

Updated February 18, 2025

Boston College
Postdoctoral Research Fellow Policy

Introduction

degrees will be required to provide proof of degree equivalency as determined by each school at the University.

2. Appointment of Postdoctoral Research Fellow

2.1 Initiating Appointment: In most cases, job advertisements for postdoctoral fellowship positions will be posted through Human Resources at Boston College. However, individuals interested in a Postdoc Fellow appointment may also directly contact the Faculty Mentor and the appropriate academic department in which the candidate is seeking the appointment to see if the Faculty Mentor anticipates being able to hire a Postdoc Fellow in the future. During the interview process, the terms and conditions of that appointment should be discussed and agreed upon by the Postdoc Fellow and the Faculty Mentor. This should include agreement on the anticipated length of appointment, scope of work (e.g., research project), training goals, expectations of an annual research progress and mentoring (e.g., publication expectations, teaching, etc.), sources and amount of salary/benefits and research support, and possibly other details such as plans or expectations to submit fellowship applications, office space, lab, and supporting equipment such as computers.

2.2 Appointment Offer Letter and Approval Process: When a Faculty Mentor makes the decision to appoint a Postdoc Fellow, the Faculty Mentor will create an offer letter using the template approved by the VPR and Human Resources (HR). This offer letter shall be made prior to the commencement of duties. The offer letter must include the following:

- !The term, title, and schedule of the appointment;
- !Duties and responsibilities of the appointee;
- !Duties and responsibilities of the faculty mentor;
- !Period of appointment;
- !Level of support;
- !Source of support;
- !Stipend level and period of time for which funding support is guaranteed;
- !Statement of the expected obligations of the appointee during the training period;
- !Statement of teaching responsibilities, if any, associated with the appointment; and
- !A copy of this Policy.

acknowledgment. A copy of the final letter will be sent to the department, faculty mentor, and the VPR.

3. Terms of Appointment

3.1 Full-Time Appointments: Professional/administrative staff work on a full-time basis (35 hours/week). As a professional/administrative employee, additional hours may be necessary to fulfill the requirements of the job. The total term of Postdoc Fellow appointments may not exceed six (6) years including previous postdoctoral experience at other institutions. Extensions may be granted in exceptional cases (see Section 4.1, below) by the VPR and will be reviewed annually.

In addition to research and scholarship responsibilities, appointments may also include teaching responsibilities. See Appendix II for the Affordable Care Act's guidelines on calculating teaching hours.

The first six (6) months of the appointment is considered a probationary period. The Faculty Mentor should provide ongoing performance feedback to the Postdoc during the probationary period. After three (3) months, the Faculty member should meet with the Postdoc Fellow for an in-depth, documented review of their performance.

3.2 Part-Time Appointments

The Postdoc Fellow may copy notes, computerized files, and other research materials that he or she helped generate during the appointment **only** with prior, written permission to do so from his or her Faculty Mentor **and only** if such reproduction is permitted under the terms of any applicable grant agreements or other contracts. Moreover, future use of any such material and information by the Postdoc Fellow is limited by the terms of any applicable grant agreements or other contracts. Any confidential information obtained by the Postdoc Fellow during his or her appointment must remain strictly confidential and may be disclosed only in accordance with federal or state law, University policy, and the terms of any applicable grant agreements or other contracts.

5. Stipend Level

Until 9/1/23, the University has formally adopted the NIH/NRSA guidelines as the minimum salary to be paid to Postdoc Fellows. The NIH/NRSA salary levels, which are adjusted annually, are based on the Postdoc Fellow’s years of research experience prior to the appointment. Should the FLSA dictate a minimum salary threshold for exempt status that is above the NIH/NRSA guidelines, the University shall use the FLSA minimum salary as the minimum salary to be paid to full-time Postdoc Fellows. Departments will be responsible for ensuring each Postdoc Fellow is paid at least the new minimum salary every year.

For the projected NIH/NRSA guidelines for the current fiscal year, please visit the NIH website: <https://www.nih.gov/salary>. Please note that NIH/NRSA salary minimums are subject to change.

Effective September 1, 2023, Boston College will be implementing an increase in minimum salaries for postdocs. This increase will be phased in over the course of two years, with the minimum salary for postdoctoral researchers with no prior postdoc experience reaching \$65,000 by June 1, 2024. Importantly, these salary increases will be scheduled on each employee's hire anniversary date.

Below, please find the two-year plan for postdoc salaries.

Effective September 1, 2023: Minimum Salaries for BC Postdocs

Years of Experience	Minimum Salary
0	\$61,000
1	\$62,220
2	\$63,464

!Provide adequate work and/or laboratory space and access to resources.

!Hold annual one-on-one meetings that discuss professional development and mentoring.

Other encouraged practices by the Faculty Mentor:

!Encourage Postdoc Fellows to seek secondary mentors who could provide them with opportunities in new areas of research, foster collaboration, and offer them guidance and support to assist with their career goals,

!Seek the participation of these secondary mentors or multiple other faculty members in the annual progress reviews with their Postdoc Fellows,

!Encourage Postdoc Fellows to participate in career development activities (workshops, courses, pre-conference events),

!Recognize that because of the temporary nature of the Postdoc Fellow appointment, early encouragement of participation in career development activities is critical,

!Encourage Postdoc Fellows to engage in the activities of the Boston College Postdoctoral Association, who sponsor professional development seminars and social networking opportunities, as well as other departmental and University-wide opportunities. Additional information about the BCPDA and their activities can be found at

<https://www.bc.edu/research/vpr/bcpda.html>.

This policy seeks to set out infrastructure that helps the Postdoc Fellow acquire the skills necessary for a career of his or her choosing. It is intended to serve as a resource that protects all parties involved in the appointment. The VPR can be contacted if issues arise that are not addressed by the Policy or need assistance for resolution.

Appendix I: Determining Adjunct Hours of Service

The Internal Revenue Service has outlined two options for universities to determine the number of hours that adjunct faculty work when teaching in order for Universities to be compliant with the Affordable Care Act. Boston College has decided the “safe harbor” option is the most efficient method to calculate the hours needed in teaching ng 50 0 0 50 253 -241 to or d B (s) 9 (i) -2 (s) 9 (t)

classroom the Postdoc Fellow spends performing duties he or she is required to perform (such

	6	13.5	2	15.5	39%
	9	20.25	3	23.25	58%

*For example, two single credit courses totaling two credits OR one two credit course and one single credit course totaling three credits OR two three credit courses totaling six credits, etc.

Appendix II: Postdoctoral Research Associate Teaching Policy

Some postdocs may wish to teach in order to gain more teaching experience as they prepare for a job in academia. This policy describes how postdocs may be paid for teaching courses. This policy applies to courses taught at any time of day, whether before 4 p.m. or in the evenings.

These teaching appointments are temporary and part time. Postdoc teaching appointments require approval and cooperation from two entities. First, the PI must approve the postdoc's teaching role, in accordance with the needs of the postdoc role. Second, a teaching position must be offered and approved by the department chair in the department staffing the course. Teaching positions are not guaranteed and are subject to the availability of courses in each department.

This policy applies *only*