

# **POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW HANDBOOK**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **A. Definition of a Postdoctoral Fellow**

A postdoctoral fellow is an individual who typically comes to UTHSC to further training in a chosen discipline after recently obtaining his/her terminal degree (e.g., PhD, MD, DVM). This training is for a limited term, and is expected to last no more than five years with any given UTHSC mentor. A fellow may not exceed eight years training in total. Appointment as a postdoctoral fellow must be renewed annually before the anniversary date of his/her original appointment. Renewal will be based on satisfactory performance, the existence of funding, and programmatic need. Fellows that began his/her training at UTHSC prior to January 1, 2015 will be given an additional 2 years to complete his/her training. Training is conducted in an apprenticeship mode where the fellow works under the supervision of an investigator who is qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. A terminal certificate will be provided to all fellows who complete an exit survey, have completed their mandatory online training, and have filled out all Individual Development Plans/Annual Progress Reports.

Postdoctoral fellows are classified as trainees of the University with benefits and work conditions as described below. Other individuals, such as Research Associates or Clinical Fellows/Residents do not fall in the category of postdoctoral fellows as defined by this handbook. In general, UTHSC policies for regular employees do not apply to Postdoctoral Fellows unless stipulated below.

## **B. Postdoctoral visiting scholar appointment**

The intent of the Postdoctoral Visiting Scholar appointment is to permit a postdoctoral fellow from an outside institution to obtain specialized training with a mentor at UTHSC. The funding for the postdoctoral visiting scholar will come from a non-UTHSC source.

All guidelines and regulations outlined in this handbook also apply to postdoctoral visiting scholars.

## **I. Infrastructure support for Postdoctoral Fellows**

### **A. The Postdoc Office**

The Postdoc Office was established in 2007 as a component of the Office of Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs, with the charge to provide appropriate infrastructure support for postdoctoral fellows and their mentors. In August 2011, the Postdoc Office was moved under the umbrella of the College of Graduate Health Sciences, which assumed all administrative and fiscal responsibilities of the Postdoc Office. The overall goal of the Postdoc Office is to help ensure and enhance the quality and quantity of postdoctoral fellows and their training experience. The Postdoc Office has specific responsibility for developing and overseeing policies that relate to postdoctoral fellow training and work conditions as outlined in the *Compact*, located on the Postdoc Office website ([http://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/pdfs/UTHSC\\_COMPACT.pdf](http://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/pdfs/UTHSC_COMPACT.pdf)).

The Postdoc Office is housed in the 920 Madison Building, Room 807, with offices for both the Associate Dean, Dr. Monica M. Jablonski, and the Administrative Coordinator, Ms. Jeddie Maxwell. Contact information for the Postdoc Office is listed below:

#### **Mailing Address:**

Postdoc Office  
University of Tennessee Health Science Center  
College of Graduate Health Sciences  
920 Madison, #807  
Memphis, TN 38163  
[postdoc@uthsc.edu](mailto:postdoc@uthsc.edu)

#### **Office Location:**

920 Madison Building, Room 807  
College of Graduate Health Sciences  
The Postdoc Office website: [www.uthsc.edu/Postdoc](http://www.uthsc.edu/Postdoc)

### **Associate Dean**

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UTHSC Postdoc Office  
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901-448-2661

## **B. The Postdoctoral Advisory Committee (PAC)**

The Postdoctoral Advisory Committee (PAC) provides advice to the Postdoc Office. Its members include faculty, postdoctoral fellows, business managers, the Director of International Affairs, and the Faculty Senate Research Committee Chair. Committee members are appointed for three-year terms by the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office in consultation with the past and current Committee members. The Committee meets monthly. A current list of PAC members can be found on the UTHSC PDO website:

<http://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/advisory.php>.

## **C. The UTHSC Postdoctoral Association (PhDA)**

The UTHSC Postdoctoral Association (PhDA) was established in 2007 as an affiliate of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) and received an award for the best new NPA chapter in 2008. The PhDA sponsors research and career development seminars, research poster

awards, and travel awards for postdoctoral fellows, as well as a variety of social events. Support for the PhDA is coordinated through the Postdoc Office. The PhDA officers hold monthly meetings with the Postdoc Office Associate Dean and Administrative Coordinator to discuss postdoctoral fellow needs, address problems and plan upcoming events. More information on the PhDA, including PhDA by-laws and membership application, can be found at on the UTHSC PhDA website: <http://www.uthsc.edu/PhDA>.

