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Procedure For Awarding Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

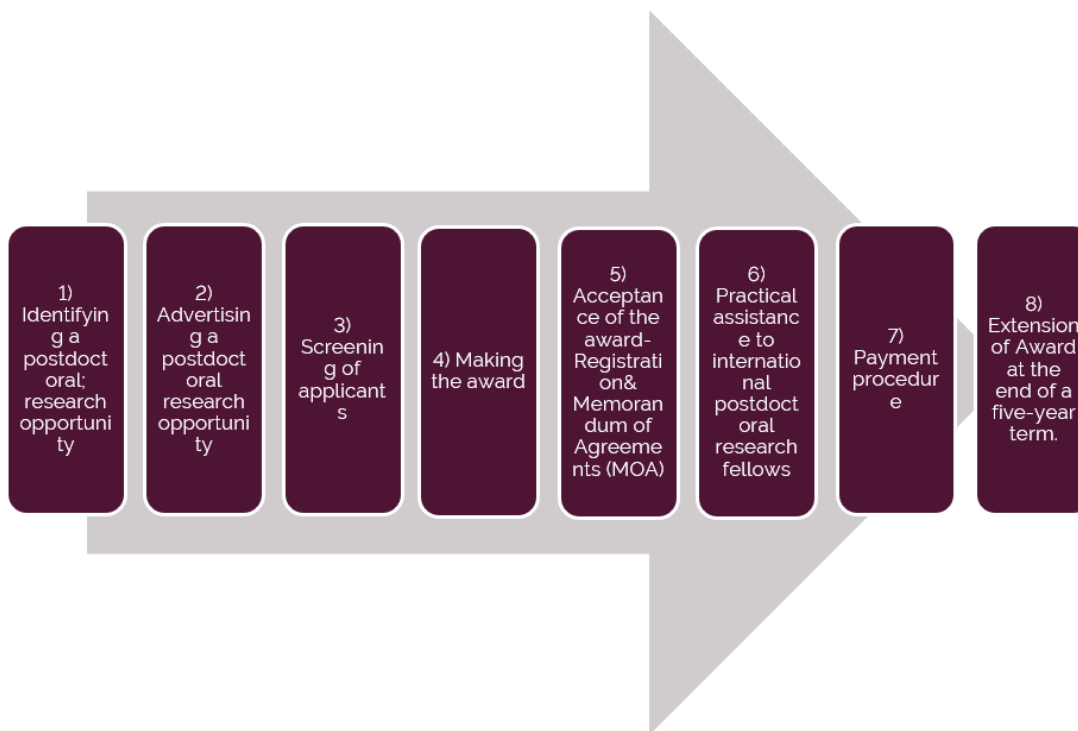
**Postdoctoral Research Support Office,
Division for Research Development**

An award always depends on a suitable opportunity within an academic department.

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Postdoctoral Research Fellow Appointment Procedure



1. Identifying a postdoctoral research opportunity

The opportunity and funding for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship may arise in a variety of ways but are generally either

a) Awarded to a host academic staff member

- Via a University Research Internal Funding Programme; or by
- An outside funding agency as part of a larger grant; **OR**

b) Awarded to a recent doctoral graduate or postdoctoral fellow who obtained the PhD qualification within the last five years

- By the relevant academic department; or
- As a result of application to an external funding body

The onus is on the host to ascertain that there is sufficient funding from a bona fide bursary source for a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Should a host secure funding from contract research, the contract must make an *express provision for a bursary*, and may not be paid in return for services rendered or specific outcomes, to comply with SARS legislation. For audit purposes, a copy of the contract must also be submitted to the Postdoctoral Office at the Division for Research Development (hereafter referred to

as the Postdoc Office). The Contracts Office, at DRD or the Tygerberg Research office, can assist with contract-related enquires.

