ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS
POLICY MANUAL

6-310 Conditions of Postdoctoral Service

Revision Dates

10/1/2026, 9/28/2018, 3/8/2007 (adopted)

A. General

These conditions of postdoctoral service shall constitute the policy under which postdoctoral scholars of the Arizona Board of Regents are appointed. Each notice of appointment or offer letter for postdoctoral scholars shall incorporate this policy by reference and shall provide that acceptance of the notice of appointment or offer letter is recognition that this policy constitutes the conditions of appointment. The Board shall not be bound by, nor does it adopt or incorporate herein, the interpretations, policies, or recommendations of other organizations, except as approved by the Board.

The Board is charged by law to exercise control and supervision of the state universities and their property. Any authority delegated by the Board is always subject to its ultimate authority. The Board retains the right of periodic review and modification of all aspects of governance of the state universities, and the right to enact such rules, regulations, policies, and orders as it deems proper.

B. Definitions

1. “Academic year” shall mean the period commencing and ending with each university’s academic calendar.

2. “Appointment” means appointment for a period as specified in a notice of appointment or offer letter. The term refers to the initial appointment and all subsequent appointments, reappointments, or renewals of appointments.

3. "Board" shall mean the Arizona Board of Regents.

4. "Day" shall mean calendar day, except that where the last day of any time period set forth in this document falls on a Saturday, a Sunday or a university recognized holiday, then the time period shall run until 5:00 p.m. of the next day which is not a Saturday, a Sunday, or a university recognized holiday.

5. “Discriminatory action” means an action that constitutes discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, or disability status or any other discrimination

prohibited by state or federal law.

6. “Fiscal year” shall mean a period of twelve (12) months commencing on July 1.

7. "Notice of appointment" shall mean the document by which an appointment is made and which is signed by the president or the president’s designee.

8. “Offer letter” shall mean the document through which a postdoctoral scholar is offered a position and which is signed by the supervising faculty member.

9. “Postdoctoral scholar” shall mean an individual who has recently completed his/her doctoral studies and who holds short-term university appointments working under the guidance and direction of a faculty mentor as the individual prepares for a career as an independent scientist and researcher.

10. "President" shall mean the president of the appropriate university or the president's designated representative.

11. “Principal investigator” or “PI” means a faculty member who has been awarded external funding and who may appoint postdoctoral scholars to participate in the project for which the funding was awarded.

12. "Professional and intellectual freedom" shall mean the right and responsibility to exercise judgment within the standards of the postdoctoral scholar’s discipline. Professional and intellectual freedom is defined as "academic freedom" for those employees involved in teaching and/or research.

13. “Renewal” means the process by which an appointment is extended for an additional period.

14. “Rule” means a written standard of general applicability that implements, interprets, or prescribes law or policy, or describes the procedure to be utilized in implementing law or policy.

15. “Supervising faculty member” means the individual faculty member of a university who appoints, provides funding, and serves as the mentor for a postdoctoral scholar.

16. “University” means the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, or any other university under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Board of Regents.

C. Appointment Procedures

1. The president shall establish procedures for appointments of postdoctoral scholars. An appointment may become effective as of the date it is approved by the president or the president's designee.

2. All postdoctoral scholars may be appointed for one academic or fiscal year, or a portion thereof. Appointments may be renewed on a year-to-year basis for not more than four years after the initial appointment. No oral or written communication made prior to or after the execution of a notice of appointment or acceptance of an offer letter that is inconsistent or in conflict with the conditions of postdoctoral service (6- 310) shall become a part of the conditions of appointment.

3. Generally, postdoctoral scholars are funded on the principal investigator's or supervising faculty member's external funding. Postdoctoral appointments that are dependent upon continuation of funding from a specific source other than state appropriations shall so state in the appointment document and may terminate when the funding is no longer available.

4. Postdoctoral scholars shall have no expectation of appointment beyond the end of the current appointment period and are not eligible for tenure or continuing status.

D. Compensation

1. The president may set individual salaries. Salary rates for reappointments will depend upon available funding. Merit raises may be allocated by the president within the limitation of available funds.

2. Certain fringe benefits are made available to postdoctoral scholars and are subject to change by the legislature, the board, or the university.

