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POL - 80.06.1 - POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLAR POLICY

Authority: Board of Trustees

Responsible Office: Human Resources

Number: POL - 80.06.1 - POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLAR POLICY

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Related Policies/Sources:

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1. Introduction

1.1 North Carolina Central University (NCCU) annually hosts a number of Postdoctoral Scholars on its campus. Postdoctoral Scholars (“Scholars”) are placed in many different departments and centers at NCCU, and they are associated with the University primarily with the goal to continue their academic training. However, some aspects of their relationship with NCCU more resemble those of employees.

1.2 Given the hybrid nature of their association, NCCU has developed these policies to better outline the University’s and the Postdoctoral Scholar’s obligations and expectations in various contexts.

2. Definition of Postdoctoral Scholars

2.1 North Carolina Central University utilizes the FASEB (Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology) definition of Postdoctoral Scholars. Postdoctoral Scholars must meet the following criteria:

2.1.1 The appointee was awarded a Ph.D., equivalent doctorate or terminal degree (e.g., Sc.D., M.D., M.F.A.) in an appropriate field within the last 5 years.

2.1.2 The appointment is temporary.

2.1.3 The appointment involves substantially full-time research or Scholarship.

2.1.4 The appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic or research career.

2.1.5 The appointment may be part of a clinical training program, if research training under the supervision of a mentor is a primary purpose of the appointment.

2.1.6 The appointee works under the supervision of a Scholar or a department in a university or similar research institution (e.g., national laboratory, NIH, etc.).

2.1.7 The appointee is expected to publish the results of his or her research or Scholarship during the period of appointment, in consultation with his or her mentor.

2.2 Postdoctoral Scholars shall be classified as either a:

2.2.1 Postdoctoral Fellow/Trainee - An individual with an earned doctorate, who holds a sponsored postdoctoral fellowship or traineeship who is engaged in postdoctoral training through research for a fixed period of time, but no more than five years, and receives a stipend or training allowance that is federally funded.

2.2.2 Postdoctoral Research Associate - An individual with an earned doctorate, who is engaged in postdoctoral training through research for a fixed period of time, but no more than five years, and receives compensation from primarily non- federal funds.

2.2.3 The above two titles are the only approved Postdoctoral Scholar titles for the University.

2.3 Recruitment of Postdoctoral Scholars

2.3.1 Given the nature of postdoctoral training experiences, postdoctoral scholars may be identified directly through national or international academic professional channels. Academic departments should widely publicize postdoctoral vacancies on campus bulletin boards, departmental websites, and also utilize professional networks in order to identify qualified candidates and to promote equal opportunity. While open recruitment through the University's online employment system is allowed, it is not required since postdoctoral positions are temporary ones.

2.3.2 Departments and centers which have recruited postdoctoral scholars from outside of the United States, or who are already in the U.S. in a temporary non-immigrant classification will need to take additional steps before their postdoctoral scholar can begin employment. The J-1 visa for exchange visitors is typically the most appropriate category used in bringing international postdoctoral scholars to NCCU. The Office of International Affairs must be contacted for assistance with the J-1 sponsorship process.

3. Expectations of Postdoctoral Scholars

3.1 NCCU has adopted the following universal set of performance expectations for Postdoctoral Scholars:

3.1.1 Conscientious discharge of assigned duties;

3.1.2 Adherence to applicable ethical standards;

3.1.3 Compliance with standards of responsible conduct in research, including participation in all currently required University training;

3.1.4 Document research activity in a laboratory notebook and/or other appropriate methods of recordkeeping, all remaining the property of North Carolina Central University upon discontinuation of appointment;

3.1.5 Conformance to all federal, state and University policies and procedures, including but not limited to regulations concerning misconduct of research; conflicts of interest and /or commitment; laboratory safety; research involving human participants, animals, radioactive, chemical or biological hazards;

3.1.6 Open and timely discussion with the mentor regarding research progress, distribution of reagents or materials, or any disclosure of findings or techniques privately or in publications;

3.1.7 Collegial conduct towards co-workers; and

3.1.8 Compliance with all applicable University policies and procedures.

3.2 In addition, all Postdoctoral Scholars must agree to provide 30 calendar days written notice prior to resigning from a Postdoctoral Scholar position.

4. Appointment and Discontinuation Policies for Postdoctoral Scholars

4.1 Criminal Background Check

Pursuant to the Criminal Background Check Policy the University will conduct background checks on persons hired for initial employment at the University. A Postdoctoral Scholar's appointment is contingent upon a satisfactory criminal background check.

4.2 Appointment of Postdoctoral Scholars

4.2.1 An official letter of appointment will be issued by the Dean/Director with prior coordination with the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research. Postdoctoral Scholars are full-time temporary employees. Upon receipt of a written request, exceptions will be considered by the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research for individuals who are unable to pursue full-time employment because of extenuating circumstances.

