



**The University of British Columbia  
Board of Governors**

**Policy No.:**

**61**

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October 1995

**Last Revision:**

April 2012

**Responsible Executive:**

Provost and Vice President, Academic  
(UBC Vancouver)

Deputy Vice Chancellor and Principal  
(UBC Okanagan)

**Title:**

**Postdoctoral Fellows**

**Background & Purposes:**

The purpose of this Policy is to define the role of postdoctoral fellows at the University and establish the eligibility criteria and terms and conditions for postdoctoral fellow appointments.

Postdoctoral fellows are valued members of the University community and make an indispensable contribution to the research environment of the University. The primary goals of postdoctoral fellows are to strengthen their publication record and broaden their research expertise, thus enhancing their employment and research opportunities. Postdoctoral fellows may also contribute to the teaching mission of the University, and hold teaching appointments.

**1. Scope**

- 1.1. This Policy applies to postdoctoral fellows (“PDFs”) who hold appointments at the University. A PDF may be either:
  - 1.1.1. a PDF who is employed by the University and whose salary is paid in full or in part from grants or contracts held by a University faculty member or from departmental resources (“PDF Employee”); or
  - 1.1.2. a PDF who has secured funding solely from an external funding organization outside the University and/or fellowship programs (“PDF Award Recipient”). A PDF Award Recipient’s earnings may be paid directly by the external funding organization or indirectly through UBC.

**2. Governing Principles**

- 2.1. A PDF is an individual in training who has recently completed a doctoral degree and is engaged in research at the University.
- 2.2. A PDF must be associated with one or more faculty members (the “Supervisor”), who will supervise the PDF and will provide resources to support the PDF’s research activities.

- 2.3. PDF appointments are for a limited period of time. Subject to the requirements of an external funding organization, a PDF typically holds successive one-year PDF appointments at the University, for up to three years. With the approval of the Dean, a person may hold PDF appointments at the University for up to five years. Beyond this appointment period, research work is normally conducted by permanent employees of the University who are appointed as research associates, tenure-stream faculty members, or tenured faculty. Shorter term appointments are permitted in exceptional circumstances but may impact a PDF's eligibility for benefits.
- 2.4. A PDF may be involved in undergraduate and graduate lecturing, laboratory instruction, tutorials, supervision of undergraduate projects, and assisting with the supervision of graduate students.
- 2.5. A PDF may hold an additional appointment as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at the University in recognition of assigned teaching responsibilities.

### **3. Eligibility Criteria**

- 3.1. A PDF must commence the appointment within five years of being awarded a Ph.D. degree or within ten years of being awarded a M.D. or D.D.S. degree; however, this time period may be extended by circumstances requiring an interruption in a research career (e.g. maternity/parental/adoptive leave).

## **PROCEDURES**

**Approved: October 1995**

**Revised: April 2012**

*Pursuant to Policy #1: Administration of Policies, "Procedures may be amended by the President, provided the new procedures conform to the approved policy. Such amendments are reported at the next meeting of the Board of Governors." Note: the most recent procedures may be reviewed at <http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/index/>.*

### **1. Recruitment**

- 1.1. Faculty members are responsible for recruitment of PDFs.
- 1.2. Advertisements are not required for PDF recruitment. However, if a PDF Employee position is advertised, the advertisement must include the University's current employment equity statement.
- 1.3. When recruiting (and supervising) a PDF, faculty members must adhere to relevant legislation, which may include the B.C. *Employment Standards Act* and *Human Rights Code*.

### **2. Selection**

- 2.1. Faculty members who have funding to support a PDF Employee are responsible for the selection process. The decision to provide financial support to a PDF Award Recipient is made by the external funding organizations granting the award. The decision to invite a PDF to the University will be made by the faculty member(s) who will supervise the PDF, with the approval of the Department Head or Director of an academic unit (the "Head"). For all PDF appointments, the selection process should consider letters of reference, reference checks, recommendations, and academic achievements (e.g. publications, research work, awards).

