UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Research and Innovation Support

**Constitution of the UP postdoctoral fellowship programme**

Document type: Policy Document number: Rt396/15

Policy Category: Academic

1. **CONCEPT**

The University of Pretoria (UP) annually grants fellowships to attract excellent young postdoctoral fellows to the University. These fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis while adequate funding is available. Research leaders at the University are invited to submit proposals for these postdoctoral fellowships where suitable candidate fellows have been identified.

**2. AIMS OF PROGRAMME**

1. To allow established and early career academic researchers the opportunity to recruit individuals to join their research groups and to enhance their research productivity and scholarship.
2. To provide outstanding young researchers with the opportunity to develop their research skills to transfer new skills to UP over the course of their fellowship.
3. To allow UP PhD graduates the opportunity to publish from their PhD research, to establish a solid basis for future research, and to position themselves favourably for further career opportunities.
4. To develop the careers of postdoctoral fellows as academics by encouraging participation in teaching and co-supervision of postgraduate students.
5. To provide benefit to UP, through the presence of the fellows, in developing new, growing existing areas of research and enhancing research productivity through increased levels of publications and supervision of postgraduate students.
6. **THE POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW**

A postdoctoral fellow is regarded as a young researcher (generally up to 40 years of age), with a doctorate, who conducts research at a university in collaboration with a senior research mentor in order to develop his/her research capabilities.

The UP Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme supports two categories of postdoctoral fellows.

3.1 A UP Postdoctoral Fellow is a recent doctoral graduate from UP or another university.

3.2 A Senior UP Postdoctoral Fellow is a doctoral graduate who has successfully completed a postdoctoral fellowship of at least two years and has authored publications as a postdoctoral fellow.

1. **APPLICATIONS: REQUIREMENTS**
2. Normally, only one UP postdoctoral fellowship per research leader (mentor) will be awarded annually. However, exceptions may be made in respect of strategically important research areas.
3. Research leaders appointed to the academic staff of the University will qualify for postdoctoral fellowship grants. Applications may also be made in cases where a candidate fellow’s expertise could provide a strategic stimulus for a new and important research field, or where it would accelerate the development of a research group with high potential to develop in a priority research area.
   1. Emerging researchers are encouraged to apply for postdoctoral grants with the support of the Head of Department (HoD).
   2. The quality of the research plan in which the fellow will participate, and the potential for increasing the research output of the group through the award of the fellowship, serve as important criteria for the award of these fellowships.
   3. Where more than one application is submitted per faculty in any one round of applications, the Dean of the faculty will be requested to indicate the order of priority for the applications. In general, the proportion of UP PhD graduate postdoctoral fellows should comprise no more than 40% of the faculty cohort of fellows.
4. **REQUIREMENTS OF FELLOWSHIP CANDIDATES**

5.1 Postdoctoral fellows are required to have completed a doctorate.

5.2 Candidates must have attained their doctorate no more than five years prior to their appointment as postdoctoral fellows.

1. The expertise and research focus of the postdoctoral fellow should indicate the potential to contribute to a noticeable increase in good quality research outputs for the research group. Therefore, the abilities and previous achievements of candidate fellows will be important criteria in selection of fellows.
2. In appointment of postdoctoral fellows, priority will be given to candidates from the designated groups, and specifically black South African candidates, in order to address previous imbalances and institutional targets through the development of a cohort of potential future academics.
3. A two-year UP Postdoctoral Fellowship may be awarded to recent UP PhD graduates (within one year of the award of their PhD).
4. Candidates will be encouraged to provide teaching and supervisory services to postgraduate students (up to a maximum of 12 hours per week, with additional remuneration in the form of a salary). In this case, the candidate is required to sign a declaration which provides that he/she will have to repay any award amount received, should he/she fail to complete the fellowship for any reason other than death, ill-health or injury. Mentors are required to inform the Dean of the teaching commitments expected of the postdoctoral fellow.

**6. DURATION OF FELLOWSHIP**

6.1 UP Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded for a period of up to two years. In the case of an application for a fellowship made for a two year period, this should be clearly stated in the original application. At the end of the first year a satisfactory progress report will be required to justify renewal of the fellowship for the second year.

6.2 At the end of the last year of a postdoctoral fellowship, a final report must be submitted. UP Postdoctoral Fellowships will not be renewed for a third year.

6.3 UP Senior Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded for a period of up to three years. At the end of each year of funding a satisfactory progress report will be required to justify renewal of the fellowship.

**7. VALUE OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

7.1 UP Postdoctoral Fellowships and UP Senior Postdoctoral Fellowships consist of a tax-free bursary in an amount that is determined from time to time by the Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education. The amount may be supplemented from other sources of funding; approval for the supplementation must be obtained from the Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education.

* 1. If funds are available, UP Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme funds may be allocated to supplement an externally-funded fellowship; in such cases, supplemental funds may be awarded only to provide a total bursary amount equal to the normal UP Postdoctoral Fellowship value as applicable at that time.
  2. A UP Postdoctoral Fellowship may include a travel allowance up to an amount to be determined from time to time, made available to international fellows, for travel to and from the University of Pretoria at the commencement and termination of the fellowship period. The allowance may also be used to cover the costs involved in obtaining the necessary visitor’s visa. The relevant amount will be paid only upon the lodging of a claim through the International Students Office, after arrival. This allowance is not available to UP PhD graduates.

