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Parent Policy: [Postdoctoral Fellows Policy](#)

Postdoctoral Fellows Appointment Procedure

Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Postdoctoral Fellows Office
Approver:	Vice-President (Research)
Scope:	Compliance with University procedure extends to all members of the University community.

Purpose

To describe appointment procedures for **Postdoctoral Fellows** (PDFs).

PROCEDURE

1. RECRUITMENT

PDFs are not employees of the University. Despite that, when recruiting PDFs, **faculty members** must adhere to relevant legislation, such as the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*. Information on human rights legislation is available from the Office of Safe Disclosure & Human Rights. Faculty members will consider the University's employment equity goals when recruiting PDFs. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) states that PDFs are exempt from employment confirmation (i.e. Canadians/permanent residents are to be given priority).

Recruitment for such appointments varies; it can take place through recommendation by a faculty member at another university, through networking at conferences, the awarding of a fellowship by a **funding agency**, or by advertising in appropriate journals or newspapers.

In all disciplines, an important objective for the PDF is to strengthen the publication record, curriculum vitae (cv), and where appropriate teaching dossier, thereby building a reputation and enhancing the chances of securing a more permanent faculty or research position. The pattern by which the PDF's work is done will vary by discipline.

2. SELECTION

Most often, a faculty member who has funding to support a PDF will conduct the selection process personally, or with other faculty members if there is joint funding for the position, using phone calls, e-mail, faxes, letters of reference, recommendations, and copies of research papers to assist in the decision process.

Killam and Notley fellowships are awarded through an adjudication process established by the University; fellowships funded by external agencies are awarded through an adjudication process established by each external agency.

3. APPOINTMENT

a. Offer Letter

The letter inviting the individual to come to the University must be signed by the faculty member(s) and **unit head**. By signing the letter the unit head accepts the PDF into the department.

The letter of invitation is to specify:

- i. The term of appointment as a PDF (if appointing for an initial three years, the contract should contain a condition of review after one year and subsequent continuation dependent upon a satisfactory performance review)
- ii. Name of supervising faculty member(s) and unit head
- iii. That it is not an employment contract but rather that the PDF will be classified as a trainee at the University
- iv. Source of funding
- v. Stipend arrangements including capability of providing scale and/or increment adjustments
- vi. Benefit arrangements
- vii. Nature of the research to be undertaken
- viii. Leave with pay arrangements
- ix. Teaching duties, if assigned, to a maximum load of one full course per term
- x. Office location
- xi. Any special conditions, e.g. subject to immigration approval (if applicable)

The PDF signs the offer letter to indicate acceptance and returns it to the faculty member. The faculty member forwards an original copy of the acceptance to the **Postdoctoral Fellows (PDF) Office**; the new PDF will then be sent a welcome package by the PDF Office.

4. DOCUMENTATION

For an individual to be registered as a PDF at the University, all appropriate documentation is to be completed and submitted to the PDF Office (i.e. offer letter, registration form, cv, degree certificate, appointment form, and if appropriate, a work permit).

5. IMMIGRATION

PDFs who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents may be issued time-limited work permits for positions offering a stipend or salary. They are exempt from advance approval from Service Canada under confirmation exemption code C44 of the Citizenship and Immigration's FW1 *Foreign Worker Manual*.

Failure to obtain proper authorization from Citizenship and Immigration Canada automatically cancels the PDF's appointment without further recourse. See, *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, [regulations 124(1)(c), 124(2), 125, 126, 127(a) and (b), 128(a) and (b)].

PDFs cannot legally be moved to positions as Research Associates without prior advertising of the position, prior approval by Service Canada, and the issuing of a new work permit. See, *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, [regulations 124(1)(c), 124(2), 125, 126, 127(a) and (b), 128(a) and (b)].

6. ORIENTATION

- a. The PDF Office will host regular orientations to the University.
- b. Orientation to the Department/Faculty

The faculty member and the unit are responsible for specific orientation of PDFs to the department or faculty. Departmental or faculty administrators prepare written materials about services, procedures and standards in the department and faculty, as well as useful contacts at the University.

The faculty member is responsible for orientation of the research location, and for providing information about performance expectations, expectation of research effort, safety procedures and ethical/scholarly integrity issues.

