

# Rammelkamp Center For Education and Research (RCER) / MetroHealth Medical Center (MHMC)

## Policy For Postdoctoral Research Fellows

### PRELIMINARY

RCER is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards of education for postdoctoral fellows. A major goal of the institution is to provide an environment that promotes outstanding academic and personal growth of our trainees.

#### I. Definition of a Postdoctoral Appointment (from AAU Committee Report on Postdoctoral Education)

- The appointee was recently awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate in an appropriate field.
- The appointment is temporary and cannot be extended beyond 5 years.
- The appointment is viewed as preparatory for a research career in academic or industry settings.
- The appointee works under the supervision of a faculty member (or established scholar approved by the hosting department) at MHMC.
- A person considered a Postdoctoral Fellow may have a Human Resources category of either a postdoctoral fellow or a research associate.

#### II. Letter of Appointment

Postdoctoral appointees should receive a letter of appointment jointly signed by the faculty mentor and the center director or other MHMC official (guidelines appended). A statement of goals, policies, and responsibilities applicable to postdoctoral education should accompany the letter.

#### III. Obligations of Postdoctoral Fellows

Postdoctoral fellows have certain obligations to their mentor, the laboratory in which they are working, the Department with which they are associated, the grantor whose funds support them, and MHMC. These obligations include but are not limited to: (i) the conscientious discharge of their research responsibilities; (ii) conformity with ethical standards in research; (iii) compliance with good laboratory habits including the maintenance of adequate research records, and due observation of standards regarding use of isotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, animals, and the like; (iv) observation of appropriate guidelines regarding human subjects if applicable; (v) open and timely discussion with their mentor regarding possession or distribution of materials, reagents, or records belonging to their laboratory, and any proposed disclosure of findings or techniques privately or in publications; (vi) collegial conduct towards coworkers and members of the research group; (vii) compliance with all applicable MHMC policies. All data and research records generated via substantial use of MHMC resources remain the property of the Mentor and MHMC. The appointee has the freedom, and is expected, to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of the appointment, respecting the original contract appointment.

#### IV. Proof of Doctoral Degree

Eligibility for appointment as a postdoctoral trainee requires an advanced degree, PhD, MD, or equivalent. International scholar-trainees should have advanced degrees which are equivalent to those provided in domestic institutions in order to qualify for appointment as postdoctoral trainees. It is the responsibility of the scholar-trainee to provide transcripts which certify that she/he has received her/his degree, and it is the responsibility of the mentor to be sure that this documentation is

satisfactory and that it is included in the trainee's file attached to the letter of appointment. If the trainee has completed the requirements for the PhD but has not yet received her/his degree, then she/he should supply documents certifying that the thesis has been approved and indicating the date when the degree is expected to be conferred; this special exception applies only to trainees receiving their degrees from domestic institutions.

#### V. Orientation

A standard compendium of information should be given to each postdoctoral scholar-trainee upon arrival at MHMC. This compendium should include a copy of these guidelines, the Patent Policy, the telephone directory, parking policies, a clear statement about benefits, sources of information within the institution, explanation of the grievance procedures available. Preferably, periodic orientation sessions should be provided for all new postdoctoral scholar-trainees.

#### VI. Grievance Procedure

It is recognized that from time to time disagreements may arise between postdoctoral scholar-trainee and mentor. Postdoctoral trainees should be clearly informed about the options which they can exercise under such circumstances. The grievance procedure is appended.

#### VII. Application for Grants

Postdoctoral Scholar/trainees are encouraged to apply for postdoctoral fellowships. The approval and collaboration of the faculty mentor and department chair are generally required to support fellowship applications. Department chairs are always required to sign off on the proposal review forms that are part of CWRU grant applications.

#### VII. Career Development

Departments and faculty mentors should provide career advising and job placement assistance as appropriate to their postdoctoral appointees.

#### IX. Visa Information

All foreign visitors must obtain proper immigration documents upon entering the United States.

## **APPENDIX I (Guidelines for letter of appointment)**

This letter should set forth at least the basic terms of appointment including the period of appointment (dates of appointment), the stipend level, all included benefits and a statement that the fellow's appointment is subject to all University and MHMC policies. The letter should state whether the trainee will receive salary and benefits under a Case Western Reserve University or MetroHealth Medical Center appointment. If the appointment is renewed or extended, that action should be documented by a letter, which includes the foregoing information. The candidate should be required to return a countersigned copy of each letter of appointment or renewal indicating acceptance of the terms set. The letters (countersigned copies) and signed agreement should be placed in a permanent file kept in the office of the appropriate Department. The letters of appointment and renewal should indicate whether the mentor has funding in hand to fulfill the terms of the appointment; if not, the letter should indicate the duration of assured funding. If the appointment is to terminate with external funding, research grant, contract, training grant, etc., that fact should be included in the letter of appointment, including the end date of the funding even when renewal is expected. A notice of termination should be given in writing at least three months prior to the end of appointment.

## APPENDIX II (Grievance Procedures)

It is the responsibility of the RCER and each faculty mentor to assure that all post-doctoral trainees have adequate access to consideration of their grievances concerning academic or personal issues. The following procedure has been established for post-doctoral fellows to present complaints about actions they feel are unfair.

1. Post-doctoral fellows with complaints should first discuss their grievance with the person against whom the complaint is directed. It is always best for the parties to be sure they understand each other before more formal steps are taken, and to be sure that every opportunity has been taken for mutually satisfactory resolution. If the grievance is not with the post-doctoral student's mentor, the faculty mentor should attempt to intervene.
2. If the grievance is not resolved, it should then be discussed with one of four pre-designated faculty who are part of a grievance-resolution team (GRT, see below). This team will include the Chairman of the Grievance Committee (GC), and 3 additional faculty. The GRT team member should intervene in a manner he/she deems most appropriate to resolve the problem. The chairman of the Grievance Committee should be contacted by the GRT member as soon as the grievance is raised. Typically, the GRT member should meet individually with the post-doctoral student and their mentor, followed by, if needed, a meeting between all three. The post-doctoral student should describe their grievance(s) in writing. If the grievance is resolved, the GRT member should submit a brief report to the chairman of the Grievance Committee describing the nature of the grievance and its resolution. If the grievance is not resolved, go to step 3.
3. The GRT member should submit a brief report to the chairman of the Grievance Committee describing the nature of the grievance and the discussions aimed at resolving them. The post-doctoral student's written description of their grievances should also be submitted. The GRT member will then present his/her findings to the Grievance Committee, who will attempt to develop and implement additional strategies for resolving the grievance. If the grievance is between a post-doctoral fellow and a member of the Grievance Committee, that member will not participate in the deliberations of the committee.
4. If the Grievance Committee can not develop reasonable strategies for resolving the grievance, or if strategies are attempted but fail, the Grievance Committee will provide suitable guidance to the post-doctoral fellow as to options they can pursue to lodge their grievance within Human Resources Departments of CWRU or MHMC as appropriate.

### Rammelkamp Center Grievance Committee (GC)

Dr. David Rosenbaum, Chairman  
Dr. William Schilling  
Dr. Glenn Kirsch  
Dr. John Sedor  
Kathleen Kreigler

### Rammelkamp Grievance Resolution Team (GRT)

Dr. David Rosenbaum (drosenbaum@metrohealth.org, 778-7342)  
Dr. Bingcheng Wang (bwant@research.metrohealth.org)  
Dr. Barbara Wible (bwible@research.metrohealth.org)  
Dr. Kenneth Laurita (klaurita@metrohealth.org, 778-7342)