



## **NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY**

SEC. V-- EMPLOYMENT 1.0

### **POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS**

UNIT POLICY—DORED

#### **A. PURPOSE**

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is committed to developing and maintaining a robust program for Postdoctoral Scholars that will simultaneously provide mentorship and professional development opportunities for Postdoctoral Scholars and support and expand the university's research mission.

#### **B. DEFINITION**

A Postdoctoral Scholar ("Postdoc") is a professional apprenticeship designed to provide recent Ph.D. recipients with an opportunity to develop further the research skills acquired in their doctoral programs or to learn new research techniques, in preparation for an academic or research career. North Carolina A&T State University embraces the principle of the National Academies' Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP) that "the postdoctoral experience is first and foremost an apprenticeship whose purpose is to gain scientific, technical, and professional skills that advance the professional career of the postdoc." In the process of further developing their own research skills, it is expected that Postdoctoral Scholars will also play a significant role in the performance of research at the University and augment the role of graduate faculty in providing research instruction to graduate students.

A Postdoctoral Scholar works under the supervision of a regular faculty member, who serves as a mentor to the Scholar, and it is expected that the Faculty Mentor will impart the information about the realities and variety of scientific careers, and will encourage experiences outside the laboratory to broaden Postdocs' aspirations. Within the confines of the particular research focus assigned by that faculty member, the Postdoctoral Scholar functions with a considerable degree of independence and has the freedom and expectation to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of appointment. The Faculty Mentor should review and approve

publications prior to submittal to external reviewers or publishing entities.

Postdoc appointments are characterized by all of the following conditions:

- the appointee was recently (within the last eight years) awarded Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate (e.g., Sc.D., M.D.);
- the appointment involves substantially full-time research or scholarship;
- the appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic and/or research career;
- the appointee works under the supervision of a Faculty Mentor; and
- the appointee has the freedom and is expected to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of appointment
- the appointee is expected to write proposals for grant funding jointly with the Faculty Mentor and may serve as Co-Principal Investigator.

*The postdoc appointment may include teaching responsibilities but postdocs can teach no more than one class per semester.*

### **C. APPOINTMENT**

Postdocs are appointed as *time limited-full time* EHRA (Exempt from the State Personnel Act) Non-Faculty Professional (Research) employees. Postdocs receive one-year appointments, renewable annually for up to a maximum of *five* years. Extensions beyond five years may be granted under exceptional circumstances and require the advance approval of the Vice Chancellor for Research.

Postdoc appointments follow EHRA Non-Faculty appointment procedures, with the exception that competitive recruitments are not required. Postdoc positions must be established by submitting a position description through the Division of Research and Economic Development (DORED), which owns all postdoc positions. DORED will assign a position number to the Faculty Mentor and process the candidate through PeopleAdmin. When a postdoc vacates a position, the position number is returned to DORED for reassignment.

Once approved, the Faculty Mentor may select the appropriate individual for the position. The positions may or may not be advertised nationally at the discretion of the Faculty Mentor; however, faculty members are encouraged to communicate broadly within their particular discipline about the availability of the position. Once the Faculty Mentor has selected the individual he/she wishes to appoint, EHRA Non-Faculty Appointment procedures should be followed (<http://www.ncat.edu/administration/salaryadmin/>).

#### **Procedures for Hiring a Postdoctoral Scholar:**

1. The Faculty Mentor develops a position description. A sample position description is attached.
2. The Faculty Mentor discusses the position description and hiring procedures (including plans for advertising) with the Vice Chancellor for

Research.

3. The Faculty Mentor proceeds with any advertising and selection process.
4. The Faculty Mentor discusses the proposed postdoc hire including salary recommendation with the Vice Chancellor for Research who approves the hire and salary.
5. If needed, the Faculty Mentor works with Foreign National Administrator, Human Resources, to complete any visa or work authorization requirements.
6. The Faculty Mentor prepares the New Hire Packet and sends to DORED.

Questions regarding the position descriptions for, responsibilities of, or selection procedures for Postdocs should be directed to the Vice Chancellor for Research.