## **D. The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA)**

The NPA is a member-driven organization that provides a unique, national voice for Postdoctoral scholars. The NPA is also a collaborative organization that seeks to work with all stakeholders to improve the postdoctoral experience in the United States. The mission of the NPA is to advance the U.S. research enterprise by maximizing the effectiveness of the research community and enhancing the quality of the postdoctoral experience for all participants.

UTHSC is a sustaining member of the NPA. UTHSC postdoctoral fellows may join the NPA at no cost as an affiliate, non-voting member by registering using their @uthsc.edu email address. Postdoctoral fellows may also join as individual dues-paying members and will receive their own vote.

The NPA hosts an Annual Meeting every spring, and NPA travel awards are available. Please visit the National Postdoctoral Association website at <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org> for more information and to join.



## **II. Financial Support and Benefits for Postdoctoral Fellows**

### **A. Salary information**

Postdoctoral fellow salaries are based on experience and on the prevailing wage minimum recommended by the US Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The current minimum salary of a Postdoctoral Fellow at UTHSC is \$47,476. After April 1, 2008, it is required that all UTHSC postdoctoral fellow re-appointments meet or exceed the minimum salary level that had been established at the time of hire.

Annual raises for postdoctoral fellow are not mandatory at UTHSC, but may be awarded at the mentor's discretion. In the event that an appointee's extramural funding source specifies an adjustment, the terms of the funding source shall apply. Many postdoctoral fellows are funded through research grants from the NIH on which his/her mentor is the principal investigator. In this instance, NIH NRSA salary guidelines (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-17-003.html>) may not apply. If a postdoctoral fellow is funded by an NIH NRSA, the NIH salary guidelines will apply.

Postdoctoral fellows are exempt from certain wage and hour laws, such as a 40-hour work week. They do not receive overtime pay for hours worked over 40 hours per week, e.g., evenings and weekends. However, compensatory time may be allowed with approval of the mentor.

Any employee who will be paid by UTHSC must have a Social Security Number (SSN), which must be reported on the I-9 form. If the candidate does not have a SSN he/she must apply for one at a local office of the Social Security Administration.

Postdoctoral fellows who are paid by UTHSC are subject to mandatory federal and state taxes. Each postdoctoral fellow has the opportunity to indicate the number of federal withholding allowances when they

complete the W-4 form or Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate at the time of hire (Tennessee does not have a State tax). The withholding allowance may be changed at any time by completing a new form.

Foreign postdoctoral fellows receiving funding from a USA-based source may or may not be exempt from FICA and/or federal taxes. The tax treaty between the USA and the postdoctoral fellow's home country determines whether a postdoctoral fellow is subject to paying taxes. If you have employment-based tax questions, please contact the UTHSC Payroll Office at 901-448-5574.

Payment through direct deposit is a condition of employment at the University. Direct deposit allows the net pay to be deposited to a bank of choice, provided that the bank is a member of the Automated Clearing House.

The hiring department will assist postdocs with all the paper work necessary for employment.

## **B. Insurance benefits**

UTHSC provides health insurance for postdoctoral fellows. Coverage begins at the start date of employment. All postdoctoral fellows are automatically eligible for coverage and are automatically enrolled in the approved postdoctoral fellow health insurance plan. Individual coverage is provided at no cost to the postdoctoral fellow. Dependent children, spouse and family coverage is also available with premiums for dependents to be paid by the postdoctoral fellow. Current insurance carrier contact information: [www.hollandinsuranceinc.com](http://www.hollandinsuranceinc.com).

## **C. University Health Services**

University Health Services (UHS) welcomes UTHSC postdoctoral fellows. Details of services can be found on the UHS website <http://www.uthsc.edu/univheal>. Health insurance will be filed for office

visits and services at UHS. Postdoctoral fellows are responsible for deductibles required by insurance policies.

Postdoctoral fellows can also take advantage of the Student Health Assistance Program available through UHS ([www.mybalanceworks.com](http://www.mybalanceworks.com)). Any information shared by a Postdoctoral Fellow is privileged and confidential.