2. Advertising a postdoctoral research opportunity

The relevant host/host department must advertise such an opportunity to comply with the SARS regulations governing 'open bursaries and existing policy for the payment of bursaries awarded by departments (passed by the Senate in June 2000). The advertisement must be placed on at least one internal and external platform to attract postdoctoral candidates from other universities. The Postdoc Office may provide a list of platforms where the adverts can be placed. (**Note: The NRF prefers not to fund a postdoctoral research fellowship at the same institution at which the candidate obtained the doctoral degree**). A copy of the advertisement must also be lodged with the Postdoctoral Coordinator, to ensure that the Division for Research Development is aware of all current Postdoctoral Research Fellowships being offered at SU.

3. Screening of applicants

The host in consultation with a selection committee at the Department, is responsible for

- Accepting and acknowledging applications, and
- Interviewing and selecting an appropriate candidate, ensuring that the proposed person holds, or will soon hold a doctoral degree.

At the time of the award, the candidate should have graduated no earlier than **within the previous five years**. (N.B. The candidates must at least be able to **provide proof** that they have satisfactorily fulfilled the University's requirements for a PhD at the time of application for an award. This includes all procedural approvals including that of the Senate. This is to avoid awarding a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship and then waiting an indefinite period while the candidate finishes their PhD).

4. Making of the Award

The host must supply the Postdoc Office with the following details of the chosen applicant:

- The name and full contact details,
- The amount¹ of the award and its source (description of the original source and the University cost entity from where it will be paid),
- The term of the award (one or two years initially),
- Proof of doctoral qualification (copy of certificate or proof of satisfactory fulfilment of the University's requirements for a PhD) and CV,
- A copy of the applicant's ID for South Africans or passport photo page and visa in the case of international postdoctoral fellows.
- A copy of the advert that the candidate responded to.

¹ The minimum level of funding for a full-time postdoctoral fellowship sponsored by SU will be revised annually by the Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies and communicated to current and prospective postdocs and their hosts by the DRD. The current minimum per annum is R200 000; and the maximum amount is R400 000, The Postdoc Office recommends R250 000 in line with Subcommittee A of the Research committee.

A formal Letter of Award, stipulating the term and amount of the award is then drawn up by the Postdoc Office and sent to the candidate and the host by e-mail. International postdoctoral candidates will also receive an award letter a letter of invitation also referred to as a visa letter via e-mail.

5. Acceptance of the Award – Registration & Memorandum of Agreement

By way of acceptance, the Postdoctoral Research Fellow submits an Application Form for Registration as a Postdoctoral Fellow, the host submits the Postdoc Information sheet and together a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) is completed. The MoA outlines the general conditions of the award and the research to be undertaken. Both documents should be sent to the Postdoc Office and copies retained by the host.

6. Practical assistance to international postdoctoral research fellows

The Postdoc Office in liaison with the International Office currently offers outstanding assistance to international Postdoctoral Research Fellows. This includes assistance with temporary university accommodation; immigration support and health insurance assistance. Airport transfers are offered upon the first arrival of Postdocs as well as for visa renewal applications when their fellowship gets extended

7. Payment procedure

7.1 Requests for payment

Payments to Postdoctoral Research Fellows are made against completed **Request for Payment forms** sent to the PD Coordinator (N.B. NOT the Postgraduate Bursary Office). The host is responsible for ensuring that the information given is complete and correct and that there are sufficient funds in the designated cost entity to cover the requested payments.

7.2 Frequency of payments

Payments are made monthly via the **Intellimali Finance Administration System** in liaison with Student Fees, into a Postdoctoral Research Fellow's' South African bank account, at the end of each month. Newly appointed postdoctoral fellows may request an immediate payment (who may urgently need money to settle in Stellenbosch) for the initial payment. The maximum annual award currently is R400 000 and the minimum annual award for a Postdoctoral Research Fellow will be revised annually by the Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies.

