


UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE			
 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>	<p><b>RESEARCH POLICY ... Section 12: Postdoctoral Research Fellowship</b></p>	Council Approval Reference Number	C2014/06
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**SECTION 12 – RESEARCH POLICY:  
POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP**

# **Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Policy at UWC**

## **1. Introduction**

In accordance with its Research Policy and Institutional Operating Plan, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) prioritises knowledge production through research and innovation. The success of the research programme will largely hinge on the ability of the University to identify and nurture its research niche areas (available from the Department of Research Development). A postdoctoral research fellowship programme that focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on emerging and established niche areas is an important component of the research strategy. The Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (PRF) programme aims at increasing the research output of the University. Additionally, the PRF programme aims to assist with the professional development of recent doctoral graduates preparing them for an academic career. For this reason, the Postdoctoral Research Fellow (PDRF) will undertake independent research, as well as participate in the academic activities of the hosting Department as agreed to with the PDRF's supervisor.

## **2. Aim of this policy**

This policy outlines the processes governing the application, duration and termination of PRFs at UWC.

## **3. Background**

In accordance with internationally accepted professional practice, a PRF will normally be awarded to an individual typically within five years of graduating with a doctoral degree to continue with dedicated research for a certain period of time. PDRFs can be considered to be academic mentees who are assigned to work under the tutelage of a research supervisor and the Head of the host Department, and are expected to join an established research team. As part of their training, PDRFs may voluntarily participate in limited forms of other academic activities such as teaching and supervision of students, for which they may be separately remunerated, as per the guidelines of the South African Revenue Services (SARS).

The University of the Western Cape considers PDRFs as valuable members of the University's academic community. Postdoctoral training adds value, both to the University, and to the country as a whole, and as such UWC should encourage an increased enrolment of PDRFs in support of its research thrusts, and thereby propel its vision of becoming a leading research-driven institution in South Africa.

PDRFs are not employees of the University. PDRFs are required to register as a student in terms of the University's registration rules and pay the normal postgraduate registration fee, in order to receive student funding and have access to the University's facilities.

#### **4. Advertising, Selection and Award**

All Fellowships must be advertised in at least one public forum other than the institution's intranet or internal bulletin boards to attract external applicants. Although the Faculty/ Department/School/Unit plays a central role in the review and selection of applicants (by committees or individuals, usually the relevant Principal Investigator, authorised to select such candidates), the Department of Research Development has an oversight role to ensure that University policies are adhered to. It must be noted that foreign PDRFs are required to have a study visa before being accepted for registration at the University.

Successful PDRFs enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) (a template is available from the Department of Research Development) with the Department/School/Unit/Institute concerned which is represented by his/her designated supervisor who is normally the project Principal Investigator. This agreement sets out the terms of the PDRF's relationship with the University of the Western Cape. These terms will be generally common across the University's Faculties. The terms of the MoA govern University-wide access to facilities and services (e.g. health care, parking, library access etc). In addition, the PDRF will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the host Department/School/Unit/Institute (a template is available from the Department of Research Development), clarifying provision of specific equipment and resources necessary to enable the PDRF to effectively carry out his/her research studies. The Department/School/Unit/Institute is required to provide an environment that is conducive to effective training and learning and where mentorship is assured.

#### **5. Conditions of Award**

All PRF adverts should stipulate the specific Conditions-of-Award. Such conditions provide a framework for the research/study to be undertaken and the basic conditions under which the Postdoctoral Fellowship is awarded. These conditions are spelt out in the advertisement and further clarified in the award letter or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and the MoU. However, it is expected that a PDRF's research programme will fall within the host Department/School/Unit/Institute's broad research areas.

#### **6. Award letter (a template is available from the Department of Research Development)**

The Department of Research Development can advise, when necessary, to ensure there is uniformity in the MoAs or award letters of the PDRFs across the University. In addition, the PDRF should sign a MoU with the Department/School/Unit/Institute. As suggested in section 4, the MoA will ensure compliance with the University's Code of Conduct, policies and conditions for students. On the other hand, the MoU with the Department/Unit/Institute will provide a framework for the work to be done and a means of monitoring the agreed-upon expectations of both parties.

#### **7. Induction**

The Postgraduate and Postdoctoral Student Forum (PPSF), a student-led forum, will play a role in the orientation/induction of the entering PDRF to the University of the Western Cape. It will also provide guidance to the Fellow on how to access the amenities and facilities available, and how to

access on-going service and advice. The PPSF will also provide other forms of support that are available.

## **8. Funding**

There are many sources for funding PRF awards and each of these will have specific grant conditions that must be met. The Faculty is responsible for administering the PRF awards on behalf of the awardee. The Fellowship award will be disbursed according to the terms set out in the MoU between the awardee and the Faculty/Department/School/Unit/Institute. The amount is disbursed in instalments.

## **9. Remuneration**

A PDRF may work outside the Fellowship, for a maximum of 12 hours per week (as stipulated in the SARS Binding Class Ruling), which requires pre-approval by the PDRF's supervisor. This work will give rise to remuneration and is subject to tax in accordance with the income tax rules of South Africa (currently, in accordance with article 78(2) of the Tax Administration Act (nr 28 of 2011)). This remuneration is to be paid at the University rate for casual work for workers with a PhD and must not be paid by means of the PDRF bursary system but must be paid via the salary system. These payments are taxable in accordance with the prevailing tax legislation.

## **10. Activities**

PDRFs are not employees of the University and, therefore, do not qualify for any employee benefits including membership of retirement funds, support for a medical aid scheme or any other employee benefits. The academic activities of the PDRF are set out in the Conditions of Award (CoA) and the Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU will be used as a terms-of-reference and as a guide to resolving any conflicts/disputes arising between the Department/School/Unit/Institute and the PDRF.

## **11. Code of Conduct, Grievance Procedures and Complaints**

The PDRF is bound by the University's code of conduct for students and relevant policies. In the event of any dispute, the PDRF will have recourse to the same Grievance Procedures as those accorded to students at UWC.

## **12. Duration**

Each PRF is awarded for a period of time specified in the CoA. In general, Fellowships are negotiable up to three years. PDRFs are not permitted to register for any degree during the Fellowship, nor are they permitted to be employed full-time or part-time beyond the 12 hours a week stipulated in section 11, by any party within or outside of the University. Work in the form of consultancies is not permitted, unless agreed to by the PDF's supervisor in writing.

## **13. Professional Development**

The CoA and the MoU must be designed to include professional development of the PDRF.

The Department of Research Development, along with other UWC stakeholders, will from time-to-time provide professional development courses and seminars to assist the PDRFs. The PDRFs may organise within the University seminars and training-courses among themselves or for senior students in their specific areas of research with the endorsement of the Deputy Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies in the relevant Faculty. .

#### **14. Termination**

A Postdoctoral Fellowship formally terminates at the end of the period specified in the CoA, unless renewal has been approved by the funding agency and the PDRF's supervisor. This requires completion of a formal process through student administration. A PDRF may give notice of intention to terminate a fellowship before the end of the specified period, and such early termination must be agreed upon by the supervisor.

#### **15. Termination for cause**

In the event of a substantive breach of contract by the PDRF, a Fellowship may be cancelled at any time. If warranted, the termination will follow the University's student disciplinary procedures. PDRF's can appeal termination of contract via the Department of Research Development.