## **D. Leave policies**

A postdoctoral fellow is recognized as a trainee committed to maximizing his/her research productivity and is expected to work extended hours as needed to achieve this goal. Postdoctoral fellows are not eligible for overtime pay or payment for any approved leave time that is not taken. A set of workplace expectations regarding work hours, annual leave and sick leave will be formulated between the postdoctoral fellow and mentor at the onset of the postdoctoral training period. It is expected that hours worked and leave time will be consistent with postdoctoral fellow peers in comparable departments at UTHSC.

## **Vacation**

Vacation days granted for postdoctoral fellows are two weeks/year and are pro-rated based upon the start date of the fellowship. Vacation days expire at the end of each year of fellowship and do not accumulate from year to year.

## **Official UTHSC holidays**

Postdoctoral fellows are eligible for all UTHSC Official Holidays. A complete listing of UTHSC Official Holiday closings can be found at: <https://www.uthsc.edu/holidays/>.

Circumstances may necessitate the postdoctoral fellow working during UTHSC holidays to complete critical experiments, obtain data for grant

submissions or bring manuscripts to the submission stage. In this instance, the postdoctoral fellow may take those days at a later time. The mentor must be notified and agree with working arrangements that occur during UTHSC holidays.

The Postdoc Office has generated a fillable worksheet that will track the vacation and sick time accrued and/or used by a Postdoc. The Postdoc Leave Tracking Form can be found at a link on the Postdoc Office webpage. The use of this form is at the discretion of the mentor. If used, both postdoc and mentor should sign the form.

## **Religious holidays**

Specific requests by the postdoctoral fellow for religious holidays should be discussed with the mentor. Such requests should be honored unless they cause undue hardship to the laboratory. Leave for religious holidays may be unpaid or substituted with UTHSC holiday closings.

## **Funeral/bereavement leave**

Postdoctoral fellows will be provided with funeral/bereavement leave that are consistent with standard practices on campus.

Approvals for funeral/bereavement leave will be equally applied to all postdoctoral fellows in the mentor's laboratory. Additional information regarding funeral/bereavement leave may be found at this link:

[http://policy.tennessee.edu/hr\\_policy/hr0340/](http://policy.tennessee.edu/hr_policy/hr0340/).

## **Sick leave**

Postdoctoral fellows will be provided with reasonable amounts of sick leave consistent with standard practices on campus, which is 8 hours/month. The mentor, on a case-by-case basis, will approve requests for sick leave. Sick leave is in addition to expected vacation time and administrative holidays and closings.

Sick leave may be requested for the postdoctoral fellow him/herself or to care for a child, spouse or parent. Approval for sick leave will be equally applied to all postdoctoral fellows in the mentor's laboratory.

Sick leave days taken can be tracked by the postdoctoral fellow using the Postdoc Leave Tracking Form via a link on the Postdoc Office webpage. The use of this form is at the discretion of the mentor. If used, both postdoc and mentor should sign the form.

Sick leave days expire at the end of each year of fellowship and do not carry over from year to year.

## **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Postdoctoral fellows can be eligible for the FMLA. To be eligible, a postdoctoral fellow must have worked at UTHSC for the previous 12 calendar months (worked at least 1250 hours in the 12 month period prior to the first day of leave). If eligible, a postdoctoral fellow will be guaranteed up to 16 weeks of leave for a pregnancy and 12 weeks of leave for non-pregnancy-related illness. Sick and vacation time may be used during FMLA leave. After sick and vacation times have been used up, the postdoctoral fellow may be placed on unpaid leave for the duration of the FMLA leave.

If a postdoctoral fellow is out on sick leave in excess of three work days, he/she must apply for FMLA, if he/she is eligible.

All FMLA paperwork must be processed through Human Resources. Details of FMLA and other medical/personal leave programs can be found at [http://policy.tennessee.edu/hr\\_policy/hr0338/](http://policy.tennessee.edu/hr_policy/hr0338/).

## **Extended leave policy**

Any additional vacation or sick time, in excess of that listed above, must be approved by the mentor in writing using the *Request for Extended Unpaid Leave* form. Please use the extended leave form at

this link: <http://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/pdfs/extended-leave-policy-form-pdo.pdf>. The form can also be found via a link on the Postdoc Office website.

Extended leave forms for postdoctoral fellows must be signed and approved by the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office **before the leave is taken by the postdoctoral fellow**.

## **Insurance coverage during extended leave**

In order to maintain health insurance coverage during an unpaid leave of absence, the postdoctoral fellow must assume full cost (100%) of the insurance premium for both single and family coverage. It is the responsibility of the postdoctoral fellow to contact the Postdoc Office to make financial arrangements for continued insurance coverage during this time.

