

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON POSTDOCTORAL POSITIONS

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Definition

A Postdoctoral position is one occupied by an individual who has previously earned a doctoral degree (e.g. PhD, LLD, MD) or equivalent and is receiving advanced mentorship in research or professional practice at Makerere University and its affiliated or other approved partner institutions including overseas under the aegis of one of the departments and its academic staff. Where such a scholar to be known as known as a Postdoctoral Fellow (PDF) plans to spend time at another institution (other than Makerere University), evidence must be provided to show the partner's willingness to provide support to the fellowship. PDFs are neither students nor permanent staff of the University. However, the fellowship award will support the PDF's salary, fringe benefits, research and related professional activities included in the award letter . The appointments are full time temporary positions which are intended to promote the growth and development to academic independence of the scholar.

Eligibility and scope

Postdoctoral fellowships will be awarded to individuals with demonstrated ability and high potential for research career development. Normally the eligible candidates will be holders of a doctoral degree or equivalent within five years of having received that award. Fellowships will be awarded for a period of one to three years depending on performance of the PDF, availability of resources and existence of a suitable supervisor/mentor with an appropriate supportive research environment.

Justification

Makerere University needs to develop and consolidate PDF positions in the University academic hierarchy as an essential and important support to its ever growing research enterprise. PDFs will play a key role and significant contribution in achieving Makerere's goal of becoming a research driven University. Moreover as doctoral training is taking a strong hold at the University there is urgent need to complete the value chain in growing independent researchers as is the case elsewhere globally. This is a missing link at Makerere in the value chain starting from

undergraduate research training through doctoral programs to development of world class independent investigators. The postdoctoral scholar experience provides essential mentorship and scholarship focused on acquiring advanced research skills under tutelage of a senior researcher. It may also provide opportunities to enhance administrative, teaching and other professional responsibilities. The PDF shall devote at least 80% of his/her time on research work.

The above experience is to prepare the fellow for a career position in academia or other organizations that require significant research expertise. PDFs are expected to be highly productive and valuable members of the University well positioned to contribute to advancing the institution's scholarship of discovery and application by enhancing the research and educational programs of the University. They bring rigor, enthusiasm, expertise and creativity that enrich the research environment for the benefit of all members of the University community including capacity building pipeline of graduate and undergraduate students. Makerere University shall strive to provide a stimulating and constructive experience for the postdoctoral scholar by emphasizing mutual commitment and responsibility of the institution, the academic staff and the Postdoctoral Scholar.

Duties and responsibilities

Colleges and other University departments are encouraged as much as possible to advertise postdoctoral positions in order to promote equal opportunity for all candidates and advance the university's image as an equal opportunity employer. Advertisements may be made at any time during the academic year.

Successful applicants will be based at Makerere University, its affiliates or at any of its partnering institutions providing a suitable environment with resources for high quality research and mentor(s) or supervisors for the Fellow. To provide adequate time for Fellows to focus on establishing their research it is mandatory that each individual spends no less than 70% of his or her time (FTE) devoted to research. For the remaining 30% time or less the Fellow will be required to participate in service duties, teaching or administrative responsibilities to be negotiated at departmental level or may use some of this time if needed take didactic courses for

a maximum of 16 credits during his/her entire tenure as a Fellow. These must be courses that are essential and critical to the research work the PDF is undertaking. However, a Fellow is not to be enrolled in any degree program. The Fellow will obtain prior to starting work the necessary licenses, permits or regulatory approvals. It is expected that in addition to conducting high quality research the PDF will engage in writing competitive research grants and preparation of manuscripts.

Funding for postdoctoral positions

There are several potential sources of funding for postdoctoral positions at Makerere University including various organizations and funding agencies, bilateral arrangements and from core University or College budgets when available. Much of the funding for Postdoc positions will be supported by grants. Over time the University will be able to set aside increasing amounts to support these positions. Sources will vary from time to time. Some funders may provide funds to the University or its Colleges, Schools, Institutes, Departments or Centers or may choose to pay the PDF directly. A Fellow will be provided with a monthly stipend and funds for research and travel that is work related and attendance at selected conferences and workshops. He/She will be encouraged and required to write grant proposals to raise additional funds.

Sponsorship and Supervision

Each applicant for a postdoctoral position must be supported by an academic sponsor who is a senior researcher and eligible for supervision of Postdocs either at Makerere University or partnering institutions mentioned above.

Sponsors are required to commit to and fulfill the following obligations with the support of their Department, School or College:

- a) Ensure adequate preparation and planning for Postdoc placement of a Fellow to receive maximum research capacity development and benefit for the unit.
- b) Provide appropriate institutional resources like space, laboratory, equipment, and others congruent with the applicant's research project.