7.4 If funds are available, a once off grant, to be determined from time to time, may be awarded to postdoctoral fellows for conference presentations by the Fellow, during the multi-year support cycle. Requests must be made through the Department of Postgraduate Support and Recruitment).

7.5 The fellowship grant funds may not be used to contribute to costs related to the research work. The research leader (the grant-holder) should ensure that all the necessary infrastructure and research running costs are available to the fellow for the proposed research.

**8. PROCEDURE**

1. A call for applications will be made at least twice a year and more frequently if necessary and if funds are available. Detailed information will be available on the Department of Postgraduate Support and Recruitment website.
2. Applications should be submitted by the research leader and should provide information requested on the prescribed form (see Appended). Applications should be supported by at least two letters of reference for the candidate fellow, from academic sources (e.g. the candidate’s doctoral supervisor) to testify to the candidate’s academic abilities and the suitability of his/her research experience for the proposed research project.
3. In the event of a successful application the research leader will become the grant-holder and accountable person for the grant.
4. Applications must be supported by the Head of the Department and the Dean or his/her delegate (who will also rank the applications in order of priority for the faculty). Applications must therefore be submitted via the Dean’s office. Heads of Departments and Deans are required to add their motivation for support of the applications on the application form. (Applicants should ensure that they comply with internal faculty submission deadlines which will be prior to the central deadline. Applications not sent from the office of the Dean/Deputy Dean will not be reviewed for funding).
5. Assessment of these applications will be made by the Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme Committee.
   1. The fellow will be informed in writing of the award of the bursary, as well as the logistical arrangements.
   2. Once informed, fellows from abroad will require a visa endorsed to conduct research (NOTE: A visa is required, and not a Work Permit).

8.6 The postdoctoral fellowship must be taken up within six months of its allocation. (Exceptions can be motivated and may be considered).

8.7 A fellowship cannot be transferred from one fellow to another within the approved support period unless approved by the Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme Committee.

* 1. The term of the postdoctoral fellowship will commence on the date of arrival at UP.

8.9 Grant-holders are requested to inform the Department of Postgraduate Support and Recruitment of the arrival date of the fellow at least two months prior to arrival to enable the Department to make the necessary arrangements. The International Students Office will communicate with international fellows with regard to logistical arrangements.

* 1. Renewal of the fellowship for the second and third year (in cases of fellowships awarded for three years) is dependent upon submission of a satisfactory progress report. The report must be submitted by the grant-holder on the prescribed form (refer to 11 for web address) to the Department of Graduate Support and Recruitment no later than THREE MONTHS before the end of the first year of the fellowship.
  2. UP Postdoctoral Fellowships are eligible for only one renewal, for the second year, dependent on satisfactory progress. Senior Postdoctoral Fellowships are eligible for renewal, for the second year and third year, dependent on satisfactory progress.

**9. REPORTING**

9.1 A final report on the prescribed form (available from Department of Postgraduate Support and Recruitment) should be submitted by the grant-holder to the Department of Postgraduate Support and Recruitment within one month of the termination of the fellowship. Note: Grant-holders who have not submitted final reports for previous fellowships from the UP Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme will not be eligible for further support.

9.2 In the event of early termination of a fellowship, the fellow should submit a final report to the Department of Graduate Support and Recruitment via the grant-holder.

* 1. If information on publications by the grant-holder and postdoctoral fellow is not available at the time of reporting, this should be indicated in the report and the information should be submitted to the Department of Graduate Support and Recruitment as soon as it becomes available.
  2. The Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme will be monitored on a continuous basis and periodically evaluated.

**10. OTHER IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS**

* 1. The grant-holder and the relevant department should ensure that the necessary infrastructure and funds are available for the proposed research when the postdoctoral fellow joins the University. The funds will only be released upon written confirmation from the Head of the Department that the necessary infrastructure for hosting the candidate is in place.
  2. The programme does not provide financial support for family or dependents of the postdoctoral fellow.
  3. The grant-holder should as soon as possible establish a Memorandum of Agreement with the fellow to ensure clarity on the role and expectations of both parties before the fellowship commences.
  4. The grant-holder should ensure that tasks related to the research do not expose the fellow to unnecessary risk.
  5. If the postdoctoral fellow is funded with a UP fellowship, and a relative of a UP employee, the fellowship award will only be exempt from normal tax to the extent that the specific provisions of section 10 (1)(q)(ii) of the Income Tax Act, 58 of 1962 have been met.

1. **DOCUMENT METADATA**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Document number: | *Rt396/15* |
| Document version: | *Rt396/15 newly approved version*  *Replacing S4459/10* |
| Document approval authority: | *Executive* |
| Document approval date: |  |
| Document owner: | *Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education* |
| Document author(s): |  |
| Date: | *3 November 2015* |
| Visibility:  Display on staff intranet  Display on student intranet  Display on public web | *√*  *√*  *√* |

1. **CONTACT PERSONS**

|  |
| --- |
| Postdoctoral Fellowships Office  Department of Research Support and Innovation  Phone: (012) 420 4023 |