## **E. Retirement**

UTHSC postdoctoral fellows are trainees and are not eligible for retirement or longevity benefits.

## **F. Housing**

**On Campus:** Not available

**Off campus:** A private commercial company, Off Campus Partners, provides a resource to help postdoctoral fellows find housing for rent or for sale. At no charge, postdoctoral fellows may search the Off Campus Partners website for housing, use the site for their own posting to find roommates, or post a single rental property (sublet or full unit). Please visit the UTHSC Off-Campus Housing website for more information: [www.uthscoffcampus.com](http://www.uthscoffcampus.com)

## **G. Workers' compensation**

The purpose of Workers' Compensation is to provide care and compensation to University employees who are injured or contract an occupational illness in the course of employment. The State of Tennessee Division of Claims Administration requires both an Accident and Supervisor Report to be completed for each job related injury or illness.

### **The Claims Process:**

1. **Report** the accident/injury to your mentor immediately!
2. **Complete and sign** the State of Tennessee "Accident Report" immediately and return it to your supervisor. The form can be found on the following website:  
[https://www.uthsc.edu/hr/benefits/workers\\_compensation.php](https://www.uthsc.edu/hr/benefits/workers_compensation.php).
3. **Your mentor** must sign the "Accident Report" and complete the "Supervisor's Report" and "Initial Medical Information checklist". Return all original forms to the HR Benefits office the day of the accident/injury if possible or soon thereafter.
4. **Seek** medical attention from an authorized medical provider. Workers' compensation information is available on the web [www.uthsc.edu/hr/insurance/workers.htm](http://www.uthsc.edu/hr/insurance/workers.htm)

### **III. Appointment and Training of Postdoctoral Fellows**

#### **A. Duration of postdoctoral training**

Postdoctoral training in a given mentor's lab is expected to be completed within five years. The maximum duration for postdoctoral fellowship training is a total of eight years. Plans to extend for a short time beyond five years in a given mentor's lab should be discussed with the Postdoc Office and may be approved on a case-by-case basis. The Postdoc Office will send letters to the mentor and postdoctoral fellow to remind them of the deadline at 2 years, 1 year and 6 months prior to the completion of the fellowship.

#### **B. Individual Career Development Plan and Annual Progress Report**

The Postdoc Office will provide a yearly opportunity for mentors and postdoctoral fellows to submit an individual development plan (IDP) and Annual Performance Review (APR). An email will be sent to all postdocs and mentors that will provide instructions on how to access the IDP/APR form. The mentor should discuss the review with the postdoctoral fellow and summarize the discussions.

The annual IDP/APR is required to be filled out by both the postdoctoral fellow and mentor before the annual appointment will be renewed.

Copies of the annual IDP/APR should be retained by mentor and postdoctoral fellow for the remainder of the training period.

#### **C. Integrity in the Conduct of Scientific Research (IP801)**

The Postdoc Office has coordinated with Dr. Terrance Ackerman, Professor of Bioethics, to allow UTHSC postdocs to audit the Integrity in the Conduct of Scientific Research (IP801) graduate course.



Included in the course are the topics of Human and Animal Research, Scientific Misconduct and Intellectual Property. "NIH requires that all trainees, fellows, participants, and scholars receiving support through any NIH training, career development award (individual or institutional), research education grant, and dissertation research grant must receive instruction in responsible conduct of research."

(<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-019.html>).

Participation in the IP801 course is optional for all postdocs who receive funding from sources other than NIH funded training fellowships. If you are in doubt if you are required to receive RCR training in this format, please have your mentor contact his/her NIH program officer. Please contact Dr. Ackerman at [tackerma@uthsc.edu](mailto:tackerma@uthsc.edu) for details regarding the specifics of when the course is offered.