4.2.2 The maximum term of appointment for a Postdoctoral Scholar is five years. Should the University desire to continue employing the Postdoctoral Scholar after the five-year maximum Postdoctoral Scholar appointment time is reached, the Postdoctoral Scholar must be moved into an established, non-Post-Doctoral Scholar position. If the University does not desire to continue employing the Postdoctoral Scholar, the University shall provide the Postdoctoral Scholar with a sixty (60) calendar day notice of the ending of the appointment and shall thereafter separate the Postdoctoral Scholar from the University once he/she reaches the five (5) year maximum appointment time.

4.2.3 This term of service refers to total time spent at NCCU under the post doctorate criteria described above, and does not include time spent at other institutions.

4.2.4 To request an extension of appointment, post-doc mentors/advisors must submit a Request for Extension Form indicating exceptional circumstances that require an extended appointment. This form must be co-signed by the Postdoctoral Scholar, as well as the department chair (or dean when appropriate), and submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research. Requests

for extensions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

5. Discontinuation of Appointment

5.1 A Postdoctoral Scholar may have his/her appointment discontinued for the following reasons or for no reason. Additionally, discontinuation may also be based on one of the following: end of one year term appointment, maximum term of appointment; or end of funding.

5.1.1 Discontinuation of One Year Term Appointment - A Postdoctoral Scholar may have his/her appointment ended with a sixty (60) calendar day notice if his/her one year appointment is not renewed or if his/her appointment expires.

5.1.2 Discontinuation due to Maximum Term of Appointment - A Postdoctoral Scholar may have his/her appointment ended with a sixty (60) calendar day notice if he/she exceeds the five year term limit.

5.1.3 Discontinuation due to End of Funding - A Postdoctoral Scholar may have his/her appointment ended with a thirty (30) calendar day notice if the funding supporting his/her appointment ends.

5.2 If the Postdoctoral Scholar is on a Visa, discontinuation should be coordinated with the Office of International Affairs and the Division of Graduate Education and Research prior to giving written notice.

6. Annual Performance Evaluation

A mentor of a Postdoctoral Scholar must complete an annual written evaluation of the Scholar's performance. The evaluation process should be simple and must include the opportunity for the Scholar to respond in writing to the evaluation. (NCCU Postdoctoral Scholar Evaluation Form)

7. Compensation

Compensation for Postdoctoral Scholars shall be consistent with NIH guidelines as adapted by NCCU. Only the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research can approve an increase in salary.

8. Benefits and Leave

8.1 A full-time Postdoctoral Scholar is eligible for:

8.1.1 Vacation Leave – 12 days of compensated vacation leave at a rate of 8 hours a month (in addition to recognized university holidays) per year.

8.1.2 Sick Leave – 12 days of compensated sick leave per year. Neither vacation leave nor sick leave can be carried over to a new calendar year.

8.1.2.1 Unused vacation and sick leave will not be paid out when the postdoc appointment ends.

8.1.2.2 Leave does not accrue and cannot be carried over year to year.

8.1.2.3 Other Leave – A Postdoctoral Scholar may be eligible for Family and Medical Leave if they meet the eligibility requirements.

8.1.2.4 Retirement – Postdoctoral Scholars may participate in voluntary retirement programs through the UNC System Voluntary 403(b) Program and the North Carolina Public Employee Deferred Compensation Plan provided under Section 457 of the Internal Revenue Code.

8.1.2.5 Health Insurance – Health insurance may be offered to postdoctoral scholars, who are paid through the University payroll system. All J-1 Exchange Visitors and their accompanying family members are required to have health insurance that meets certain federal guidelines. J-1 Postdoctoral scholars who will not be provided insurance coverage by NCCU must purchase insurance covering themselves and all dependents pursuant to the federal guidelines. Information relating to the federal guidelines and a list of insurance providers can be obtained from the Office of International Affairs.

9. Grievances

9.1 Postdoctoral Scholars must use the following procedure to address matters of concern related to his/her appointment:

9.1.1 The Scholar must make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter through discussions with his or her mentor.

9.1.2 If the matter is not adequately resolved by discussion with the mentor, the Scholar may formally request resolution by submitting a written statement describing the matter of concern, the supporting facts, and the disposition of prior discussions to the Dean of the School in which the mentor is appointed. The Dean shall resolve the matter promptly, providing a written response outlining the reasons for the decision no later than 14 calendar days after the request for resolution is received from the Scholar.

9.1.3 If the Scholar remains unsatisfied with the resolution provided by the Dean, the Scholar may formally request in writing a resolution by the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research. Such a request must be accompanied by a written statement describing the matter of concern, the supporting facts, and the disposition of prior discussions. The Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education shall resolve the matter promptly, providing a written response outlining the reasons for the decision no later than 14 calendar days after the request for resolution is received from the Scholar. The decision of the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education and Research is final.