

Postdoctoral Scholars Regulation 10.10.08: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The NC State University [Postdoctoral Scholars Regulation 10.10.08](#) was first issued on June 28, 2010. The following document contains answers to a few of the frequently asked questions regarding Regulation 10.10.08 to better assist faculty and human resources personnel representatives with their hiring and management of postdoctoral scholars.

Question: *How is a “postdoc” defined?*

Answer: North Carolina State University’s definition of a postdoctoral scholar is outlined in Section 2.1 of Regulation 10.10.08 and includes the need for the postdoc to have been awarded a doctorate no more than five (5) years prior to the appointment; the appointment involves substantial research and/or scholarship; the appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic or research career; the appointee works under the supervision of a scholar or a department in a university, laboratory, center, etc; and the appointee is expected to submit for publication the results of his/her research or scholarship conducted during the period of the appointment. In addition, the expectations of postdoctoral appointees are noted in Section 6 of the regulation.

Question: *What is the amount of time that can pass between the time a potential postdoctoral scholar (or “postdoc”) is awarded their Ph.D. and then appointed as a postdoc?*

Answer: As outlined in Section 2.2, an applicant for a postdoctoral scholar position must have been awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate no more than five (5) years prior to the appointment. There are some cases where an applicant was awarded their doctorate more than five (5) years ago; in these situations, the Program Manager the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs must approve the appointment, and a justification for hiring that particular applicant needs to be e-mailed to the Program Manager at nmditill@ncsu.edu.

Question: *How can a faculty mentor/principle investigator recruit postdocs?*

Answer: Postdoctoral appointments are, by their very nature, training experiences that are meant to strengthen the research and/or scholarship of postdocs. Postdocs are often identified directly through national or other academic professional channels. As stipulated in Section 2.4 of Regulation 10.10.08, academic departments are strongly encouraged to widely publicize postdoctoral vacancies but open recruitment and, therefore, full searches, are not required.

Question: *Is there a template for a postdoc appointment letter?*

Answer: Yes. The offer letter for postdocs was created by Human Resources and is available both on the [Human Resources website](#) and on the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs’ Faculty Resources web page under “[Hiring a Postdoctoral Scholar](#).”

Question: *What is the new minimum salary for postdocs?*

Answer: As of June 28, 2010, as outlined in Section 5 of Regulation 10.10.08, all postdocs hired from that date forward must be compensated at a rate that is at least 60% of the minimum starting salary for an assistant professor in the appropriate/corresponding discipline as published in the University’s approved faculty salary ranges established by Human Resources. An example: The minimum starting salary for an assistant professor in Biochemistry is, according to HR’s faculty salary ranges, \$55,000. The required minimum starting salary for a postdoc in Biochemistry is, therefore, \$33,000 (60% x \$55,000).

Furthermore, the University recommends hiring all incoming postdocs hired at 1.0 FTE at the annual salary minimum of \$47,476, as recommended by the Fair Labor Standards Act and supported by the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health.

Question: *Are postdocs eligible for salary increases?*

Answer: Yes, they are eligible for salary increases since their appointments are temporary in nature and their salaries are funded, for the most part, through grant awards. Faculty mentors/PIs may provide postdocs with salary increases based on merit and market increases. Any salary adjustments to a postdoctoral scholar's pay must be in compliance with any restrictions or guidelines of the authorized funding source.

Question: *Are performance evaluations required of postdocs?*

Answer: Yes, all postdoctoral appointments are subject to annual performance reviews that need to be documented and placed in the postdoc's personnel file (Section 4.1.4 of Regulation 10.10.08). The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) offers examples of documents that can be used to evaluate a postdoc's work performance under the "Performance Evaluations" section of OPA's Faculty Resources web page.

Question: *Are postdocs eligible for the tuition waiver (that EPA and SPA employees have)?*

Answer: No. Unfortunately, since all postdoctoral appointments are temporary ones, they are not eligible for this benefit. However, if a postdoc wishes to sit in on a class (and not receive a grade for the class), she or he may ask the permission of the instructor to do so.