## **D. Required online training**

### **1. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training**

The UTHSC Postdoc Office sponsors online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) RCR training that is required of all postdoctoral fellows. Completion is required within two months of each postdoc fellow's start date, or sooner if the postdoctoral fellow is to conduct human subjects research under the review of the UTHSC Institutional Review Board. Below are the instructions for completing CITI RCR training:

- Go to [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)
- Create an account, if you do not already have one, or login, if you have an account
- Go to section "My Learner Tools for University of Tennessee Health Science Center – Memphis"

- Click on the link "Add a Course or Update Learner Groups"
- Scroll down to Question 3 and select "RCR for Post-docs". This will bring up 6 required modules
  1. Research Misconduct (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1215)
  2. Data Management (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1308)
  3. Authorship (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1380)
  4. Collaborative Research (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1450)
  5. Conflicts of Interest (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1622)
  6. Export Controls and National Security (RCR-Interdisciplinary) (ID: 14770)

An average score of 80% must be achieved on all 6 RCR modules to receive a certificate. Postdoctoral fellows should send a copy of certificate of completion to the Postdoc Office to be maintained in the postdoctoral fellow's file.

## **2. AALAS (American Association for Laboratory Animal Science) training**

AALAS training is required of all postdoctoral fellows that will be working with animals. Completion is required within two months of each postdoc fellow's start date, or sooner if the postdoctoral fellow is to conduct animal research under the review of the Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC). Below are the instructions for completing AALAS training:

- Modules (required and elective) are selected by mentor and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) office
- The administrator in the IACUC office will work with you and your mentor to get you certified

### **3. Conflict of Interest (COI) Training**

COI training is required to be listed on NIH grants, regardless of the Principal Investigator. COI training is coordinated through Research Administration. Below are the instructions for completing COI training:

- Log on via [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org) and create an account, if you do not already have one
  - Go to section "My Learner Tools for University of Tennessee Health Science Center–Memphis"
  - Click on the link "Add a Course or Update Learner Groups"
  - This will bring up 3 required modules
    - CITI Conflict of Interest Course–Introduction (ID: 15177)
    - Financial Conflicts of Interest: Overview, Investigator Responsibilities and COI Rules (ID: 15070)
    - Institutional Responsibilities as They Affect Investigators (ID: 15072)

An average score of 80% must be achieved on all 3 modules to receive a certificate. Postdoctoral fellows should send a copy of certificate of completion to PDO and Research Administration. Must be completed within 2 months of start date.

### **4. Outside Interest Disclosure**

An outside interest disclosure form is required of all Postdoctoral Fellows within two months of start date. The form can be downloaded at:

[http://www.uthsc.edu/finance/documents/Outside\\_Interest\\_Disclosure\\_Form-Faculty\\_and\\_Staff.pdf](http://www.uthsc.edu/finance/documents/Outside_Interest_Disclosure_Form-Faculty_and_Staff.pdf).

Postdoctoral fellows should send a copy of certificate of completion to PDO and Research Administration.

## **5. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training**

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) training is required of all Postdoctoral Fellows within two months of start date. Postdoctoral fellows should send a copy of scores to Postdoc Office and Research Administration. Below are the instructions for completing HIPAA training:

- Go to <https://courses.uthsc.edu>
- Login with your UTHSC NetID and password
- Click on “2016 - 17UTHSC Information Security Training” listed under “My Courses”
- Complete HIPPA Training

An average score of 67% must be achieved on each quiz to receive a certificate.

Contact UTHSC Educational Technology Department if you have questions at: <http://uthsc.edu/edtech/>

## **F. Outside employment**

Postdoctoral fellows must consult the Postdoc Office and mentor prior to engaging in additional employment activities. Outside employment must not interfere with primary research and training obligations and must comply with all relevant University policies including those on conflict of interest, conflict of commitment, and intellectual property, and must comply with the rules of the funding source.

In most cases, federal law prohibits foreign nationals from working outside UTHSC.

## **G. Publications and Intellectual Property**

Postdoctoral fellows are expected to write manuscripts from their research and submit for publication in a timely manner. The laboratory

policy of authorship on manuscripts should be discussed with the mentor at the outset of training. Typically, authorship requires the contribution of at least one figure or piece of data critical to the publication of the manuscript. For a first authorship in a manuscript, fellows are required to be the primary contributor of the study and play major role in experimental work, data processing and manuscript writing.

A postdoctoral fellow's contribution to the development of any intellectual property (IP) will be recognized in accordance with UTHSC and the University of Tennessee Research Foundation (UTRF) policies. To be allocated rights to an invention, the postdoctoral fellow must have contributed to the intellectual development of the IP. Technical contributions will typically not be allocated rights to IP.

## **H. Renewal of appointment**

At the end of the initial appointment term, the appointment as Postdoctoral Fellow may be eligible for renewal, based on satisfactory performance, the existence of funding, and programmatic need.

