

Postdoctoral Procedure			
Parent Policy	Postdoctoral Policy		
Policy Sponsor	Chief Human Resource Officer	Category	Administrative
Policy Contact	Chief Human Resource Officer	Effective Date	April 5, 2023
Procedure Contact	Manager, HR Client Advisory Services	Review Date	April 5, 2028

1. Purpose

The Postdoctoral Policy provides a framework for establishing postdoctoral positions at Athabasca University. This procedure establishes processes and expectations in relation to Postdoctoral Researchers and Postdoctoral Award Holders, including Appendix A, as applicable.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to Postdoctoral Researchers and Postdoctoral Award Holders and covers Appointments, Remuneration, 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 fellowship.
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 policy to this procedure and any guidelines or pay schedules established in accordance with this procedure.
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

Appointments

- 4.1. The terms of a Postdoctoral Researcher (employee) shall be specified in a letter of offer. The terms of the Postdoctoral Award Holder (non-employee) shall be specified in an Appointment Letter.
- 4.2. Letters of offer or Appointment letters set out for either position shall be signed by the Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder (as applicable), Supervising Faculty Member, Dean, and Associate Vice-President, Research.
- 4.3. Postdoctoral positions are temporary and may extend from three months to three years, with the possibility of renewal to a maximum five years in total (including all previous postdoctoral appointments within the University), subject to satisfactory performance as determined by the Supervising Faculty Member, funding agency regulations, and continuation of funding.

Remuneration

- 4.4. The Postdoctoral Researcher's salary should fit within the guidelines of the funding agency from which the funds are derived. Compensation should be based on the Postdoctoral Researcher's relevant experience, responsibilities, and the salary guidelines of the relevant agency from which the Supervising Faculty Member obtains the majority of their research funding.
- 4.5. Remuneration for both postdoctoral positions will comply with all applicable tax and legislated requirements.

- 4.6. Postdoctoral Researcher salary and benefits are outlined in Appendix A. Postdoctoral Award Holders are not eligible to receive benefits and remuneration shall be disbursed in accordance with the funding agency requirements.
- 4.7. Costs associated with the Fellowship, including travel, relocation, and other forms of personal insurance (e.g., health, life, disability), accommodation and related documentation (e.g., passports; visas), are the responsibility of the postdoc, unless otherwise negotiated with the Supervising Faculty Member and are eligible in accordance with the funding agency's terms and conditions.
- 4.8. Prior to the establishment, renewal or extension of a postdoctoral position, a Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder, as applicable, who is not a Canadian citizen or Permanent Resident is responsible for obtaining authorization from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to reside and work in Canada as postdoc and for any related fees. All postdocs shall comply with all such requirements for the duration of their term. Failure to do so will result in termination without recourse.

Responsibilities

- 4.9. Postdocs shall conduct original and significant research in their discipline, such as critical or scientific inquiry aimed at the discovery of new facts or the development of new interpretations, applications, or contributions to an identified area of scholarly inquiry. They may also engage in co-supervision of Athabasca University students, under the direct supervision of a University Academic staff member.
- 4.10. A Postdoctoral Researcher or Postdoctoral Award Holder shall become aware of and comply with:
 - a) all relevant University and funding agency policies and procedures;
 - b) relevant provincial, federal, and other jurisdictional legislation;
 - c) applicable Information Technology (IT) policies and procedures; and
 - d) any regulations and professional codes of conduct governing the practice of their discipline.
 - i. Personal Conduct policies are critical as they set standards of conduct that the University expects from all its members as well as protects them and the University from potential risks. Members of the University Community are required to read these policies by logging onto <http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/index.php>

Evaluation

- 4.11. As part of the mentorship process, a postdoctoral position that extends beyond one year is subject to annual review and evaluation by the Supervising Faculty Member. The Supervising Faculty Member shall determine the criteria to be used.
- 4.12. A copy of the written evaluation, signed and dated by the Supervising Faculty Member and the postdoc, shall be submitted to the Research Office within thirty (30) days of the review for file purposes.

Termination of an Appointment

- 4.13. Funding Agency termination requirements will be considered in addition AU policy and procedures.
- 4.14. If the funding designated to support the postdoctoral position is terminated prior to the term end date stated in the letter of offer (employee) or Appointment Letter (non-employee), a postdoctoral position can be terminated with as much prior notification as possible, but in no event with less than thirty (30) days notice.
- 4.15. Early termination of a Postdoctoral Researcher's employment may occur by mutual agreement of the University, upon the recommendation of the Supervising Faculty Member, and the Postdoctoral Researcher, or if either party provides two months' notice in writing to the other party, or, in the case of the University, if the University provides payment in lieu of notice, equivalent to the compensation that would have been earned over the course of the normal two-month notice period. Postdoctoral Award Holders are not eligible for payment in lieu of notice.
- 4.16. The University may terminate a Postdoctoral Researcher's employment at any time, upon the recommendation of the Supervising Faculty Member, for cause (e.g., failure to meet specified performance standards), or if the performance or behavior of the Postdoctoral Researcher has the potential to reflect negatively on the University. In such a case, the Postdoctoral Researcher is entitled to payment for services rendered up to the date of the termination.
- 4.17. University authorities shall take reasonable precautions to protect the funds of any external funding agency or research sponsor upon termination of a Fellowship.

- 4.18. The University has the right to refer an individual matter to the appropriate law enforcement agency or professional body should such action be considered necessary.

Dispute Resolution

- 4.19. Every attempt should be made to resolve disputes about a postdoc's performance informally among those concerned before proceeding to a formal appeal. Assistance may be sought from the following (in order), as appropriate: Supervising Faculty Member, then Dean. If the issue is still not resolved, it may be forwarded to the Associate Vice President, Research, who shall make a final decision. The decision of the Associate Vice President, Research shall be communicated to the postdoc and Supervising Faculty Member in writing and is final and is not open to appeal.
- 4.20. A decision to terminate a Fellowship requires the Associate Vice President, Research to notify the postdoc and any relevant funding agency, in writing, at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 4.21. The postdoc is responsible for informing Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and any other relevant agencies of the termination of the Fellowship, if applicable.

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 Policy](#)
[Research Institute Policy and related Procedures](#)
[Research Policies](#)
[Security of Digital Information and Assets Policy](#)

History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
April 5, 2023	Policy Approved (Motion)

Postdoctoral Researcher Salary and Benefits (employee)

- i) Postdoctoral Researcher employees shall be paid a minimum salary of \$45,000, subject to statutory deductions:
 - Income Tax
 - Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
 - Employment Insurance (EI)

- ii) Postdoctoral Researcher employees meeting the minimum eligibility requirements will be enrolled in the Athabasca University Health Care Benefits and will share in the cost of those benefits.
 - a. Minimum eligibility requirements are:
 - i. term of employment must be for at least one year
 - ii. must work at least 14 hours per week
 - iii. must be a resident of Canada and be eligible for benefits under the provincial government health care programs in their province of residence
 - b. The Postdoctoral Researcher shall fund 50% of premium costs, while the University funds the other 50%.
 - c. Enrolment is mandatory unless the Postdoctoral Researcher has coverage under another group plan.

Postdoctoral Award Holder (non-employee)

The remuneration afforded to a Postdoctoral Award Holder shall be disbursed in accordance with the funding agency requirements and in no way implies that they are an employee of the University.

Postdoctoral Award Holders will not be subject to any withholding by the University for Income Tax, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) or Employment Insurance (EI). There are no employer paid benefits associated with this postdoc appointment.