7. SUPERVISOR LEAVES

It is the responsibility of supervisors to make adequate provisions for supervision of their PDFs during their leave. Therefore, academic members who intend to take a leave (exceeding two months) during a period in which they have PDFs under their supervision shall submit to their department and the PDFs involved a written statement describing the arrangements which have been made to provide satisfactory supervision during the period of the leave.

8. STIPEND

PDF stipends can come from various sources, including fellowships, supervisor research grants, and/or department operating funds.

In cases where there are no specific guidelines from a funder, the University of Alberta requires that PDFs receive a minimum stipend of at least 1.5 times the current PhD level (36 hours per week) award and minimum salary rates for TAP A trust-funded appointments. These rates are negotiated annually between the Graduate Students' Association and the Governors of the University of Alberta and can be found in the Regulations Governing Academic Employment of Graduate Students.

Total stipend may exceed the regulated maximum of a single funding agency provided that other sources of funding are used.

The ability to provide scale and increment adjustments will be determined by the faculty member upon consideration of the available funding source(s) and the PDF's experience and responsibilities.

9. BENEFITS

All PDFs and their eligible dependents must be enrolled in the University benefits plan, unless their spouse/partner has comparable coverage. The benefits are paid by the faculty member, except in the case of disciplines where the PDF is not training directly with a faculty member. For example, if the PDF does not co-publish with the faculty member or whose research is not connected with the faculty member's; the faculty member is simply serving in a supervisory capacity. In such circumstances, benefits will be covered by the home department or faculty of the PDF or the Killam Trust Fund. The benefits are effective the first day of the month following the appointment date (e.g. if appointed January 1, benefits become effective February 1).

10. RENEWAL

A PDF's appointment will automatically cease at the end of the term of appointment. In some instances an appointment may be renewable, provided that the PDF still falls within the definition of a PDF and that the renewal would not normally exceed the total time limit of five years.

The PDF must receive a renewal letter outlining the terms of the renewal and it must be signed by the faculty member(s) and unit head. The PDF signs this renewal letter to indicate acceptance and returns it to the faculty member. The faculty member forwards a copy of the acceptance to the PDF Office.

11. TEACHING

Some PDFs have expressed an interest in obtaining teaching experience. PDFs should discuss with the faculty member their desire to participate in the teaching activities of the department. In cases of formal assignment of teaching duties the maximum load is one full course per term (3 course weights). For teaching assignments, PDFs will be appointed as temporary academic staff under the appropriate employment terms and be considered an employee of the University. The salary for the teaching activities will be drawn from the department operating funds and will be subject to withholding by the University for Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance.

Faculty members should determine in advance of making any teaching arrangements if there are any funding agency restrictions to whether teaching can be assigned to a particular PDF.

PDFs may be involved in undergraduate and graduate lecturing, laboratory instruction, tutorials, supervision of undergraduate projects, and assistance with the supervision of graduate students.

12. PRIVILEGES

PDFs are eligible for a University ONEcard (funded by the supervisor and/or supervising department/faculty), which provides full library privileges and access to a campus computing ID and password. PDFs may also apply and pay for the following:

- a. a privilege card for use of the physical education and recreation facilities
- b. membership in the Faculty Club
- c. a parking permit
- d. access to the University Health Centre

13. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Some PDFs may wish to further their professional development experience. A self-directed Professional Development Program for PDFs is available. For details contact the Postdoctoral Fellows Office.

It is important that faculty members provide PDFs the opportunity to attend workshops and presentations to enhance their career development.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. ▲Top	
Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs)	Individuals who are appointed as research trainees normally within five years from the completion of a doctoral degree or 10 years from the completion of a MD, DDS or equivalent.
Faculty Member	University faculty member who has been designated to oversee the activities associated with the scholastic opportunity of the PDF.
Funding Agency	Either the University or another institution or agency that provides the funding to the PDF.
Unit Head	Applies to Chair of a Department, Dean of a non-departmentalized faculty, Director of an Institute
Postdoctoral Fellows (PDF) Office	The office that has been designated to register the PDFs at the University and to provide formal administrative services.

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