The most recent IDP/APR must have been completed by both the postdoctoral fellow and mentor before an appointment renewal will be approved by the Postdoc Office.

## **I. Resignation by postdoctoral fellow**

If a postdoctoral fellow decides to resign prior to the completion date set by the mentor, he/she should discuss the timing of this termination with his/her mentor. Notice should be given to the mentor at least thirty days prior to the planned resignation in order to assure a smooth transition of laboratory duties. The mentor should confirm the acceptance of the resignation in writing.

A postdoctoral fellow leaving employment has the obligation to leave the research records, laboratory reagents etc. in a condition that will

allow continuation of the project and ensure compliance. A postdoctoral fellow must also turn in his/her ID and keys to the departmental Business Manager. If this does not occur, the postdoctoral fellow's final paycheck may be held until research records and returned items are in compliance.

A copy of the resignation letter must be provided to the Postdoc Office.

## **J. Early termination of training by mentor**

A postdoctoral fellow may be terminated by the mentor during the course of his/her training period if his/her performance is unsatisfactory, provided that written documentation is provided to the postdoctoral fellow of the policy violation or of the significant performance deficiency and prior counseling about that deficiency have taken place. Postdoctoral fellows should be provided at least a 30 day written notice prior to being terminated. However, in instances of gross negligence or significant violations of UTHSC policy, the mentor reserves the right to terminate a postdoctoral fellow without such written notice. The Postdoc Office should be consulted in these cases.

The postdoctoral fellow leaving employment has the obligation to leave the research records, laboratory reagents etc. in a condition that will allow continuation of the project and ensure compliance. A postdoctoral fellow must also turn in his/her ID and keys to the departmental Business Manager. If this does not occur the postdoctoral fellow's final paycheck may be held until research records and returned items are in compliance.

A copy of the termination letter and/or of the mentor's plans for termination must be provided to the Postdoc Office.

Termination letters for postdoctoral fellows must be signed and approved by the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office before being delivered to the postdoctoral fellow.

## **K. Completion of postdoctoral fellowship**

It is the mentor's responsibility to support and, when possible, assist in the postdoctoral fellow's transition to the next stage of his/her career. When the mentor concludes that the training is nearing its conclusion, he/she should meet with the postdoctoral fellow to discuss a transition plan. Following this meeting, the mentor should provide the postdoctoral fellow with written confirmation of the agreed-upon completion date, and written plans for transition of lab duties. The mentor should confirm that research records, laboratory reagents, etc. are in a condition that will allow continuation of the project and ensure compliance. It is expected that this notice will be provided to the postdoctoral fellow at least three months prior to the anticipated transition date, unless precluded by extenuating circumstances such as changes in the availability of funding.

Copies of completion letters and/or of the mentor's plans for termination must be provided to the Postdoc Office.

### **Exit Survey**

Upon leaving a postdoctoral fellowship position at UTHSC, each postdoctoral fellow must complete a mandatory exit survey. Information from the survey will be used in a confidential manner to help enhance the postdoctoral program for future postdoctoral fellow and mentors. A copy of the exit survey can be found at:

[https://uthsc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe3/preview/SV\\_b0Y7ymolfhrJtZP](https://uthsc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe3/preview/SV_b0Y7ymolfhrJtZP).

## **Training Certificate**

Certificates will be generated for all postdoctoral fellows when they leave the UTHSC postdoctoral fellowship program. The certificate will be provided upon completion of the mandatory exit survey. All relevant IDP/APRs and all mandatory online training must be completed prior to generation of the certificate. The certificate will state the postdoctoralfellow's name, department and the dates that he/she was a postdoctoral fellow on the UTHSC campus.



## **IV. Other UTHSC work-place policies that apply to postdoctoral fellows**

### **A. Drug-free workplace**

It is the policy of the University of Tennessee to maintain a safe and healthful environment for its students and employees. Therefore, university policy prohibits the unlawful use, manufacture, possession, distribution, or dispensing of drugs ("controlled substances" as defined in the Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. 812) and alcohol on university property or during university activities.