### **3. Appointment Process**

- 3.1. All PDF appointments at the University must be processed through Human Resources. A PDF Employee will receive a paid appointment from the University; a PDF Award Recipient will receive an honorary appointment from the University.
- 3.2. Faculty members, individually or jointly, wishing to invite an individual to the University as a PDF should prepare an offer letter, signed by the Head, in accordance with the applicable offer letter template provided by Human Resources, which specifies the following:
  - 3.2.1. the duration of the PDF appointment and the anticipated duration of the PDFs total appointments at the University;
  - 3.2.2. the financial arrangements (whether funding is from external or University sources or a combination of both);
  - 3.2.3. if applicable, instructions on how to enroll in payroll and benefits;
  - 3.2.4. the nature of the research and the duties and responsibilities of the PDF;
  - 3.2.5. any special conditions applicable to the appointment; and

- 3.2.6. if applicable, the terms and conditions relating to an appointment as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow for any assigned teaching responsibilities.
- 3.3. Information regarding the terms and conditions of PDF appointments is available through Human Resources and the Postdoctoral Fellow Office as well as the Department and Dean's Office.
- 3.4. Acceptance of an offer must be confirmed in writing by the PDF.
- 3.5. For a PDF to be appointed by the University, all appropriate appointment documentation must be completed and submitted to Human Resources, including the individual's appointment form, *curriculum vitae*, social insurance number (for PDFs who receive funding through the University), and immigration authorization (if not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident). By signing the appointment form, the Head accepts the PDF into the academic unit.
- 3.6. Prior to making a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow appointment, the Head should inquire about any restrictions by the external funding organization on the amount of teaching that may be assigned to the PDF.
- 3.7. An appointment as a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow made after the commencement of a PDF appointment must be in writing and in accordance with the applicable template provided by Human Resources.

#### **4. Immigration**

- 4.1. Upon receipt of appointment documentation from the University, a PDF who is not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident is responsible for obtaining all necessary immigration authorization.
- 4.2. Upon arrival in Canada, a PDF who receives funding through the University must apply for a social insurance number.

#### **5. Terms of Appointment**

##### **5.1. Compensation**

- 5.1.1. A PDF appointment may be funded by grants or contracts held by faculty members, from external funding organizations, by University endowment or operating funds, or from a combination of these sources.
- 5.1.2. The Supervisor should establish a PDF Employee's compensation following consultation with the PDF Employee and approval by the Head. Compensation must, at a minimum, be in accordance with the B.C. *Employment Standards Act*.
- 5.1.3. Compensation ranges for a PDF Award Recipient must comply with the policies and regulations of the applicable external funding organization. Where such policies and regulations permit, the Head, with the approval of the Dean, may approve additional compensation for a PDF Award Recipient greater than amount funded by the external funding organization. In such case, the PDF Award Recipient will become a PDF Employee. A PDF's compensation should be based on his or her relevant experience and responsibilities. Current information regarding external funding organization policies and regulations is available through the University's Office of Research Services.

- 5.1.4. Compensation for Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows is determined by the Head and should be in addition to compensation for research as a PDF.
- 5.1.5. Information regarding benefits available for all PDFs who meet the eligibility requirements is available through Human Resources. Eligibility is determined based on the total of all consecutive PDF appointments at the University, not the duration of individual PDF appointments.
- 5.1.6. The University will provide maternity/parental/adoptive leave and sick leave to eligible PDFs in accordance with Policy #86 Extraordinary Expenses – Grant and Contract-Funded Employees.
- 5.1.7. Vacation time should be taken at a time agreed upon between a PDF and his or her Supervisor and for PDF Employees, must, at a minimum, be in accordance with the B.C. *Employment Standards Act*.
- 5.1.8. Given the short-term nature of a PDF appointment, compensation is not normally reviewed for the duration of the appointment (including successive appointments).

## **5.2. Probationary Period**

- 5.2.1. The probationary period for PDF appointments is normally three months.

## **5.3. Orientation and Assistance**

### **5.3.1. Orientation to the University**

- 5.3.1.1. Human Resources will include PDFs in its regular university-wide orientations. The Postdoctoral Fellows Office will offer a semi-annual orientation designed specifically for PDFs.

