

Definitions of Postdoctoral Scholars

Brandeis University

(January 29, 2014)

Postdoctoral Scholars receiving postdoctoral appointments at Brandeis University are defined as those meeting the following criteria:

- The appointee was awarded a Ph.D., equivalent doctorate or terminal degree (e.g. Sc.D., M.D., M.F.A.) in an appropriate field;
- The appointee receives a temporary, conditional appointment;
- The appointee is viewed as normally preparing for a full-time academic or research career;
- The appointee works under the supervision of a scholar, department, or institute in the university;
- The appointee is expected to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of appointment, in consultation with his or her faculty sponsor.

There are some additional University appointments that include “Post-Doctoral” in the title, particularly in the Humanities (for example the Kay Fellows), but which include individuals who are hired by the University and are thus not considered in the following types of postdoctoral scholars. Except for these special cases, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs at Brandeis University offers three types of Postdoctoral Scholar appointments.

NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow

NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows come to Brandeis to further their scholarly competence, with fellowship aid (stipends to cover living expenses) provided through NIH’s National Research Service Award (NRSA). NRSA fellowships take two forms: an Individual Fellowship (known as an F32) or a Fellowship appointment on an Institutional Training Grant (known as a T32). NRSA appointments are usually for not less than one semester and cannot be renewed beyond a total of 3 years. NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows are considered to be in training positions; they do not provide services to the University and are not considered to be employees. An NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow is eligible to be appointed as an adjunct faculty member, Research Associate or a Postdoctoral Associate after the term of the NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow appointment has ended.

Postdoctoral Fellow

Postdoctoral Fellows come to Brandeis to further their scholarly competence, with fellowship aid (stipends to cover living expenses) through sources other than the NRSA. These sources may be federal or non-federal. Appointments are usually for not less than one semester and are renewed based upon the terms and conditions of the individual award. Postdoctoral Fellows are considered to be in training positions; they do not provide services to the University and are not considered to be employees. A

Postdoctoral Fellow is eligible to be appointed as an adjunct faculty member, Research Associate or Postdoctoral Associate after the term of the Postdoctoral Fellow appointment has ended.

Postdoctoral Associate

Postdoctoral Associates work at Brandeis under funding provided by Brandeis, whether through University funds or other grant funds. Unlike Postdoctoral Fellows, Postdoctoral Associates provide services to Brandeis and are not considered trainees. (People in these positions usually reside in the Humanities or Social Sciences, rather than in the Sciences.) Appointments are usually not for less than one semester and are normally not renewed beyond a total of 6 years, in any combination of appointments as Postdoctoral Associate or Postdoctoral Fellow. Extension of an appointment beyond a combined total of six years is only possible in extraordinary circumstances and requires approval of the Dean or Division Head. Appointments for less than one semester should use a visiting appointment of the appropriate type.

Responsibilities of Faculty Sponsors

Faculty sponsors' responsibilities include:

- developing, in consultation with the Postdoctoral Scholar, a mutually satisfactory research project or scholarly program;
- encouraging Postdoctoral Scholars to present their work and to publish their results in a timely fashion;
- encouraging Postdoctoral Scholars to acquire and enhance their knowledge and technical skills, as dictated by their current and future needs;
- arranging and overseeing teaching opportunities for the Postdoctoral Scholar, as appropriate to their discipline and program;
- encouraging Postdoctoral Scholars to apply for training and research support, as appropriate;
- meeting regularly with their Postdoctoral Scholars to discuss progress in their research;
- providing an annual review of Postdoctoral Scholars' performance based upon written, mutually agreed expectations of progress and performance;
- training Postdoctoral Scholars in the responsible conduct of research
- ensuring that Postdoctoral Scholars are aware of University policies regarding postdoctoral training and ethical training and are instructed about research policies of the University;
- providing career counseling.

Responsibilities of Postdoctoral Scholars

Postdoctoral Scholars have certain obligations to their mentor, the group in which they are working, the department/institute/school with which they are associated, the sponsor whose funds support them, and the University. These obligations include but are not limited to:

- developing, in consultation with the faculty sponsor, a mutually satisfactory research project or scholarly program;
- performing conscientiously the duties assigned to them by their faculty sponsor;
- conforming with the highest ethical standards in research and scholarship;
- following all applicable guidelines regarding human subjects, animal subjects, and biohazards;
- complying with good scholarly practice, including the maintenance of adequate research records;
- discussing with their faculty sponsor the possession or distribution of tangible property, such as materials, reagents, and the like, in a timely and open manner;
- discussing laboratory records or scholarly materials and if relevant disclosing appropriate scholarly information, findings or techniques proposed for dissemination privately, at scholarly meetings, or in publications;
- conducting themselves collegially towards coworkers, members of their academic or research group, and all members of the Brandeis community;
- completing all required training within a timely manner;
- complying with all applicable sponsor, laboratory, departmental, Office of Postdoctoral Scholars, Office of Research Administration, International Students and Scholars Office and US immigration regulations (if applicable), and University policies, including the intellectual property policy.