutions. Appointments are renewable on a yearly basis, based on continued satisfactory performance and research progress as defined by the Principal investigator, unless otherwise specified. An extension of the postdoctoral position for a sixth year is possible upon approval by the Senior Associate Dean of Graduate Biomedical Sciences. Individuals are not considered Post Doc fellows or Post Doc Training fellows if they are five or more years past their qualifying degree unless they are changing into a different professional career path. If a Post Doc with an M.D. has had previous research experience, a determination will need to be made as to how much of the 5 year limitation applies.

Individuals Who May Not Be Appointed in a Postdoc Title

The following individuals may not be appointed using a postdoctoral title: individuals who do not have a doctoral-level degree; individuals who will be at NYU SoM for less than one year and retain an appointment or position including compensation from an entity other than NYU SoM; and individuals who are "self-funded". "Self-funded" means that the individual is using his/her own personal funds (e.g., from a savings account, etc.) and no agency or outside entity is providing funds.

Payroll Titles for Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdocs have one of three possible payroll titles:

- **POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW:** A Postdoctoral Fellow is funded through sources other than a training grant such as Principal Investigator initiated research awards (i.e., the lab director's R01) or other types of funding.

- **POSTDOCTORAL NIH NRSA TRAINING FELLOW:** A Postdoctoral Fellow who is funded from individual or institutional NRSA Training Grants (National Research Service Awards, "F32"s and "T32"s). The source of funding is from the federal government to support the individual's training. An N.R.S.A. postdoctoral fellow's stipend may be subject to federal, state and local income tax but is currently exempt from the FICA/Medicare tax.
- **POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING FELLOW:** A Postdoctoral Training Fellow is a postdoc who is funded from a non NIH NRSA private training grant or fellowship.

Postdocs who are funded by two sources will be given two titles as appropriate.

Postdocs may have multiple sources of funding, presenting an ongoing challenge regarding postdoctoral job classification and salary determination. Many funding sources have strict guidelines about whether supplementation or additional compensation may be paid to postdocs. For example: the National Research Service Award guidelines for individual and institutional grants states: "Federal funds may not be used for stipend supplementation unless specifically authorized under the terms of the program from which funds are derived.... Under no circumstances may Public Health Service funds be used for supplementation."

It is critical to appoint postdocs using the correct Job Code and Title, as different titles have different accounting implications under federal regulations. Administrators are encouraged to ask for assistance with classifying postdocs whenever necessary by contacting the Postdoctoral Program Office. For purposes of this handbook, the term "postdocs" shall be deemed to refer to both individuals who have either compensated title.

Externally Paid Postdocs (Who are Not Employees of the School)

A small percentage of our postdocs do not receive their stipends through the School's payroll system but instead are paid directly from a foreign government or external company. There are some that are also paid a small supplement by the NYU School of Medicine. The appointment process is the same for these individuals but not the employment process or their status. Their appointment letters should clearly indicate the source and amount of their funding; however, where policies of their funding organization differ, the funding organization's policies prevail.

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