- c) Clarify the goals, objectives and expectations in the fellowship program and the responsibilities of the Postdoctoral Scholar.
- d) Ensure adequate guidance, supervision and mentorship that will facilitate growth and development of the Fellow towards becoming an independent investigator.
- e) Ensure that all required or necessary legal and institutional, national or funder's regulatory requirements for conducting research and publishing or teaching and service delivery that the Fellow is to be involved in are obtained and/or adhered to.
- f) Monitor the research efforts and development of the PDF. In addition the sponsor should regularly and frequently communicate with the postdoctoral scholar, provide regular and timely assessments of the scholar's performance and provide career advice.

Since PDF occupy temporary positions funded from financial resources available at the College level, the College upon recommendation of its respective College appointment committee has the authority to approve appointments and re-appointments of postdoctoral scholars. Where the funding of a particular postdoctoral position is from a University central resource pool the College Principal will ONLY authorize these appointments after appropriate due consultation and documented agreement with responsible authorities like Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration or Director School of Graduate Studies.

Colleges may provide the post-doctoral appointee with salaries based on ongoing competitive market rates, availability of funding and performance of the scholar. Appointments may be made for one to three years but renewable on a yearly basis subject to satisfactory performance. It is within the institution's sole discretion not to reappoint a postdoctoral scholar in that position.

When the PDF is a holder of a Makerere University employment the individual will plan with his/her mentor/supervisor and Dean/Head of department to determine how best to accommodate the post-doc responsibilities. If the PDF is employed elsewhere and continues with that appointment the percent time of the PDF appointment will be reduced so that the sum of the percent times of the appointments does not exceed 100 percent.

Notice of appointment

The scholar shall be provided with a written notice of appointment as a PDF which shall include the mentor's name, begin and end dates of the appointment, leave entitlement, salary/stipend amount, other fringe benefits if any, , what is to be covered by funds provided by the Fellowship, source of funding and work eligibility requirements. Additional information may be added based on the nature of work to be undertaken and other circumstances. The Fellow is required to accept the appointment in writing. The mentor will conduct an annual review of the scholar and a written review provided to the PDF and the College Human Resource Office.

Interruption, Corrective Action or Termination of employment as a PDF

a) Withdrawal

A PDF may withdraw or be withdrawn from the program for personal reasons but may rejoin if the mentor evaluates that there is merit in continuing the Fellowship. The decision whether or not to continue salary payment or other benefits to the PDF will be made on a case by case basis in light of the reasons for withdrawal. Such payment shall not exceed two months salary.

b) Lay off

Lay off is defined as the termination by the University of a PDF appointment prior to the end date as a result of appropriate funding and/or suitable mentorship environment becoming unavailable. The University or College Human Resource official shall provide notification in writing to the Scholar not less than thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the effective date of the early termination. Appropriate pay in lieu of notice may be given.

c) Corrective Action

The University may impose corrective action or dismissal when, in its reasoned judgment, the PDF's performance or conduct merits the action. Corrective action is the institution of one of the following:

- i) Written warning that informs the PDF of the nature of the inadequate performance or misconduct, stating requirements for continuation in the Fellowship program and the probable consequence of continued inadequate performance or misconduct.

- ii) Reduction in salary or stipend for a stated period of time. The amount and duration of the reduced salary or stipend shall be specified.
- iii) Suspension, which is debarment from the training program without pay for a stated period of time. Unless otherwise noted, the terms of a suspension will include loss of normal Postdoctoral Scholar privileges including access to University property and that of partnering institutions where the PDF was undertaking or expected to undertake his Fellowship activities.
- iv) Other action(s) as may be determined appropriate by the university and its organs or the respective funding agency.

d) Termination

Dismissal is the termination of a PDF's appointment initiated by the University or College, prior to the appointment end date, when, in the reasoned judgment of the University or College, the PDF's conduct or performance does not justify continuation.

Prior to the institution of formal corrective action or dismissal, informal efforts to resolve the problem should be made, where appropriate.

A Postdoctoral Scholar may be placed on immediate investigatory leave with pay, without prior written notice, for the purpose of reviewing or investigating conduct which in the judgment of the University requires removing the PDF from University premises. While on such leave, the PDF's return to University premises without written permission may create independent grounds for dismissal. Such investigatory leave shall be confirmed in writing after it is instituted.

Days Off Work

a) Sick leave

Scholars are entitled to sick leave and are eligible for paid sick leave as prescribed by the University guidelines and laws of Uganda. The Fellows who are paid directly by the funder will also be subject to the above guidelines unless the funder has different sick leave requirements.

b) Holidays

Official holidays for postdoctoral scholars are those holidays published by or allowed by the University.

c) Annual or other leave

The PDF will be enjoy the same annual or any other leave that other university employees in his/her category of temporary staff are entitled to.