

Hiring Procedures for Postdoctoral Appointments

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The College of Agricultural Sciences Human Resources Consultants are the primary resource for hiring departments. We are responsible for ensuring implementation of the procedures and policies for recruitment and hiring of all personnel and ensuring that processes comply with applicable laws, regulations and policies in consultation with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, Penn State Human Resources, the Affirmative Action Office, and the Office of Global Programs.

As communicated by the Associate Vice President for Affirmative Action, all postdoctoral appointments must be announced on the Penn State Careers site.

The recruitment and selection process for hiring a Postdoctoral Scholar or Fellow is managed by the Faculty Supervisor or designee. The title of Postdoctoral Fellow will be used only in connection with appointments financed under a Postdoctoral Fellow Program of a granting agency outside the University. The title of Postdoctoral Scholar will be the usual designation for all other postdoctoral appointments.

When recruiting, the Faculty Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the recruitment process:

- Involves a search committee with at least 3 members
- Adheres to [Policy HR108 – Position Vacancies](#) and all relevant legislation, including the [Department of Labor-Fair Labor Standards Act](#)
- Adheres to [Policy HR11 – Affirmative Action in Employment at The Pennsylvania State University](#)
- Adheres to recruiting and posting requirements as stated below

In accordance with [Policy RA68 – Postdoctoral Appointments](#), these positions:

- must be full-time temporary, 48-week appointments under the supervision of a faculty mentor;
- be granted to appointees awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate (e.g., Sc.D, M.D., D.D.S., J.D.), typically in the last five (5) years;
- involve substantially full-time research or scholarship;
- provide the appointee to publish results of their research/scholarship results during the appointment;
- provide the appointee with professional development opportunities in preparation for an academic and/or research career;
- have an initial appointment at the University for one (1) year

- reappointments are based on funding, satisfactory performance, and adherence to University policies
- Maximum appointment duration for a postdoctoral scholar/fellow is five (5) years.
- If the appointment is not being renewed at the end of the appointment period for any reason, including lack of adequate funding, or the postdoctoral scholar/fellow has reached a maximum of five (5) years in the position, at least thirty (30) days' notice, in advance of the appointment end date must be given. Postdoctoral scholars/fellows are expected to continue performing assigned responsibilities during the notice period.

Financial Considerations

This [link](#) references the Postdoctoral Scholar or Fellow salary minimum stipend.

Compensation for postdoctoral scholars/fellows must meet or exceed the minimum stipend specified in the [Table of Stipends for Postdoctoral Appointments](#).

If an annual salary increase is approved by the Penn State Board of Trustees and funding is available, a salary increase may be provided; however, they are not mandatory. The College provides guidance for appropriate increase amounts.

Steps to Announcing

- 1) The Faculty Supervisor will submit the following information to their assigned HRC:
 - Annual salary that will be paid
 - Funding source that will support annual salary**Please note positions that are not entirely research funded will require Dean's approval.*
 - Justification noting the **area of work** and set of responsibilities
 - Email notification of Department Head's approval
- 2) The assigned HRC will review and if not, entirely research funded, will obtain Dean's approval
- 3) The HRC will notify the Faculty Supervisor they may proceed with announcing the position by following the directions outlined in the "Create a Job Requisition (Managers) - Full-Time Academic Job Requisition" found [here](#). Remember to list the Search Committee Members along with their user id's in the "Additional Information for Talent Acquisition" field.
- 5) The Faculty Supervisor will receive an email notification from Talent Acquisition once the job requisition has been approved through all levels and the position has been announced.

Job Announcement

Please remember to state if the Ph.D. should be in a certain field of study and/or requires specific experience.

Include the following statements in all announcements:

- “Applicants are required to have a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate in an appropriate field and be able to provide evidence that all requirements have been met for completion of the Ph.D. prior to the effective date of hire.”
- “This is a limited-term position funded for one year from date of hire with a [good] possibility of re-funding.” [In place of good, may use “no” or “excellent” as appropriate.]
- “This position will be located at Penn State in [University Park, Pennsylvania or wherever the work will be completed, ex: FREC in Biglerville, etc.] **Please note prior approval must be obtained for a postdoc to work remotely.** *Please reach out to your assigned HRC for guidance on requesting permission.

Advertising in a journal of national circulation is recommended to obtain a larger and more diverse pool of candidates.

Advertisements in *publications, websites, listservs, etc.* cannot be placed without prior approval from HR Shared Services.

Search Procedure

Our College requires a search committee with at least three members (who are non-student employees of the University). Please note that current postdocs and graduate assistants may participate on a search committee; however, they must be in addition to the three core members.

Our College requires that search committee members complete search committee training prior to beginning the search process. The training, forms, and additional resources can be found on the [College HR website](#). After completing the training, individuals should notify their assigned HR Consultant so their records can be updated accordingly.

The search committee will review applications through Workday Recruiting. If you receive an application directly from an applicant, they should be directed to apply via the Penn State Careers site <https://hr.psu.edu/careers>.

The faculty supervisor will be responsible for inviting candidates to interview for the position.

Steps to Hire

Once a suitable candidate is identified the faculty supervisor shall review this candidate with their Department Head prior to extending a verbal offer. Providing that the Department Head approves the candidate, the faculty supervisor may extend a verbal offer indicating the offer is contingent upon the successful completion of a background check(s) and providing evidence of a Ph.D.

A postdoctoral appointment shall be granted to appointees who recently were awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate (e.g., Sc.D., M.D., D.D.S., J.D.) in an appropriate field (typically within five (5) years of completion of their degree). As a result, the selected candidate must be awarded and be able to provide evidence of obtaining a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate **prior to** the effective date of hire.

We realize that recent graduates experience a delay until they have their actual Ph.D. in hand and/or the Ph.D. may not be recorded in timely manner.

As a result, they may provide an official transcript from the Office of the Registrar stating they have met all the PhD requirements. In some instances, a communication has been sent by the Advisor confirming that the individual has met all the PhD requirements. In this case the Deans Office will review and inform us if they accept the communication as evidence of being awarded a Ph.D. until they are able to provide a copy of their Ph.D. certificate.

There are situations where an individual has defended, but final corrections and revisions of the dissertation have to be made per the recommendation of the committee. In this scenario, once we are provided with notification from the graduate school the dissertation has been accepted, we may proceed with the hire. The effective date of hire can be prior to graduation and award of the diploma, as long as all requirements have been met.

If the offer is accepted, please discuss and agree upon a tentative start date considering that it will be based on the time it takes for completion of a background check and clearances (approx. 2 weeks) and onboarding. Please keep in mind that the start date may be delayed until visas are processed (if needed).

Supervising faculty extending offers to international postdoctoral scholars/fellows must comply with federal regulations and University policies. The foreign national must have valid employment authorization for the appointment's duration. Faculty and foreign national scholars/fellows should consult Penn State Global (JScholarAdv@psu.edu) to ensure immigration compliance with initial offers, renewals, leaves of absence, and exits/terminations. A postdoctoral scholar/fellow's failure to maintain work authorization will result in termination.

Once an effective date of hire is agreed upon, follow the directions outlined in the "Job Offer Process (Managers) –Full-Time Academic Offer Process" found [here](#).

Contact Information

For questions on the recruiting process and on the processing of the appointment, contact your assigned [HR Consultant](#) or talentacquisition@psu.edu