

33.99.99.C0.01 Postdoctoral Research Associates

Approved: August 27, 2015
Revised: August 27, 2015
Next Scheduled Review: August 27, 2020



Procedure Statement

The employment of Postdoctoral Research Associates at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is essential to achieve national recognition and competitiveness in research and scholarship. A Postdoctoral Research Associate is a non-faculty employee who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of developing the professional skills needed to pursue their desired career path.

Reason for Procedure

To clarify the Postdoctoral Research Associate role, provide guidelines that are compliant with applicable legislation, rules and regulations, and facilitate employment and development of a robust Postdoctoral Research program.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. General

- 1.1 Postdoctoral Research Associates report to the assigned principal investigator or project leader who is tasked with mentoring and creating an environment that fosters diverse research experiences and professional development opportunities.
- 1.2 Postdoctoral Research Associates titles are required to observe all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including, but not limited to, export control laws and regulations, University policies and procedures, and the Texas A&M University System *Rules and Regulations*.
- 1.3 All nonfaculty positions in the system are “at will,” meaning that any nonfaculty employee may be dismissed from employment with or without cause. Any such dismissal must be in compliance with federal and state law.

2. Qualifications

Postdoctoral Research Associates must hold the appropriate doctoral degree in an appropriate academic field awarded in the previous five years. If the degree had not been conferred at the

time applicant applied for a postdoc position, a letter needs to be attached from the school's official Graduate Office and/or Registrar's Office certifying that all requirements for the degree have been met and stating the degree conferral date.

3. Commitment to Diversity

Employing units should seek to promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity and inclusion for all Postdoctoral Research Associates in the activities of the Institution regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, national origin, religion, age, or veteran status. Strategies to recruit diverse candidate pools should be implemented in accordance with university affirmative action guidelines.

4. Process to Hire a PRA

4.1 The process to recruit for and hire a Postdoctoral Research Associate (PRA) begins with the submission of a position description which must provide a fund source for salary and benefits. Position descriptions are submitted on-line by the employing department to Human Resources and routed electronically. Approvals required include the Dean/Unit Head, Human Resources, Budget Office, and the Grants Office if applicable. Additional approvals may be required if the fund source is not a grant or contract.

4.2 Upon approval of the position description, Human Resources will post the vacancy for a minimum of 5 working days and list the vacancy with the Texas Workforce Commission as required by state law. Alternatively, an employing unit may request that the vacancy be posted internally or that a current employee be appointed without a search in accordance with university affirmative action guidelines. See University Procedure 33.99.01.C1.01 Filling Staff Vacancies for additional process requirements.

4.3 With justification and approval by the Office of Compliance Services and Human Resources, a hiring manager may recommend that a current qualified employee (i.e. a Graduate Assistant) be appointed as a Postdoctoral Research Associate without a search process. The justification must indicate the benefit of not conducting a search and why the recommended individual should be hired over similarly situated qualified employees. A recommendation to appoint an employee to a vacant PRA vacancy requires a current position description, the submission of an employment application, and the same review and approval process as required for an external hire.

5. Appointment Period

The intention of the Postdoctoral Research Associate is to provide a continued opportunity for training in a specialty area for a limited amount of time. Generally, the initial salaried appointment period is one year and the maximum allowable time for an individual to hold a Postdoctoral Research Associate position is five years. Offers of employment should specify the appointment period. In order for employment to be continuous beyond the maximum of five years it would be necessary for the Postdoctoral Research Associate to be considered for a promotion to a higher rank, such as Research Associate, Research Scientist or Research Assistant Professor. Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family

leave, illness) if approved by the mentor, Chair, Dean, Provost, and if grant funded, the Vice President for Research, Commercialization and Outreach)

6. Salary Levels

Postdoctoral appointees should be provided a salary level that reflects both their prior postdoctoral experience and what is customary for the relevant market.

7. Benefits

PRA's who are appointed for 20 hours per week or more and 4.5 months or longer and whose funding flows through the University are eligible for a benefits defined by the University and administered by the Office of Human Resources. PRA's appointed on a full-time basis are eligible to participate in the Optional Retirement Program.

8. Annual Performance Evaluation

Supervisors are required to provide a new hire evaluation on or before the 4 month of employment and thereafter on an annual basis and in accordance with the University deadlines.

9. Outside Employment and Additional Compensation

In rare circumstances, a PRA who holds a full-time appointment and proposes to engage other employment must obtain approval from their immediate supervisor and complete and submit the Request for External Employment, subject to mentor approval. These activities must comply with all relevant University policies including those on conflict of interest, conflict of commitment, and intellectual property. (See 31.05.02.C1.01 External Employment)

10. Teaching

At the discretion of the supervisor, PRA's in some disciplines include a role in teaching. For those that do not normally include such a role, when allowed by the funding source and with the approval of the supervisor, PRA's may teach. In the case of international PRA's visa regulations may determine whether teaching is allowed and Human Resources should be consulted.

11. Research data, records, products and intellectual property

The PRA should be aware that all data, software, and research records, and similar materials generated in the course of research at TAMUCC remain the property of the University, the laboratory, and the mentor; and their disposition must be carried out in accordance with University policies on Intellectual Property Management and Commercialization. In keeping with academic convention, the PRA may retain copies of research data that he/she was personally responsible for collecting or generating. Future use of such data must appropriately acknowledge TAMUCC, as well as the PRA's research collaborators and mentor.

12. Application for Grants

A PRA may not serve as the principal investigator (PI), but may serve as a co-principal investigator.

13. Termination

The appointment of a PRA may be terminated through resignation, nonrenewal of appointment, loss of funding which supports the appointment, dismissal, or dismissal with cause during the appointment period for poor performance, work related misconduct, violation of University policies or other serious reason. Decisions to not renew an appointment should be coordinated with Human Resources and communicated in writing at least 30 days in advance. All involuntary terminations should be coordinated with Human Resources to ensure compliance with University rules and procedures.

Related Statutes, Policies or Requirements

[System Regulation 33.99.01 General Employment Practices](#)
[University Procedure 33.99.01.C1.01 Filling Staff Vacancies](#)
[University Procedure 31.05.02.C1.01 External Employment](#)

Contact Offices

Contact for interpretation and clarification: Vice President for Research, Commercialization and Outreach (361) 825-7267
Human Resources (3561) 825-2630