7.3 Restrictions on the period of payment

-Requests for payments to be advanced, will unfortunately not be allowed via the Intellimali Finance Administration System; Requests for quarterly and bi-annual payments will also not be accommodated; and no single annual payments may be made to Postdoctoral Research Fellows as this creates problems in cases where fellowships are terminated prematurely.

7.4 Extra amounts

Amounts that exceed the amount stipulated in the Letter of Award should not be in contravention of any specific bursary award conditions or the conditions in 7.4 below.

- 7.4.1 Any ad hoc ("top up") amounts** are allowed up to the cap value of the institution. However, if it is not **specified in the Letter of Award or similar updated document** (see 7.4.2 below), hosts will be required to complete a document indicating these amounts (Addendum C) are **taxable and must be**

paid via the Sundry Payment system of the Division of Finance, and not via the Postdoctoral Coordinator and the bursary system.

7.4.2 Payment requests to increase the initial bursary award amount (as reflected in the Award Letter and therefore not taxable) and where permitted by the specific bursary award conditions, must be accompanied by a formal letter from the host academic department specifying the permanent change in the bursary amount so that there is an auditable trail for SARS purposes. The postdoctoral fellows are personally responsible for ensuring that they do not violate their bursary or visa conditions² regarding additional funding, and the University Division of Research is obliged to report any such contraventions to the relevant funding organisations (in terms of signed undertakings) and to the auditors.

7.5 Remuneration for additional work

7.5.1 The express purpose of a Postdoctoral Fellowship Award is to enable the Postdoctoral Research Fellows to engage in a period of uninterrupted research, as bursary recipients. Postdoctoral Research Fellows may however work, in their own time as long as it does not encroach upon their research. This will also be subject to the funders' conditions.

7.5.2 Where extra work is permitted in terms of the fellowship scheme, a total of up to 12 hours weekly of additionally paid work may be undertaken, as stipulated in the SARS Binding Class Ruling. This includes all other additionally remunerated academic activities and is to be paid for at the University rate for workers with a PhD as determined by the Human Resources Division. Such remuneration will not be paid via the postdoc fellowship system, but via the university Human Resources system. These payments are taxable by the prevailing tax legislation.

7.5.3 Postdoctoral Research Fellows may not be required to give lectures to students

Should they wish to lecture briefly to gain experience, this should be voluntarily up to a maximum of 12 hours per week (e.g., as part of the additional work for which they may be remunerated as in 7.5.2 above) but this should in no way constitute part of the basic teaching provisioning of a department. *N. B. The number of hours may also be restricted by the particular bursary scheme, e.g. Claude Leon.*

7.5.4 Postdoctoral Research Fellows may not be appointed as a supervisor or co-supervisor of postgraduate students, but may be expected to provide support, guidance, mentorship and informal training on a day-to-day basis, with oversight of the supervisor/host to ensure quality.

8. Progress reports

Requests for the second payment and each subsequent six-month period must be accompanied by a brief progress report from the host. This report serves a dual function: it provides a record of research done and provides hosts/the University with a basis for possible termination of unsatisfactory postdoctoral fellowships. Such reports are in any event required annually for the continuation of external funding. Postdoctoral research fellows are encouraged to expeditiously publish their research findings.

² International postdocs may not work for remuneration, in terms of their visa restrictions.

9. Extension of Award for a third, fourth and fifth year

Should funding be available and should the host deem this to be desirable for the University,

A Postdoctoral Research Fellowship may be extended for

- **A third year at the request of the host.** (The host must send a letter to the PD Coordinator, who in turn drafts a new Letter of Award to formally extend the term).
- **A fourth and fifth year on request of the host, subject to the written approval of the Vice-Rector: Research.** (The host should write a letter of motivation to the Vice-Rector: Research, sent via the PD Coordinator before the end of the third year of the fellowship. If approved, the PD Coordinator drafts a new Letter of Award to formally extend the term). Postdoctoral research fellows are encouraged to accept offers of research in other related areas at SU.