

Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs) are valued members of the Queen's community and make an indispensable contribution to the research environment of the University. As trained researchers, normally with limited or no teaching responsibilities, they have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to their chosen field. As members of a research group, they can form partnerships with faculty researchers and can guide graduate students.

Persons usually accept a Postdoctoral Fellowship for a limited period of time, normally for two or three years. In the sciences, the customary pattern is to seek to broaden one's research expertise under the guidance of an established researcher. In all disciplines an important objective is to strengthen one's publication record and CV, thereby building a reputation and enhancing one's chances of securing a more permanent faculty or research position.

In some cases, the Postdoctoral Fellowship is accompanied by a letter of academic appointment from the Principal. In other cases, however, the status of the PDF has not been adequately covered by any existing policy statement. The "Terms and Conditions of Employment of Persons Employed on Grants and Contracts" at Queen's University, as issued in January 1991 and amended in September 1992, specifically excludes PDFs. The rationale for this exclusion is the consideration that a person completing a doctoral degree does not normally seek a Postdoctoral Fellowship as a career position. Such positions usually provide a transition between the doctoral degree and a more permanent position in academia or in research.

The following statement defines policy, benefits and access to facilities and resources of the University for PDFs.

Policy

Definition

Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs) are considered to be those individuals who are designated as such by external funding agencies or those who are within five years of completion of their doctoral degree. This five-year period may be delayed by circumstances requiring a break in research career, e.g. by parental responsibilities.

Persons within five years of completion of their doctoral degree need not necessarily be designated a PDF but could accept a contract research position at the University. Researchers who have held a doctoral degree for more than five years are normally considered contract employees and their employment at Queen's University is governed by the "Terms and Conditions of Employment of Persons Employed on Grants and Contracts".

PDFs can receive funding from grants or contracts held by faculty at Queen's or from departmental resources. PDFs can also secure personal funding from external sources, including competitive fellowship programs. Because this policy statement includes reference to benefits, this aspect of the policy applies only to those PDFs whose salaries are paid by Queen's through the Human Resources, Compensation Unit or for whom

arrangements are made for the employer's and employee's benefit contributions to be paid from a Queen's account.

Recruitment

Faculty may recruit PDFs by whatever method they deem appropriate, e.g. by personal contacts, or by advertisement in the local, national or international press. However, when recruiting PDF's, faculty members must adhere to relevant legislation, such as the Human Rights Code and Employment Standards Act. Information on human rights and employment standards legislation is available from Human Resources. Faculty members should consider Queen's employment equity goals when recruiting PDFs.

Faculty should be aware of restrictions placed upon the recruitment of PDFs by Employment and Immigration Canada.

Appointment

An individual faculty member or group of faculty may invite a PDF to join them as a research colleague. The letter of invitation to come to Queen's must specify:

1. the term of appointment as PDF
2. salary or stipend arrangements (whether funding is from external or internal sources or a combination of both)
3. the nature of the research to be undertaken
4. any special conditions

The PDF must accept this letter of invitation in writing.

A PDF will be associated with one or more faculty colleagues for the purpose of research collaboration. It is the responsibility of the faculty colleagues to provide whatever resources are needed to support the collaborative research activities.

For a PDF to be recognized at Queen's University under the terms of this policy statement, the Authorization to Pay a Regular Monthly Salary form and the **Postdoctoral Fellow Appointment Data Sheet** must be completed and submitted to Human Resources. By signing these forms, the Head of Department accepts the PDF as a member of the department.

Some PDFs may also have a special academic appointment at Queen's University in recognition of assigned teaching responsibilities.

Salary or Stipend

PDFs may be funded by external awards, by payments from grants or contracts held by faculty, or from a combination of sources.

Queen's University does not specify a salary range for PDFs. Those receiving support from sources at Queen's do so by mutual agreement with their faculty colleague(s) who have signing authority over the funding.

It is noted that some external agencies do specify salaries for PDFs. For example, NSERC awards Postdoctoral Fellowships at \$35,000 per year and specifies that postdoctoral fellows may be paid stipends at a minimum rate of \$25,000 per annum as of April 2000. SSHRCC Postdoctoral Fellowships are presently of value \$28,428 annually and are usually supplemented by the University in recognition of the teaching duties normally associated with such positions.

Employment Status

PDFs are considered to be employees of Queen's University. As such, PDFs are governed generally by the policies of the University. However, they are not governed by Queen's personnel policies for support staff, contract staff, or faculty except where noted in this document. PDFs are entitled to hold appropriate staff cards, thereby gaining access to library and athletic facilities.

By application to the Department of Information Technology Services, PDFs may have a computer account established in their own name and will be given the same computing resources to which faculty are entitled.

The names of newly appointed PDFs will be included in the following issue of Queen's University's Telephone Directory.