Violation of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action—up to and including immediate discharge for an employee and permanent dismissal of a student. Federal and state laws provide additional penalties for such unlawful activities, including fines and imprisonment (21 U.S.C. 841 et seq.; T.C.A. 39-6-401 et seq.). Local ordinances also provide various penalties for drug- and alcohol-related offenses. The university is bound to take all appropriate actions against violators, which may include referral for legal prosecution or requiring the individual to participate satisfactorily in an approved drug use or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

Individuals who are paid by the University of Tennessee from federal grants or contracts must notify the University of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace within five days after such conviction. The university is, in turn, required to inform the granting or contracting agency of such violation within ten days of the university's receipt of notification. UTHSC's policy can be found at: [https://academic.uthsc.edu/policy\\_docs/student\\_drug\\_alcohol.php](https://academic.uthsc.edu/policy_docs/student_drug_alcohol.php).

## **B. The University of Tennessee System sexual harassment policy**

1. The University of Tennessee unequivocally opposes the sexual harassment of its employees. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action. In accordance with federal regulations, sexual harassment is defined as follows:

*Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:*

- a. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;*
  - b. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; or*
  - c. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.*
2. The university prohibits any retaliatory action against an employee for opposing an action that he or she believes to be sexual harassment, including the filing of an internal complaint or grievance or a charge with a state or federal civil rights enforcement agency.
  3. Each unit will provide training for its employees on what constitutes sexual harassment and will provide a procedure to handle complaints of sexual harassment and other complaints of discrimination.

(Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX, Educational Amendments of 1972)

For more information or assistance, please contact:

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)  
920 Madison Avenue, Suite 420  
Memphis, TN 38163  
(901) 448-2112 / 5558  
<https://uthsc.edu/oed/sexual-harassment.php>

### **C. Accommodation for disabilities**

In accordance with University of Tennessee Health Science Center Personnel Procedure #220 and University of Tennessee System Policy HR0220, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, reasonable accommodations will be made for otherwise qualified disabled veterans and persons with disabilities. This policy applies to residents with disabilities. The University of Tennessee Health Science Center is required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and is committed to providing a campus, which is accessible to everyone. Information on rights under these laws is available through the Office of Equity and Diversity, 910 Madison Avenue, Suite 826; 901-448-2112, or online at: [www.uthsc.edu/oed/disabilities.php](http://www.uthsc.edu/oed/disabilities.php).

### **D. Grievances**

1. Informal Resolution of Grievances: A postdoctoral fellow with a grievance should first discuss the grievance with one of the following people: his/her faculty mentor, the department Chair, the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office, Dean of Graduate School, UTHSC Human Resources Office. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, then the postdoctoral fellow can file a formal grievance.

2. Formal Grievance Procedure for an Academic Issue (including, but not limited to, authorship concerns or research ethics):

- a. A written complaint should be filed with the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office and include the allegation of the grievance with pertinent facts, names of persons involved and possible witnesses, and a summary of steps taken thus far in an attempt to resolve the problem
- b. The Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office will then appoint an *ad hoc* grievance committee comprised of Postdoc Advisory Committee members.
- c. The *ad hoc* grievance committee will review the complaint and investigate the grievance.
- d. The *ad hoc* grievance committee will present a written report of its findings and a recommendation of action to the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office. All reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of information obtained at meetings of the *ad hoc* grievance committee.
- e. If the *ad hoc* grievance committee report indicates the grievance or elements of the grievance are justified, the Associate Dean of the Postdoc Office may then take the following actions:
  - i. meet with the departmental Chair and the faculty mentor to discuss how the issue will be resolved
  - ii. in the case of repeated grievances, identify the faculty mentor as unsuitable for postdoctoral fellow mentoring and encourage the departmental Chair to include this failing in the annual faculty review of that mentor
  - iii. in the case of an extreme grievance, request for dismissal of the faculty from UTHSC

3. Formal Grievance Procedure for a Workplace Issue (including, but not limited to, sexual or racial harassment):

Contact the UTHSC Human Resources Office:  
<http://www.uthsc.edu/hr/employee-relations/grievance.php>.

## **E. Scientific misconduct/research integrity**

The primary mission of science is to produce ideas. Because this “product” is a virtual commodity and not a real one, scientific ideas may be vulnerable to cheating. Plagiarism, misrepresentation, purposeful selection of data to fit preconceptions, unbridled investigator bias—there are many ways to produce false science.

UTHSC Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures covers situations involving fabrication, falsification or plagiarism may be reviewed by going to the Statement of Policy on Misconduct in Research and Service website at <https://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/conduct.php>

More information for research integrity may be found at Office of Research Integrity, US Department Health and Human Services:  
<http://ori.hhs.gov>