

Complete Policy Title:	Policy on Postdoctoral Fellows
Policy Number (if applicable):	n/a
Approved by:	Senate and Board of Governors
Date of Most Recent Approval:	November 12, 2008 (Senate) December 18, 2008 (Board)
Revision Date(s):	December 8, 2004 (Senate) December 9, 2004 (Board) June 1, 2005 (Senate) June 16, 2005 (Board)
Position Responsible for Developing and Maintaining the Policy:	Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies
Contact Department	University Secretariat

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Scope of Policy on Postdoctoral Fellows

This policy applies to all Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs) who receive income through McMaster University's payroll and/or who hold an externally-awarded postdoctoral fellowship for which McMaster University is the formally designated institution for tenure of the award.

McMaster University considers PDFs to be an integral part of the University and its mission. To recognize their contributions, the University offers Postdoctoral Fellows services and benefits intended to meet their needs and to enhance the value of their experience. The University expects in return that Postdoctoral Fellows will comply with all relevant University policies and will acknowledge their affiliation with the University in their publications and in their participation in scholarly meetings and endeavours.

1. Description of a Postdoctoral Fellow

The following criteria outline the scope of a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University:

- (i) the appointee must have been awarded a PhD or equivalent normally within the five years immediately preceding his or her initial appointment as a PDF at

McMaster;

- (ii) the appointment is temporary, normally not to exceed 6 years, including renewals;
- (iii) the appointment, normally full-time, involves substantial research or scholarship, and may also involve some teaching (normally 3 or 6 units in any year, but in any case no more than 9);
- (iv) the appointment is viewed as preparatory for an academic and/or research career;
- (v) the appointee works under the supervision of a faculty mentor in the University or at one of its affiliated hospitals;
- (vi) the appointee has the freedom to publish the results of her or his research or scholarship during the period of the appointment, and is expected to do so, when appropriate in conjunction with the faculty supervisor, while respecting the norms of the discipline and giving due consideration to intellectual property issues.

2. Steps to Obtain a Postdoctoral Position at McMaster University

- (i) An applicant must directly contact a researcher who shares his or her research interests. This researcher must have the potential to act as a mentor/research supervisor, and in some cases an immediate research supervisor. Please note that the office of the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies cannot provide assistance until an applicant has an identified mentor / research supervisor.
- (ii) Each applicant will need financial support. A Postdoctoral position may be funded by an external agency (usually through a competition), or through the University via a mentor/supervisor.
- (iii) Once financial support has been arranged, and a faculty member has agreed to supervise the postdoctoral fellowship, the supervisor/mentor will arrange for the department to issue a letter of appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow.
- (iv) Once an applicant has accepted the offer of a Postdoctoral position, the Chair of the Department/Program will arrange a meeting with Human Resources Services to initiate the Fellow's formal introduction to McMaster.

3. Appointment and Registration of Postdoctoral Fellows

Appointments of Postdoctoral Fellows are made by the Chair of a Department (or equivalent) following the submission of a recommendation from the host or sponsoring faculty member. The Office of the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies maintains templates of appropriate letters of offer. One copy of the appointment letter will be sent to the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies, whose office keeps a record of all Postdoctoral Fellows, and a second copy will be sent to Human Resources Services. The letter will specify the following items:

- (i) the area or topic of advanced study in which the Fellow will be working;
- (ii) the level of financial support (or salary) from the academic unit and/or the host member of faculty, as well as the source of any external postdoctoral fellowship paid directly to the Postdoctoral Fellow;

- (iii) expectations with regard to teaching, and the level of remuneration for that teaching;
- (iv) the duration of the appointment;
- (v) the benefits that are available;
- (vi) expectations with regard to office space and clerical support to be provided, and also access to lab facilities if applicable.

The copy of the appointment letter to the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies must be accompanied by a curriculum vitae for the proposed appointee, and proof of completion of all degree requirements, which can take the form of a letter from the University granting the PhD, or a copy of a final transcript.

Human Resources Services will maintain a list of all who accept McMaster's offer of a PDF appointment, and will provide quarterly updates of that list to the office of the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies.

