

**THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**OFFICE OF THE DEAN**

**Date Effective:** December 19, 1989  
**Date Revised:** December 9, 2004  
**Date Revised:** February 28, 2008

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM STUDENTS – 5**

**SUBJECT:** Postdoctoral Fellows – Policy Guidelines and Procedures

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**I. POLICY GUIDELINES**

**A. Definition**

A Postdoctoral Fellow (PDF) is an individual who has previously earned a doctoral degree or its equivalent and is receiving advanced training in research or professional practice at the School under the aegis of one of the departments and its faculty.

**B. Status**

Although the PDF shall not be enrolled in a formal degree program, the fellow may take didactic courses for credit up to a maximum of 16 credits during his/her entire tenure as a fellow. A PDF is usually enrolled full-time; however, part-time PDF programs are possible depending on individual circumstances. PDF status and/or privileges are not granted to degree candidates who hold a previous doctoral degree.

**C. Admissions**

After receiving a completed application form from an applicant, it will be the responsibility of the Admissions Office to assemble a file which is sent to a department for evaluation. The department reviews the file, rejects or accepts the applicant, communicates the decision to the applicant and the Admissions Office, and returns the file to the Admissions Office. Each department handles postdoctoral fellowship applications slightly differently. For the most current process for each department, refer to the School's website.

**D. Financial Support for Postdoctoral Fellowships**

Postdoctoral Fellows are charged a small set fee per term for tuition (in 2007, that amount was \$200). The tuition may be supported from an extramural source such as a federal training grant or a private sponsorship. Postdoctoral Fellows without an extramural source of tuition support are eligible for School-wide postdoctoral fellow scholarship funds. The request for scholarship support should be generated by the PDF's department.

**E. Certification**

Upon satisfactory completion of the program planned for the PDF, the department chair shall notify the Records and Registration Office so that a certificate of completion may be prepared for the PDF. If a PDF is terminated as unsatisfactory or is withdrawing for personal reasons, the department chair shall report the matter to the Records and Registration Office without delay.

The Records and Registration Office will take the responsibility for having a certificate sent to the PDF following satisfactory completion of his stay at the School and for reporting this certification to the Committee on Academic Standards.

**II. PROCEDURES****A. Initial Contact**

1. A prospective PDF may first contact either a department or the Admissions Office.
  - a. If a department is contacted first, the department will ask the candidate to complete a PDF application form and submit it to the Admissions Office.
  - b. If the Admissions Office is contacted initially, the PDF application is handled in the same manner as any other application.
  - c. No application fee is required for PDFs.
  - d. If the applicant is already enrolled in another division of the University, that division can forward copies of the original credentials to the Admissions Office.

**B. Admissions Process**

1. The Admissions Office assembles a file which includes (at least):
  - a. a completed standard postdoctoral fellow application form;
  - b. proof of the doctoral degree (an official transcript or a letter from the dean of a school certifying that all requirements for the doctoral degree have been completed satisfactorily);
  - c. a curriculum vitae; and
  - d. one letter of reference from an individual with appropriate knowledge of the applicant.

2. The file is sent to the department for evaluation.
  - a. The department reviews the file and recommends acceptance or rejection of applicant on the review sheet. The form is signed by the department chair.
  - b. For applicants recommended for acceptance, the department adds the following information to file:
    - 1) beginning date of fellowship; and
    - 2) name of faculty mentor.
  - c. Applicant file (recommended or not recommended) is returned to Admissions Office.
3. File of applicant which has been acted upon and endorsed by the department and endorsed by the Committee on Academic Standards.
  - a. Following acceptance of applicant by department, the department prepares letter of acceptance including details of financial support with copies to the Admissions Office, the Records and Registration Office, Student Accounts and Business Services Office, Student Financial Services Office, department chair, and mentor.
  - b. If proof of completion of the doctoral degree requirements was provided by a letter from the previous institution, the postdoctoral fellow must also submit an official transcript confirming completion of doctoral degree within two academic terms of the start of his/her postdoctoral fellowship. Failure to do so will result in dismissal of the postdoctoral fellow.
4. If applicant is not recommended for admission, the department prepares appropriate letter and copies the Admissions Office.

#### **C. Financial Aid Process**

1. The charging of tuition to the PDF budget will be handled through the Distributed Graduate Aid system in the Student Financial Services Office, and automatically disbursed onto the postdoctoral fellow's tuition account. All expenditure processing is handled by the departmental administrative office of the PDF.
2. Request for Scholarship Funds
  - a. A department may request a scholarship for each PDF (new or continuing) who has been formally accepted and who has no other source of tuition payment by completing and submitting an Application for Postdoctoral Scholarship form.
  - b. Upon receipt of the application form, Student Financial Services personnel verify that the PDF has been formally accepted by the School and that no other known source of tuition support exists.

**D. Registration Process****1. Initial Registration**

- a.** The PDF registers in person or online through the Records and Registration Office in the initial term and during each established registration period thereafter. The PDF must maintain continuous registration for each term of research.
  - 1)** The Records and Registration Office receives the file from Admissions and verifies that acceptance letter has been issued and details are in order.
  - 2)** PDF is given all necessary registration materials. The following steps are then taken:
    - a)** PDF fills out personal data form; and
    - b)** PDF completes the course registration process. A PDF must register for a minimum of 12 credits per term. The 12 credits may be a combination of Postdoctoral Research (###.830) and courses of interest to the PDF. PDFs are not permitted to earn more than 16 credits of didactic course work for academic credit during their tenure as a postdoctoral fellow. However, this 16 credit limit may be extended for some special postdoctoral training programs if prior approval is obtained from the School's Committee on Academic Standards. Even in cases where an exception to the 16 credit limit has been granted, only 16 credits can be transferred to meet degree program requirements. There is no limit on the number of courses a fellow may audit. The PDF's advisor approves the registration request.

**2. Continuing Registration**

- a.** Each term the Records and Registration Office sends a list to departments with currently enrolled students, including PDFs.
- b.** Responsibility of Department Chair
  - 1)** When PDF completes training at the School, the department chair informs the Records and Registration Office.
  - 2)** If PDF is being terminated as unsatisfactory or is withdrawing for personal reasons, the department chair should report the matter to the Records and Registration Office without delay. The Records and Registration Office will refer the action to the Committee on Academic Standards as appropriate. It is the department's responsibility to inform the Student Financial Services Office and the Student Accounts and Business Services Office of any actions resulting in withdraw or termination of a postdoctoral fellow.

**E. Certification**

1. Upon receiving verification on the PDF Status Form from a department chair that a PDF has satisfactorily completed his/her stay at the School, the Records and Registration Office makes arrangements to have a certificate prepared and forwarded to the PDF.
2. PDF certification information is included in the Registrar's Report to the Committee on Academic Standards.