3. Postdoctoral scholars are entitled to (12) days of sick leave accrual per year, (10) days of vacation leave during the first year of appointment and (15) days per year for subsequent appointments. Vacation leave is not paid out upon termination. Each university will set its own policy or procedure on vacation time usage.

4. Policies governing outside activities and supplementary compensation are administered by each university.

E. Employment Related Board Policies

1. The board has adopted various policies which may be a part of the employment relationship depending upon the terms of the particular policy. Among these policies are the patent policy, medical service plan, royalty policy and leave policy. Changes to existing policies may be made by the board and such changes will normally become effective at the beginning of the first appointment period following the period in which a change is adopted. Additional policies may be added to be effective as determined by the board.

2. Each university shall maintain a compilation of such policies and shall take reasonable steps to inform postdoctoral scholars of the existence of such policies.

F. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Duties and responsibilities of a postdoctoral scholar shall consist of those assigned by the president or the president's designee, who may be the principal investigator or supervising faculty member. All duties and responsibilities shall be carried out under the direction of the president or the president's designee. Duties and responsibilities shall be related to the expertise and competence of the postdoctoral scholar.

2. Performance of assigned duties by postdoctoral scholars shall be subject to evaluation by a principal investigator, supervising faculty member and/or appropriate administrator and performance shall be considered in decisions relating to compensation, retention, termination, or a decision not to reappoint.

G. Reappointment

Postdoctoral scholars shall be given at least a sixty (60) day notification of non renewal prior to the end of the appointment period. Failure to provide a sixty (60) day notification of non renewal shall not constitute an automatic renewal of appointment. If notice of non renewal is given less than sixty days prior to the end of an appointment period, then the postdoctoral scholar shall be entitled to continuation of compensation for sixty (60) days from the date of notification. If funding is no longer available or eliminated, a postdoctoral scholar shall be provided with a thirty (30) day notification of termination of the appointment due to loss of funding.

H. Termination

1. Methods of Termination

The appointment of a postdoctoral scholar may terminate through resignation, non-renewal of appointment, loss of funding which supports

the appointment, or dismissal for just cause during the appointment period for poor performance, work related misconduct, violation of board or university policies, or other serious reason as determined by the supervising faculty member.

2. Dismissal During the Appointment Period

   a. The supervising faculty member shall provide a written recommendation of dismissal to the academic unit head, with a copy to the postdoctoral scholar. The recommendation shall provide the reasons or basis for the proposed action.

   b. If the postdoctoral scholar disagrees with the reasons for dismissal, he/she may, within five (5) days after receipt of the recommendation, submit an appeal to the academic unit head, with a copy to the supervising faculty member.

   c. The academic unit head will meet with the postdoctoral scholar and the supervising faculty member. Within ten (10) days after receipt of the appeal, the unit head will issue a written determination, affirming, reversing or modifying the recommendation of dismissal with the reasons for the decision.

   d. Within five (5) days after receipt of the decision, the postdoctoral scholar may submit a request for reconsideration of the determination to the college dean, who will review the case and issue a final decision within ten (10) days after receipt of the request for reconsideration.

3. The supervising faculty member may decide not to renew the appointment of any postdoctoral scholar. In such case, the postdoctoral scholar is not entitled to a reason for the decision to non-renew the appointment or a hearing either prior to or subsequent to the decision.

4. Interim Action

   A postdoctoral scholar may be placed on leave with pay pending a dismissal in a case in which the supervising faculty member, unit head and college dean determine that the continued presence of the individual on the campus constitutes a substantial interference with the orderly functioning of the university or of a substantial area, unit, college or department of the university. Placement on leave with pay status shall not be considered a disciplinary sanction. The employee is not entitled to a hearing or review process before being placed on Leave with Pay.

I. Implementation

The president shall establish such additional policies and procedures consistent with this policy as may be needed to carry out the conditions of postdoctoral service (6- 310).

J. Severability

If any section, paragraph, subdivision, clause, sentence, or phrase of this policy shall for any reason be held illegal or unenforceable, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the policy. If any provision of this policy contains an ambiguity, which may be construed as either valid or invalid, the valid construction shall prevail.

Policy History

3/8/2007 Approved by the Board on second reading.

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Related Information