At the end of the appointment, a short letter confirming the duration of the Fellow's affiliation with McMaster will be sent by the academic unit to the office of the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies. Annually, the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies will prepare a list of all PDFs who have completed their appointments. The list will be presented to the University Senate, with a recommendation that a Certificate of Postdoctoral Studies be conferred upon the individuals whose names appear on the list. The office of the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies will prepare the Certificates of Postdoctoral Studies to be sent to the PDFs through their Departments.

4. Remuneration and Financial Support

A PDF can receive financial support in various forms, including fellowships, research contracts, and part-time teaching. Each year, the University establishes an annual minimum level of total financial support required for a full-time PDF. In the case of a part-time appointment, the minimum is calculated proportionally. When the PDF's financial support comes from an external research grant, the regulations of the granting agency must be observed.

5. Benefits and Services Available to Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral Fellows are encouraged to participate in the "Working at McMaster" program and other health promotion activities available to all McMaster employees.

Currently, Postdoctoral Fellows have access to benefits and services listed below. However, the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3906 ("CUPE") represents all Postdoctoral Fellows employed by McMaster in the Province of Ontario, except those in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Thus, terms of employment for Postdoctoral Fellows in this bargaining unit will be governed by the collective agreement to be negotiated from time to time between CUPE and the University.

Health and Dental Care Services and Insurance:

If there is a PDF who is ineligible for the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP),

enrolment in the Universities Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) is mandatory. The cost for UHIP (single and family coverage) will be covered by the faculty member who is the Postdoctoral supervisor for a maximum period of three months. In the case of those funded through a researcher at McMaster, this means the UHIP cost will be part of the cost of benefits. In the case of those with an external fellowship, it is expected that the McMaster supervisor will cover the cost of this insurance if the fellowship does not do so. A prospective supervisor who does not expect to have sufficient research funding to do so should contact the office of the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies to discuss the alternatives.

Extended Health (Major Medical) Insurance: Any PDF who has accepted an appointment for 12 months or more will be provided with Extended Health (Major Medical) coverage for a period not extending beyond the end date of their appointment. The cost of this coverage will be covered in the same manner as described above for UHIP premiums.

Dental insurance: Any PDF who has accepted an appointment for 12 months or more and who wishes to register for Dental Insurance must do so within 30 days of the start of the appointment. Such coverage must continue for the duration of the appointment. The PDF must pay all premium costs. The payment of premiums can be done through regular payroll deductions if the PDF is paid through the University. The payment of premiums for other situations must be made through post-dated cheques.

Life Insurance:

Any PDF who has accepted an appointment for 12 months or more will be eligible to enrol in the basic group life insurance plan, with premiums to be paid by the supervisor. Each such PDF will also be eligible to purchase additional optional coverage.

Tuition Rebates for University Courses:

Tuition will be refunded, or covered, by the University for courses taken at McMaster by a PDF that are relevant to her or his training.

Library:

PDFs are entitled to the same access and borrowing privileges at all University libraries as faculty members.

Athletics and Recreation:

PDFs are entitled to the same access as faculty members.

Computing and Communication Services:

PDFs are entitled to an e-mail account and access to software for which the University owns site licenses.

Centre for Leadership and Learning:

PDFs are entitled to the same access as faculty members.

Research Services:

PDFs are entitled to the services that are available to faculty members, such as the

administration of operating grants, and negotiation of research contracts.

6. Application of University Policies

The established policies of McMaster University apply to the responsibilities and activities of any PDF including, for example, intellectual property, research ethics, human rights/equity and, for PDFs enrolled in University courses, academic integrity. Current University policies can be viewed on the University website at: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/>.

Disputes between a PDF and his or her mentor/supervisor that are not covered by other University policies with dispute-resolution mechanisms should in the first instance be resolved informally, through the Department Chair, or subsequently through the Faculty Dean.

If these avenues are not successful in resolving the issue, at the request of either party to the dispute, the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies will appoint an *ad hoc* tribunal of three faculty members. The Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies shall present the slate of members of the *ad hoc* tribunal to the parties, who may object in writing and with reasons to any of the suggested names. After ruling on any objections, the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies shall appoint the tribunal that will hear the dispute. The tribunal shall recommend a resolution to the Provost, who shall either ensure that it is implemented or shall state in writing the reasons for rejecting the tribunal's recommendation.