

**Policy for
Postdoctoral Scholar Benefits**
Brandeis University
(January 29, 2014)

Paid Leave

The University recognizes the need for Postdoctoral Scholars to have clearly defined guidelines with regard to leave time. The following conditions govern the leave policies detailed in this document:

- All vacation leaves must be approved in advance by the faculty sponsor.
- Leave will be made available in total after the 60th day of the postdoctoral appointment and will be renewed annually.
- Unused leave will not be paid out when the postdoctoral appointment ends.
- Leave does not accrue and cannot be carried over from year to year.
- Tracking leave is not necessary at the departmental level, but faculty sponsors are encouraged to do so on an individual basis.
- In the event that an appointee's funding source specifies leave, vacation, and/or holiday provisions, the terms of the funding source shall supersede these policies.

Full time Postdoctoral Scholars who serve on a 12-month basis are allowed up to 15 days paid vacation days in addition to designated University holidays. Less than full-time Postdoctoral Scholars will receive prorated vacation time.

Sick Leave

Sick leave may be taken as needed up to a limit of 12 days per year. If illness extends beyond one week, then documentation from a physician may be required. Under exceptional circumstances, a period of unpaid leave due to illness or incapacity may be extended at the discretion of the mentor.

Holidays

Postdoctoral Scholars are entitled to all University observed holidays and discretionary days as designated by the President. If a Postdoctoral Scholar wishes to or is required to work and/or perform research during an official holiday, then he or she can use the equivalent time as additional vacation days, with approval of the mentor.

Parental Leave

Postdoctoral Scholars are entitled to a minimum of 8 weeks of paid parental leave. These 8 weeks are a part of the 12-week FMLA leave policy detailed below. As always, if an appointee's funding source specifies different parental leave parameters, the terms of the funding source shall supersede this policy.

FMLA

Postdoctoral Scholars may be eligible for unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons in accordance with federal and state law. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible Postdoctoral Scholars with up to 12 work-weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave within a 12-month period and requires health benefits to be maintained during the leave. Note that the Postdoctoral Scholar may be required to cover the cost of health insurance coverage during any extended leave period.

Unpaid leave may be granted under FMLA in the following circumstances: serious illness of the appointee; birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child; care of a seriously ill child, stepchild, spouse, parent, parent-in-law or civil union partner. While this leave is unpaid, scholars may use paid leave time (described above) to cover leave for the birth or adoption of a child. These leave requests must be arranged with the faculty sponsor a minimum of 30 days in advance (especially for the birth or adoption of a child). The Postdoctoral Scholar must then contact the Office of Human Resources, the department, and the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars to make administrative arrangements surrounding the leave. In the event that an appointee's funding source specifies leave provisions that differ from those stated above, the terms of the funding source shall apply, and, where necessary, the leave request shall also be sent to the funding agency.

Leave of absence/Unpaid Leave

In the case of unpaid leaves for professional or personal reasons (non-medical), leave arrangements must be acceptable to both the Postdoctoral Scholar and the faculty sponsor, and must not be in violation of visa regulations for international Postdoctoral Scholars. Requests may be approved for up to 90 days at a time. An unpaid leave period may not extend beyond the Postdoctoral Scholar's current appointment or visa end-date.

International Postdoctoral Scholars must have current visa status throughout the unpaid leave period. Requests for an unpaid leave that extends beyond the Postdoctoral Scholar's appointment or visa-end date must be accompanied by a reappointment letter and, in the case of international Postdoctoral Scholars, a visa extension. All Postdoctoral Scholars maintain their appointment affiliation with the University, privileges, and benefits eligibility while on approved unpaid leaves of absence. Though customary, faculty sponsors are not required to pay for medical insurance coverage for their Postdoctoral Scholars while the Postdoctoral Scholars are on an approved unpaid leave of absence. A Postdoctoral Scholar in this instance may elect to either:

- waive the Brandeis University medical plan after showing proof of other coverage to the Benefits Coordinator in accordance with University Policy and, where applicable, visa regulations.
- OR
- continue on the Brandeis University medical plan and arrange with the department that s/he will pay for it during the leave period.