### **5.3.2. Orientation to the Academic Unit**

- 5.3.2.1. The Supervisor, Head and Dean's office are responsible for orienting PDFs to the Department and Faculty. Departmental or Faculty administrators should provide written materials about services, procedures and standards in the Department and Faculty, and useful contacts at the University. The Supervisor is responsible for orientation to the worksite, and for providing information about performance expectations, standards for hours of work, safety procedures and ethical/scholarly integrity issues.
- 5.3.2.2. The Dean's office of a Faculty, through its Postdoctoral Coordinator, Associate Dean Research or equivalent, is responsible for providing assistance and information to PDFs.
- 5.3.3. Other sources of assistance include the Postdoctoral Fellows Office, Human Resources, the Work-Life & Relocation Services Centre, and the UBC Postdoctoral Association.

## **5.4. Role and Responsibilities of the PDF**

- 5.4.1. PDFs are generally regarded as advanced research trainees and should be treated by faculty members as academic colleagues in such matters as departmental communications and social interaction and should be consulted about matters affecting them.

- 5.4.2. PDFs must comply with all regulations and policies of all external funding organizations that provide the PDF with financial support, either directly or through their Supervisor's research funding agreement.
- 5.4.3. PDFs are subject to and must comply with University policies and procedures, including but not limited to the following:
  - 5.4.3.1. Policy #85 (Scholarly Integrity)
  - 5.4.3.2. Policy #86 (Extraordinary Expenses – Grant and Contract-Funded Employees)
  - 5.4.3.3. Policy #87 (Research)
  - 5.4.3.4. Policy #88 (Patents and Licensing)
  - 5.4.3.5. Policy #89 (Research and Other Studies Involving Human Subjects)
  - 5.4.3.6. Policy #97 (Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment)

## **5.5. Scholarly Contributions**

- 5.5.1. PDFs should be appropriately recognized for their contributions in publications of research or development of patentable or licensable products. At the start of a PDF's appointment, the Supervisor should establish a clear understanding of the PDF's rights and obligations under all applicable University policies.
- 5.5.2. PDFs should be encouraged to present their work and publish the results of their research completed before and during their PDF appointment. Timely dissemination of research at scholarly meetings and in publications is considered good professional development. Prior to the commencement of a PDF appointment, a PDF should disclose to his or her supervisor the anticipated time for dissemination of work conducted prior to the PDF appointment.

## **5.6. Resolution of Disagreements**

- 5.6.1. A Supervisor and a PDF should first attempt to resolve issues themselves through discussion. The Supervisor or PDF may bring unresolved issues to the attention of the Head.
- 5.6.2. If the Head is not able to resolve an issue, the Head or the PDF may bring the issue to the attention of the Faculty's PDF Coordinator, Associate Dean Research, or equivalent, who will act as an impartial facilitator (the "Facilitator").
- 5.6.3. A Facilitator or the PDF may refer an issue to either the PDF Associate Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC Vancouver or the Dean, College of Graduate Studies at UBC Okanagan, whose decision on an issue will be final.

## **5.7. Reappointment**

- 5.7.1. PDF appointments may be renewed annually based on satisfactory performance and availability of funding. A Supervisor should give reasonable notice (normally 3 months) to a PDF of whether he or she intends to request that Human Resources process the reappointment of the PDF.

## **5.8. Termination**

- 5.8.1. On the recommendation of the Supervisor, the Head may terminate a PDF's appointment at any time, irrespective of the source of funding.
- 5.8.2. For a PDF Employee, termination may be:
  - 5.8.2.1. for just cause without notice or pay in lieu of notice; or
  - 5.8.2.2. for any other reason with the greater of one month's notice for each completed year of service or the amount of notice the PDF Employee is entitled to pursuant to the B.C. *Employment Standards Act*. Pay may be provided in lieu of notice.
- 5.8.3. For a PDF Award Recipient, the Head will determine the manner and timing of the termination subject to any applicable legal obligations.