

Postdoctoral Policy			
Policy Sponsor	Chief Human Resource Officer	Category	Administrative
Policy Contact	Chief Human Resource Officer	Effective Date	April 5, 2023
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1. Purpose

Postdoctoral Researchers and Postdoctoral Award Holders are valued members of the Athabasca University community and make an indispensable contribution to the research culture of the University.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for establishing postdoctoral positions at the University and for integrating them into the University research environment, to enhance their expertise in a particular field, and facilitate their development as an independent scholar.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Postdoctoral Researchers and Postdoctoral Award Holders and covers Appointments, Responsibilities, Evaluation, Termination and Dispute Resolution.

3. Definitions

Dispute	A serious disagreement regarding matters other than the violation of university policy and procedures.
Funding Agency	The organization/entity that provides financial support for the postdoctoral positions.
Postdoctoral Researcher	An individual, normally within five years of completion of a doctoral degree, who is employed by Athabasca University and receives funding through a Supervising Faculty Member's external grant, and/or Athabasca University grant (employee).
Postdoctoral Award Holder	An individual, normally within five years of completion of a doctoral degree, who has been personally awarded a postdoctoral fellowship from an external funding agency

	following a competitive process and is supervised by an Athabasca University Faculty member as a non-employee.
Postdoctoral Fellowship	An affiliation with the University enabled through internal and/or external research funding. Also referred to as a Fellowship.
Remuneration	Financial compensation paid to Postdoctoral Researchers or Postdoctoral Award Holders in accordance with the procedure to this policy and any guidelines or pay schedules established in accordance with this policy.
Supervising Faculty Member	An Athabasca University academic with an active research program who has agreed to assume responsibility for overseeing the activities of the Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder.
Unit Head	Dean or Chair, as appropriate, or the Director of a Research Institute.
University	Athabasca University

4. Guiding Principles

- 4.1. Athabasca University (the University) is committed to the fair, equitable and respectful treatment of Postdoctoral Researchers and Postdoctoral Award Holders.
- 4.2. A Postdoctoral Researcher is deemed to be an employee of the University, and a Postdoctoral Award Holder is deemed to be a non-employee.
- 4.3. An academic staff member or a group of academic staff members, in consultation with their Dean, may invite a Postdoctoral Researcher to join them as an employee. Alternatively, a prospective postdoc who has secured their own external funding may submit a proposal for a Postdoctoral Award Holder research opportunity as a non-employee to an academic who must be designated as the Supervising Faculty Member.
- 4.4. Training occurs under the mentorship of the Supervising Faculty Member as an individual researcher (e.g., Principal Investigator) or as a member of a research group.
- 4.5. A Postdoctoral Researcher must be assured of financial support, other than from personal means, for the duration of their appointment, and are encouraged to apply for external fellowship funding during their appointment.

- 4.6. Funding for the Postdoctoral Researcher's or Postdoctoral Award Holder's remuneration and other related costs shall be derived from the internal and/or external research grants acquired by the Supervising Faculty Member and/or other sources (e.g., funding secured by the postdoc) and must be in place prior to the commencement of a Fellowship. Expenses that exceed available funding shall be the responsibility of the Supervising Faculty Member and/or the Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder as appropriate.
- 4.7. In order to be appointed to a postdoctoral position, the incumbent must have completed a doctoral degree normally within the five years immediately preceding their initial appointment as a Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder at the University.
- 4.8. Appointments, administration, and duration of a postdoctoral position will be in accordance with the provisions and requirements established in the Procedure to this policy.
- 4.9. The Research Office is responsible for the financial administration of postdoctoral positions at the University.
- 4.10. A Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder must ensure they are familiar with and comply with any requirements and responsibilities set out in the Procedures established under this Policy.
- 4.11. Dispute Resolution in relation to the appointment of a postdoctoral position will be in accordance with the Procedures established under this Policy.

5. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Post-Secondary Learning Act, S.A. 2003](#)
[Labour Relations Code](#) (Province of Alberta)
[Canadian Human Rights Act](#)
[Immigration and Refugee Protection Act \(S.C. 2001, c.27\)](#)

6. Related Procedures/Documents

[Code of Conduct for Members of the University Community](#)
[Harassment, Violence and Sexual Violence Policy](#)
[Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
[Postdoctoral Procedures](#)
[Research Institute Policy and related Procedures](#)
[Research Policies](#)
[Security of Digital Information and Assets Policy](#)

History

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