Benefits

PDFs who are paid through Queen's are entitled to the following plans:

- Canada Pension Plan
- Employer's Health Tax (O.H.I.P., subject to Ministry of Health, O.H.I.P. eligibility)
- Employment Insurance Compensation
- Workers Compensation

In addition, PDFs may elect to participate in the following optional plans:

- basic life insurance
- optional life insurance
- long term disability insurance (for PDFs with appointments of at least 12 months)
- supplementary medical plan
- semi-private hospitalization

The faculty colleague(s) are responsible for paying the employer's contribution to these benefits, and this amount will be debited monthly from the account identified by the faculty member(s) on the Authorization form. The employee's contributions to these benefits are debited from the PDFs salary payment by Human Resources, Compensation Unit.

PDFs who receive funding from an external source are eligible only for the optional benefits plans as described above. The faculty colleague(s) are responsible for paying both the employer's and the employee's contribution to these benefits and this amount will be debited monthly from the identified account. The faculty colleague(s) may wish to recover the employee's contribution from the PDF by reimbursement to the account from which benefit payments are debited.

In accordance with Ontario Pension Benefits legislation, PDFs may choose to participate in the Queen's Pension Plan after a period of two continuous years of employment if they have earned 35% of the YMPE (Canada Pension Plan annual maximum pensionable earnings; the 2001 maximum being \$38,300) or worked at least 700 hours in each of two consecutive years. PDFs can elect to join the plan before the completion of this two-year period, provided that the faculty colleague(s) are prepared to pay the employer's contribution to the Plan.

Information on the cost sharing of premiums can be obtained from the Human Resources, Compensation Unit. The faculty colleague(s) are responsible for paying the Queen's contribution. Note that contributions for long term disability insurance, optional life insurance, and semi-private hospitalization are paid entirely by the PDF.

PDFs must sign on for any optional benefits at Human Resources, Compensation Unit, and coverage is not effective until the necessary enrollment documentation is completed.

Other employer provided benefits for which PDFs are eligible include sick leave, general or compassionate leave, voting day, bereavement leave, jury or witness duty, maternity and parental leave, leave without pay, and the Employee Assistance Program, as described in the Queen's University Staff Policy Manual.

PDFs who accept stipends from an external agency without arrangements being made for employer and employee contributions to be paid through a Queen's account are not eligible for any of the above benefit plans. Such persons are advised to make separate arrangements for required benefit plans and insurance coverage outside the University.

Central Fund

In order to provide for payments to PDFs and contract employees necessitated by sick leave, maternity or parental leave, and benefit continuation for persons receiving long term disability benefits, a Central Fund has been established. Thus, in addition to being responsible for paying the employer's contribution for benefits mandated by law or elected by the PDF, the faculty colleague(s) will contribute a further amount equal to 0.25% of the salary or stipend paid to a PDF. This Central Fund effectively provides internal insurance for principal investigators and spreads unanticipated personnel employment expenses over all PIs at Queen's University. Reimbursement from the Central Fund can be arranged by contacting Human Resources.

The faculty colleague (or external agency) is responsible for paying the first month's salary/stipend of a PDF on sick leave. Thereafter, on presentation of a statement from the PDF's physician, continued sick leave up to a maximum of five months will be paid from the Central Fund. Absence beyond a six-month continuous period can be insured (with premiums paid entirely by the PDF) and covered under the Long-Term Disability Income Plan (if the PDF has chosen this benefit).

The Central Fund will pay for salary and benefits during maternity and parental leave, unless such payments are covered by an external agency, in accordance with Queen's policy.

The Central Fund will pay employer benefit costs associated with long term disability.

It is recognized that many PDFs wish to obtain a faculty position at a university, and it is therefore desirable for them to obtain some teaching experience. It is also recognized that PDFs are an intellectual resource in the University and that both undergraduate and graduate programs would benefit from their participation. PDFs could usefully be involved in undergraduate and graduate lecturing, tutorials, supervision of undergraduate projects, and assistance with the supervision of graduate students.

PDFs should discuss their desire to participate in the teaching activities of the department with their faculty colleague(s) and with the Head of Department. The assignment of teaching duties and any payment therefore is entirely the responsibility of the Head of Department and the appropriate dean.

Courses

PDFs may audit any undergraduate or graduate courses with the permission of the instructor. PDFs may take courses for credit under the status of Special Student, as described in the Calendar of the School of Graduate Studies and Research. PDFs are not eligible for tuition reimbursement under Queen's Tuition Assistance Program.

Vacation

PDFs are entitled to three weeks' vacation per year, in addition to public holidays and other observed holidays available to faculty and staff by agreement with the University.

Grievance Procedures and Sexual Harassment

Policy with regard to Grievance Procedures and to Sexual Harassment is consistent with the corresponding sections of the Queen's University Staff Policy Manual and senate policies governing the same.

Termination

In accordance with Queen's policy, the appointment of a PDF may be terminated with appropriate written notice.