Instructions for Completing Postdoctoral Fellow Appointment

A Postdoctoral Fellow ("postdoc") is a professional apprenticeship designed to provide recent Ph.D. recipients with an opportunity to develop further the research skills acquired in their doctoral programs or to learn new research techniques, in preparation for an academic or research career.

UNC Charlotte embraces the principle of the National Academies’ Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP) that “the postdoctoral experience is first and foremost an apprenticeship whose purpose is to gain scientific, technical, and professional skills that advance the professional career of the postdoc.”

In the process of further developing their own research skills, it is expected that Postdoctoral Fellows will also play a significant role in the performance of research at the University and augment the role of graduate faculty in providing research instruction to graduate students.

A Postdoctoral Fellow works under the supervision of a regular faculty member, who serves as a mentor to the Fellow, and it is expected that the faculty mentor will impart the realities, and variety, of scientific careers, and will encourage experiences outside the laboratory to broaden postdocs' aspirations.

Within the confines of the particular research focus assigned by that faculty member, the Postdoctoral Fellow functions with a considerable degree of independence and has the freedom (and is expected) to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of appointment. Thus, the role of Postdoctoral Fellows is clearly differentiated from full-time technical employees.

Postdoc appointments are characterized by all of the following conditions:
- the appointee was recently (within the last eight years) awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate (e.g., Sc.D., M.D.).
- the appointment is temporary.
- the appointment involves substantially full-time research or scholarship.
- the appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic and/or research career.
- the appointee works under the supervision of a faculty member.
- the appointee has the freedom and is expected to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of appointment.

Appointment

Postdocs fall under a special category of temporary employment defined by Policy Statement #108. There are two key features of Policy #108 that faculty investigators should know:

1. The Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development has the responsibility for monitoring and applying policies that relate to postdoctoral appointments. Postdoc appointments are made using Academic Affairs Form AA-35 ("Agreement for Temporary Postdoctoral Fellow Appointment") and require the signature of the Department Chair, Dean, and the Vice Chancellor for Economic Development. A key feature of the Vice
Chancellor's oversight is the degree to which the University's postdoc hiring is nationally visible. It is critical for UNC Charlotte's development as a research university that we be known for hiring postdocs and for treating them well.

2. Postdocs are appointed for one year and may be renewed for additional one-year increments. However, postdocs will be limited to not more than five years' total duration, and we will count prior experience as a postdoc in that five-year total. In doing so, we are following the recommendations of COSEPUP, in which several guiding principles for the postdoctoral experience are set out.

**Benefits**

As temporary employees, postdocs will not accrue vacation or sick leave. However, the University recognizes that postdocs will likely work long hours in the course of their duties, and faculty supervisors may make appropriate arrangements for compensatory leave in accordance with the specific working conditions.

_Policy Statement #108_ states that "the Chancellor is authorized to arrange for Postdoctoral Fellows such health care coverage and retirement benefits as may be appropriate, consistent with the requirements of law and University policy." Under that Policy Statement, the University has classified postdocs as students for health care purposes, and the University's student health fee will be paid as a fringe benefit.

The University will also pay for supplementary student health insurance for the employee, and the postdoc may pay to add family members to the insurance plan. Under this coverage, the postdoc first goes to the Student Health Center and may then be referred to outside primary health-care providers; family members may go directly to outside providers for health care. The University does not currently provide a retirement benefit but is exploring possible options for such a benefit.

7. Send postdoc appointment folder to Margo Gross in the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration (311 CARC), consisting of:

- Signed Employment Contract (Form AA-35)
- Verification of Credentials (Form AA-34)
- Position Description
- Signed Authorization for Release of Information (Form AA-33)
- Signed Insurance Enrollment Form
- Official transcript
- Curriculum vita
- Form PD-7
- Criminal Background Disclosure (Form AA-38)

After approval by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, the contract and all associated paperwork will be forwarded to Ramah Carle in Academic Affairs for Provost approval.

**Instructions for REAPPOINTMENT of a Postdoc Fellow**

Send postdoc reappointment folder to Margo Gross in the Office of Grants and Contracts Administration (71884). The folder should contain the following documents:
a. Employment contract – AA35 signed by postdoc, Chair and Dean
b. Position description which can be revised if necessary and signed by supervisor
c. PD7
d. Insurance enrollment information

After approval by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, the contract and all associated paperwork will be forwarded to Ramah Carle in Academic Affairs for Provost approval.