

## UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLAR APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST FOR FACULTY MEMBERS/ADMINISTRATION

The following checklist has been designed to help faculty members learn and implement procedures for recruiting and appointing Postdoctoral Scholars at Western. Your specific departments/units may have additional requirements but in general you will need to do the following to ensure a smooth appointment process occurs. **The University defines a Postdoctoral Scholar as an individual who meets the following criteria:**

- **the individual completed his or her doctoral degree within three years of the appointment;**
- **the appointment is time-limited, for a period of up to four years, with the possibility of a one-year renewal (for a maximum of five years);**
- **the appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic or research career;**
- **the appointment involves full-time research and scholarship;**
- **the individual will work under the supervision of a faculty mentor and often as part of a larger research team; and,**
- **the individual is encouraged and expected to publish the results of his or her independent research during the period of the appointment.**

### □ **The Search**

o In some cases you may be approached by a potential scholar whose interests align with your own. On other cases, you may wish to advertise for a postdoctoral scholar who will bring a specific skillset to your research group, or who will work on a predefined project. When creating a job description, consider the following:

⇒ What skills are necessary/desirable?

⇒ To what level of compensation and duration of appointment can you commit? For PDAs, please add in the job posting **details related to the benefits** as per Article 31 (12.06) of the CA.

⇒ What is your recruitment plan? Where will you advertise? Are there avenues through which you can reach a broader/more diverse audience? Have you considered equity, diversity, & inclusivity in your approach? Remember to send the advertisement to [mharmos@uwo.ca](mailto:mharmos@uwo.ca) and use your own professional network to advertise



The Researcher Toolbox – offers support for hiring and fulfilling supervisory responsibilities



Research Finance – provides financial management of grants and contracts, and information on the use of grant funds



Equity and Human Rights Services – provides info on the University's discrimination and harassment policies, employment equity and diversity & other human rights related issues

### □ **Hiring Process**

o When interviewing candidates be prepared to discuss the following:

⇒ Compensation: Postdoctoral Associates are governed by a Collective Agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (effective January 1, 2021 the current minimum floor is **\$34,942** and the benefit recovery rate is 13% of employment earnings).

- ⇒ Time off (holidays, sick days): Postdoctoral Fellows are considered trainees. Under tax statute, the nature of this relationship is not considered employment and therefore there is no minimum vacation pay nor statutory benefits to be paid by the individual or the University.
- ⇒ Travel costs or moving expenses
- ⇒ Teaching and supervisory opportunities
- o Meet and interview the candidate – You will likely choose to interview qualified candidates via Skype, Zoom, etc. This will often be followed by a one-on-one interview, presentation on current research, and opportunity for interaction with members of the lab/department/unit/faculty
- o Take the opportunity to describe your lab/research environment, including your expectations of the role, policy on authorship, policy on scholarly independence, etc.
- o When checking references, ask questions regarding the candidate’s attention to detail, perseverance, creativity, originality, commitments, team work, and address any concerns based on the candidate’s CV.
- o **NOTE** - Hiring international postdoctoral scholars can take up to six months



Western Human Resources – can assist with your planning and hiring.



Faculty Research Officers/Facilitators - provide Faculty-based grant application support and information on grant policies and procedures

#### □ **Completing the appointment process**

- o A meeting at the commencement of the appointment to **discuss the research expectations**, including associated duties and responsibilities and the professional development goals, using the IDP, as per CA (12.09). Please provide the PDA with a **written record of the discussions within 7 days of the meeting**.
- o The postdoctoral scholar must initiate their appointment by completing the Appointment Form online: <http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral/scholarappointment/>
- o Upon completing the form, you will be alerted to this proposed appointment via email and be prompted to confirm additional details (duration, compensation etc.)
- o An email will then be directed to the postdoctoral scholar summarizing the details of the proposed appointment and requesting confirmation
- o Based on the information provided, a Postdoctoral Fellow Agreement or Letter of Appointment will be generated depending upon the nature of their appointment. This document must be generated and signed by both parties prior to the commencement of the appointment.
- o Once this letter has been signed, the scholar must email [mharmos@uwo.ca](mailto:mharmos@uwo.ca) to arrange an intake meeting with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (IGAB 1N07). The scholar must bring the signed agreement or letter, proof of Ph.D. degree, individual development plan and, if applicable, Canadian Work Permit to this meeting
- o SGPS will validate and forward the appointment package and supporting documents to Human Resources for processing.
- o **NOTE** - Most of the services available to postdoctoral scholars at Western cannot be accessed until this entire process is completed



The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies - provides information and assistance on processes and procedures for Postdoctoral Scholars

***First Day of Postdoctoral Scholar Arrival at Western:***

- If the appointments process described above has not yet been completed, this should take priority upon arrival at Western. Once this process has been completed, a [Western ID](#) can be obtained from Western Technology Services, a staff ID card can be generated at the Student Services Building, and necessities like email, swipe card access, [facility keys](#), etc can be established/obtained.
- **NOTE:** these steps occur sequentially, and can take 1-2 weeks depending on when the appointments process was initiated/completed
- You should take an opportunity to meet with and orient the postdoctoral scholar, including:
  - ⇒ An orientation to campus and city services that may be useful
  - ⇒ A discussion of expectations
  - ⇒ An introduction to the people they will be collaborating with
  - ⇒ An introduction to the facilities they will be making use of
  - ⇒ A discussion about any departmental or research specific requirements to the scholar

***Tasks to be completed within the First Month of the appointment:***

- Complete all health and safety and orientation training as required by you and your department [www.uwo.ca/humanresources/facultystaff/h\\_and\\_s/training/training\\_idx.htm](http://www.uwo.ca/humanresources/facultystaff/h_and_s/training/training_idx.htm)
- Addressing any additional skills training and professional development necessary to excel
- Establish a regular meeting schedule to establish and foster a strong research and development plan to assess important aspect of the postdoctoral scholar's progress
- Discuss opportunities to seek advice and collaborative opportunities from other faculty members/labs/units
- Provide guidance on resources on campus that will make the most of their postdoctoral experience
- Encourage the postdoctoral scholar to play an active role in seeking career and research advice, both from you and from their mentors



National Postdoctoral Association – institutional guide to postdoc mentorship and conferences



The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies - provides information and assistance on processes and procedures for Postdoctoral Scholars

**References**

"Staffing Your Laboratory" chapter from Making the Right Moves: a practical guide to scientific management for postdocs and new faculty, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Burroughs Wellcome Fund:  
<http://www.hhmi.org/resources/labmanagement/moves.html>

Staffing the Lab: Perspectives from both sides of the bench, Burroughs Wellcome Fund:  
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/2544488/Staffing-the-Lab-Perspectives-from-Both-Sides-of-the-Bench>