

Postdoctoral Fellows

Definition

A postdoctoral fellow is a person engaged in a period of special study and/or research at the postdoctoral level. The postdoctoral fellow (PDF) is a trainee, which is a unique category of employment at UNM, distinct from staff, faculty, and students enrolled in a degree-granting program. Being a trainee, each PDF must have an identified faculty mentor (advisor). It is the responsibility of the institution, college, department, and faculty mentor to supervise, encourage and foster the education of the PDF in a manner consistent with PDF's career goals. PDF appointments will be processed through the Faculty Contracts Office.

Period of Appointment

An individual may be appointed as a PDF for no more than five years at the University of New Mexico. At the conclusion of five years employment is terminated. If the PDF is to remain a UNM employee, they must go through the normal UNM hiring process for a staff or faculty position.

During the period of appointment, the PDF is considered an exempt employee and generally has a forty (40) hour work week, though the PDF is paid a salary which is not based upon the number of hours worked.

A PDF is permitted to also be hired to teach as a part-time instructor. This will be handled as a separate hiring, subject to the normal UNM hiring process and policies. In total, the PDF's FTE cannot exceed 125% (100% if funded entirely with federal funds).

Any reduction in the position funding may result in a reduction in FTE or early termination of this contract. Due to the unique and temporary nature of their employment, PDFs are allowed to terminate employment without advance notification, although mutual consideration between the PDF and the faculty mentor should make this an infrequent occurrence. Similarly, the University may terminate the employment of a PDF without advance notice. Again, the relationship between a faculty mentor and the PDF would usually preclude such an event.

Benefits

The following benefits will apply to eligible PDFs:

- Fifteen (15) days annual leave per year or 10 hours per month

- A PDF must have at least a 50% appointment to be eligible for annual leave benefits
- Annual leave balances will carryover from contract year to contract year but may not, at any point in time, exceed 180 hours
- Annual leave balances may not be converted to cash
- When postdoctoral fellows separate from the University, they will not be paid for unused annual leave
- Fifteen (15) days sick leave per year or 10 hours per month
 - A PDF must have at least a 50% appointment to be eligible for sick leave benefits
 - Sick leave balances will carryover from contract year to contract year but may not, at any point, exceed 360 hours
 - Sick leave balances may not be converted to cash
 - When postdoctoral fellows separate from the University, they will not be paid for unused sick leave
- UNM holidays
- PDFs who have a contract of at least three (3) months or more working at least .50 FTE are eligible for medical, dental, life, and vision insurance as well as life insurance and accidental death & dismemberment insurance
- Courses available through Human Resources Employee Training or the Teaching and Research Center
- Discounts available to faculty and staff, which do not incur additional fringe benefits charges
- Flexible spending plan.
- 403b Tax Shelter Annuity plans.

Additionally

- The hiring department will maintain leave records.
- Leave balances will appear on payroll earnings statement.
- If fringe benefits are not an allowable cost on the contract or grant paying PDF's salary, the department shall identify another allowable source of funds (usually unrestricted) to pay the University's portion of the fringe benefits.
- No other employee benefits apply.
- If a PDF is appointed for less than full-time (1.0 FTE) but more than .50 FTE benefits will be pro-rated.
- Postdoctoral fellows are subject to FLSA standards.

Pay Guidelines

HSC postdocs receive a salary based on NIH NRSA stipend levels. The stipend level for the entire first year of support is determined by the number of full years of relevant postdoctoral experience when the position is started. However, to provide flexibility in accommodating various funding mechanisms or for purposes of competitive recruitment, a range of 4 years of experience will be allowed for the determination of postdoc salaries. For example, a postdoc with zero years of experience may receive a salary of 0-4 years of experience range (see table below for current NRSA postdoc stipends).

Requests to pay salaries outside of this range will require prior approval by Dr. Bryce Chackerian, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, and Dr. Akshay Sood, Interim Director of the Office of Faculty Academic Affairs.