Health/Dental Insurance Coverage

All Postdoctoral Scholars must have evidence of health insurance during the duration of their appointment at Brandeis University. Coverage provided through Brandeis University will terminate upon the end of the Postdoctoral Scholar's appointment at Brandeis University.

Postdoctoral Scholars who hold an appointment at Brandeis University for a period of six months or more and receive salaries or stipend payments through Brandeis University's Payroll Office may enroll in one of the health insurance programs. Postdoctoral Associates are entitled to partially subsidized membership in one of the available health plans offered by Brandeis, for themselves, their families, and civil union partners, subject to specific plan provisions.

Both NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows and non-NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows are eligible to enroll in the same health plans; this membership may be subsidized in whole or in part, to the extent that funds for this purpose are included in the fellowship or are supplemented by the faculty sponsor or the department.

Postdoctoral Scholars who hold an appointment at Brandeis University for a period of six months or more and do not receive a salary or stipend payment through the University Payroll Office may enroll in one of the health insurance programs, but they must assume 100% of the monthly premiums.

Postdoctoral Scholars holding appointments for less than six months are not eligible to participate in any of the University health insurance programs.

Postdoctoral Scholars are also eligible to enroll in dental coverage under the same conditions of eligibility noted above.

Upon appointment, all eligible Postdoctoral Scholars will receive an information packet from the Office of Human Resources containing additional stipulations and details regarding the health and dental insurance coverage offered at Brandeis University.

Retirement

NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows

Since NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows are not employees of the University, they are not eligible to participate in the Brandeis Retirement Plan. Even if an NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow has a retirement account when he/she receives the NRSA fellowship, the University will not make contributions to the account while the person is an NRSA Postdoctoral Fellow.

Non-NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows

Since Postdoctoral Fellows are not employees of the University, they are not eligible to participate in the Brandeis Retirement Plan.

Postdoctoral Associates

While Postdoctoral Associates are paid through University resources and/or other grant funding and provide services to the University, they are academic appointees and not University staff members. However, they are provided the opportunity to contribute to a retirement savings account, but Postdoctoral Associates will not receive contributions to their retirement accounts from the University. Details of the retirement benefits available to Postdoctoral Associates are available through the Office of Human Resources.

Tuition

Postdoctoral Scholars are eligible to audit (not for credit and not recorded on a transcript) University courses during the academic year. Classes audited by Postdoctoral Scholars should be consistent with the training objectives of the Postdoctoral Scholar, and Postdoctoral Scholars should discuss their plans with their mentors to ensure that the coursework does not interfere with research activities. Postdoctoral Scholars must have the permission of the course instructor to audit classes.

Student Loan Deferral

Postdoctoral Scholars are considered to be trainees engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored scholarly development or research. A faculty sponsor, who monitors the Postdoctoral Scholar's progress and advises him or her in continuing professional and scholarly development in the chosen field of study, closely directs this activity. Consequently, the University considers that such individuals qualify for deferment of student loans per section seven of the Federal Family Education Loan Program form for Education Related Deferment Request. All requests for documentation or verification of Postdoctoral Scholar status should be directed to the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars.

Facilities

Brandeis University offers a wealth of benefits to members of the Brandeis community including access to the Gosman Sports Complex, library privileges, and parking. Additional information on these benefits is available through the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars.

Grievances

A Grievance Procedure for Postdoctoral Scholars is available for individuals who believe that they have been treated in a manner inconsistent with University policies or that they

have been discriminated against or have been inappropriately disciplined for misconduct. The Postdoctoral Scholar with the grievance should first bring the grievance to the department administrator of the department. If the case cannot be resolved at the departmental or division level, the Postdoctoral Scholar may bring the grievance to the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars, which will work with the Postdoctoral Scholar to resolve the dispute.

Complaints of academic fraud/scientific misconduct must follow the guidelines established in the Brandeis University Policy on Research Misconduct.

Complaints of sexual harassment must be brought to the Office of Human Resources and will be resolved in accordance with the University's sexual harassment complaint procedures.