### **Orientation and Benefits Enrollment:**

On first day of work, send the Postdoc to Human Resources. Human Resources will work with the Postdoc to complete the required I-9 and E-verify process. Human Resources will also schedule a benefits orientation session for the new Postdoc. Attendance is critical in order that the Postdoc gets put on Payroll in a timely fashion and makes key benefits decisions. For example, as EHRA Non-Faculty Professional (Research) employees, Postdocs will need to make a decision about whether they wish to participate in the Teachers and State Employees Retirement System or participate in the Optional Retirement Program.

Questions regarding EHRA Non-Faculty employment processes should be directed to the Director of EHRA Salary Administration at 334-7967.

### **D. EXPECTATIONS OF POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS**

The University has adopted the following universal set of performance expectations for Postdoctoral Scholars:

- conscientious discharge of assigned duties;
- adherence to ethical standards;
- compliance with good laboratory practice and recognized University standards;
- observations of established guidelines for research involving biohazards, human subjects or animals;
- open and timely discussion with the mentor regarding research progress, distribution of reagents or materials, or any disclosure of findings or techniques privately or in publications;
- collegial conduct towards coworkers; and
- compliance with all applicable University policies and procedures

### **E. APPOINTMENT AND DISCONTINUATION POLICIES FOR POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS**

Postdoctoral Scholars are subject to the appointment and discontinuation policies for EHRA Non-Faculty Professional (Research) positions found in Section 2.E.3 of the Employment Policies for EHRA Non-Faculty. The complete policy can be found at

<https://hub.ncat.edu/administration/human-resources/documents/policies/emp-prov/epanf-emp.pdf> .

To request an extension of appointment beyond the *five*-year limit, Faculty Mentors may submit a Request for Extension of Postdoc Appointment form, indicating exceptional circumstances that require an extended appointment. The form must be signed by the Faculty Mentor and submitted through the Dean to the Vice Chancellor for Research who will make the determination. Requests for extensions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Discontinuation of Appointment due to Funding**

A Postdoc may have his/her appointment ended with thirty calendar days' notice if the funding supporting his/her appointment ends. All appointment letters for Postdocs should include a contingency clause based on availability of funding.

### **Discontinuation of Appointment for Cause**

A Postdoctoral Scholar may have his/her appointment ended at any time during the appointment if he/she is found by his/her mentor to have violated the expectations set forth above. Discontinuation of appointment for cause is to be preceded by written notice of intent to discontinue following Section 3.F of the Employment Policies for EHRA Non- faculty.

## **F. GRIEVANCES**

Postdoctoral Scholars may follow the grievance processes outlined in the Employment Policies for EHRA Non-faculty for resolution of employment related disputes.

## **G. BENEFITS**

As EHRA Non-Faculty employees, Postdocs are entitled to the University benefit package which includes health insurance and the NC Flex program. All Postdocs must participate in a retirement system (including a mandatory employee contribution of 6% of salary).

Postdocs will be given the option of participating in the Teachers and State Employees Retirement System (a defined benefit program) or the Optional Retirement Program (a defined contribution program). In both cases, the University provides an employer match. More information about specific benefits can be found on the Human Resources website at <http://facultypages.ncat.edu/hr/>.

## **H. COMPENSATION**

The minimum salary for a Postdoctoral Scholar shall comply with the Postdoctoral Salary Guidelines for National Research Service Awards (NRSA) published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Salaries may vary by discipline but should reflect market rates for individuals with a doctorate in the specific field. Assistance in determining appropriate

salary levels can be obtained from Human Resources. Salary levels will be reviewed at the time of reappointment. Any proposed mid-year salary increases must follow university procedures for Out-of-Cycle pay increases.

#### **I. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

The Faculty Mentor of a Postdoc must complete an annual written evaluation of the Postdoc's performance. The evaluation process should be simple and must include the opportunity for the Scholar to respond in writing to the evaluation. A sample evaluation form is attached.

#### **J. LEAVE**

A Postdoctoral Scholar is eligible for leave according to the leave provisions of the Employment Policies for EHRA Non-Faculty (Section 9).

**Additional References:** EHRA Non-Faculty Employment Policies, Request for Extension of Postdoc Appointment Form, Annual Evaluation of Postdoc Form

**Related Policies:** Employment Policies for EHRA Non-Faculty

Date revision is effective: upon approval

Approved by the Chancellor

Originally approved April 1, 2008

Revised: September 11, 2017