

**The UNIVERSITY of WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

## **7.6 GUIDELINE FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS AND POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATES**

Classification: Research

Effective Date: 30SEP08

Supersedes: 26JAN95

### **A: PREAMBLE**

Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs) and Postdoctoral Associates (PDAs) are valued members of the University community. As trained researchers making the transition from graduate student to independent scholar, they have the opportunity to make significant contributions to the research environment of the University as well as their chosen fields.

### **B: DEFINITION**

The University defines a PDF or PDA as an individual who meets the following criteria:

1. the individual has completed his or her doctoral degree within three years of first appointment;
2. the appointment is time limited, for a period of up to four years, with the possibility of a one year renewal (for a maximum length of 5 years);
3. the appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic career, and(or) a research career in other sectors;
4. the appointment involves full-time scholarship and research;
5. the individual will work independently in association with a faculty mentor; and,
6. the individual is encouraged and expected to publish the results of his or her research during the period of the appointment.

There may be exceptional circumstances requiring a break in the PDF's or PDA's research career that will impact the above-noted time periods (e.g. parental responsibilities or military service). It is otherwise the expectation of the University that all individuals who do not meet the definition of PDF or PDA will be appointed as Research Associates.

### **C: TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The appointment of a PDF or PDA is time-limited and not ongoing. Generally, PDFs and PDAs are appointed for term of one to four years, with the possibility of a one-year renewal. In consultation with their faculty mentors, individuals receiving Postdoctoral appointments may determine that they will be either entering into an employment relationship with the University as Postdoctoral Associates, or be undertaking their training as independent Postdoctoral Fellows. The documentation setting out the specific terms and conditions of engagement for PDFs and PDAs will be reviewed with the individual prior to the commencement of his or her appointment.

PDFs are not employees of the University, but rather individuals who contract with the University to obtain specialized training and contribute to the University's scholarship and research mission through the use of University facilities and other developmental opportunities. As a PDF is providing his or her services as an independent contractor and not as an employee, he or she is responsible for all personal tax obligations. Any stipend provided to the PDF and administered through the University's payroll system will be without statutory deduction for income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance or similar deductions or remittances. PDFs are not entitled to any benefits which the University may extend to its employees.

PDA's are employees of the University, and will be required to enter into an Employment Contract prior to the commencement of their appointment. Any stipend provided to the PDA will be administered through the University's payroll system and will be subject to statutory deductions for income tax, Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance or similar deductions or remittances. However, PDA's are not entitled to benefits which the University may extend to its other employees.

Administrative procedures for the appointment of PDFs and PDA's are set by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) in conjunction with Human Resource Services.

As members of the University community, PDFs and PDA's are expected to adhere to the appropriate administrative policies maintained by the University Secretariat.

In the event of a problem related to his or her appointment that requires resolution, it is expected that the PDF or PDA will arrange an informal discussion of the matter with the faculty mentor as soon as possible following the identification of the problem. In most instances, the concerns will be resolved at this juncture. If the problem remains unresolved, PDFs or PDA's are encouraged to request a meeting with the Department Chair, School Director or Faculty Dean. If resolution is not possible through these interventions, any of the affected parties may request assistance from the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or designate in reaching a resolution. Any decisions of the supervisor, Chair, School Director, Faculty Dean and/or Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), shall be timely and in writing. At the request of any participants, assistance from Human Resource Services may be obtained at any point in the process.