

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
REQUEST FOR DECISION**

PRESENTED BY: Terry Wotherspoon, Chair, Governance Committee

DATE OF MEETING: April 15, 2021

SUBJECT: **Request for Decision: Postdoctoral Fellows Policy Revisions**

DECISION REQUESTED:

It is recommended that University Council approve the proposed revisions to the Postdoctoral Fellows Policy (as attached), pending the approval of the Board of Governors, effective June 22, 2021.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this agenda item is to request Council's approval of the proposed revisions to the Postdoctoral Fellows (PDF) Policy.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The existing PDF Policy was approved by University Council and the Board of Governors in December 2004. The postdoctoral landscape in Canada has changed over the past 16 years and more recently has changed significantly at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

On January 16, 2019, an interest arbitration award finalized the first collective bargaining agreement between the university and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), representing PDFs. This first collective bargaining agreement formalized terms and conditions for most PDFs as employees at USask. As a result of the changes brought forward through the collective agreement, the existing PDF Policy no longer reflects the status of PDFs at USask. Through consultation between Labour Relations and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), it was proposed that the PDF Policy should be revised to align with the PSAC Local 40004 Collective Agreement. CGPS also took into consideration the objectives of the current policy.

In summary, proposed major changes to the 2004 PDF Policy that are presented in the attached documentation include:

- Aligning the policy with current procedures
- Updating language and out-of-date terminology and providing links to relevant policies and procedures
- Expanding on the definitions for faculty members and supervisors
- Defining the different appointment categories for postdoctoral fellows (in-scope and external)

- Clearly defining the maximum term for a PDF
- Formatting the policy to align with other institutional policies

CONSULTATION:

After consultation with the Governance Office and People & Resources, it was determined that certain sections of the policy were procedure-based and would be more appropriately housed under the purview of CGPS, rather than university policy. The Policy that had previously been approved by Graduate and Postdoctoral Council on October 13, 2020 was therefore separated into two documents, one being the policy, the other being procedures.

Changes to the policy since its October 13, 2020 approval by Graduate and Postdoctoral Council:

- Minor updates to the language for clarification and links to relevant policies and documents
- Moved the following sections from policy document to the CGPS procedures document:
 - Intellectual property
 - Recruitment and selection
 - Notice
 - Remuneration
 - Benefits
 - Research allowances
 - Teaching
 - Conflict resolution procedures

Graduate and Postdoctoral Council was updated about the modification in format, breaking the document into two, at its February 9, 2021 meeting, and the CGPS Postdoctoral Studies Advisory Committee has reviewed and given its continued endorsement to the two documents on February 17, 2021, with minor modifications.

On February 23, 2021 representatives from CGPS, the Governance office and People & Resources met to discuss the policy and procedures and made additional minor modifications to the documents.

Additionally, drafts of the PDF Policy and the CGPS Postdoctoral Procedures documents are being shared with the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) Local 40004 representing Postdoctoral Fellows for information.

The PDF procedures attached to this Council agenda item are for information only, they are not presented for approval. The procedures are within the purview of CGPS.

DECISION PROCESS:

At its meeting on October 13, 2020 Graduate and Postdoctoral Council of the CGPS accepted the revised PDF Policy. On March 9, 2021, the Governance Committee of Council approved a motion to recommend to Council the attached proposed revisions to the PDF Policy. A request for input from University Council was presented on March 18, 2021. No additional feedback was received. Pending Council approval, a request to approve these revisions will be presented to the Board of Governors on June 21, 2021.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Postdoctoral Fellows Policy

Attachment 2: Postdoctoral Fellows – CGPS Procedures (*for information*)

No tracked changes version of the current policy is provided given the extent of the proposed changes, which results in very limited readability.

REFERENCES:

[Link to existing Postdoctoral Fellows Policy \(2004\) on USask website](#)

Postdoctoral Fellows Policy

Authorization: Board of Governors / University Council

University Council approved on XXXXX

Board of Governors approved on XXXXX

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Collective Agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Local 40004 (Post Doctoral Fellows)

(<https://careers.usask.ca/agreements/psac/agreements/postdoctoral/psac-pdf-table-of-contents.php>).

1.0 Guiding Principles

1.1 Postdoctoral Fellows (PDFs) are valuable members of the University of Saskatchewan community. As trained researchers, they have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to the vitality of the university's research environment.

The PDFs' primary objectives include developing the skills and knowledge necessary to become independent investigators and making scholarly contributions to the conception, development and completion of research projects.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to define the status and the role of a person holding an appointment as a PDF (see "appointment categories for PDFs" below) and, in support of this purpose, to establish the requirements for such appointments and to outline the scope of a PDF's intended activities.

3.0 Scope

3.0 This policy applies to PDFs (whether in-scope or externally funded), faculty members, and administrators at the University of Saskatchewan.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Postdoctoral Fellow (PDF): An individual who holds a Postdoctoral Fellowship appointment.

4.1.1 There are two appointment categories for PDFs:

- a) A PDF who receives full or partial funding from university sources (e.g. from a research grant or contract obtained by their supervisor, from a research unit of the University, etc.) is considered an employee of the University of Saskatchewan and will be appointed in-scope of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Local 40004 (referred to as an in-scope PDF). The terms and conditions of their working relationship with the faculty supervisor will be governed by the Collective Agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Local 40004 (Post Doctoral Fellows).

- b) A PDF who has secured 100% of their own transferrable funding from an external source (e.g., NSERC Postdoctoral Fellowship, SHRF Research Fellowship, etc. awarded directly to the PDF, not to the supervisor) is not an employee of the university and will be appointed as an external PDF. In some cases, funding derived from external sources may be administered through the university payroll system as a “paymaster,” but it does not constitute an employment relationship.
- c) Unless otherwise required by the context, both in-scope and external PDFs will be referred to in this policy simply as PDFs.

4.2 Faculty member: Any professional position at or through the University of Saskatchewan, excluding PDFs, that confers the right to hold a research grant. For purposes of this definition, a “faculty member” includes a person holding an appointment at the university in one of the following ranks: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Adjunct Professor, and Professor Emeritus.

4.3 Supervisor: The individual to whom the PDF reports directly in the performance of their research (and sometimes teaching) duties, and with whom the PDF carries out research projects. The supervisor shall be a member of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS).

4.4 University: University of Saskatchewan.

5.0 Policy

The following applies to all PDFs, regardless of whether they are in-scope or externally funded.

5.1 Appointment Requirements and Eligibility

5.1.1 CGPS is the college responsible for the academic and administrative needs of PDFs at the University of Saskatchewan. All PDFs shall be appointed through and registered with CGPS. Guidelines regarding these appointment and registration processes are available on the [CGPS website](#). The information gathered from these processes may be used to provide information for both strategic and research planning.

5.1.2 The PDF must normally have been awarded a PhD or equivalent within five (5) years immediately preceding the appointment.

5.1.3 Appointments are normally one-to-two years and may be renewable to a maximum of five years from the year of PhD conferral.

5.1.4 An exception to the requirements set out in section 5.1.3 may be made by the Associate Dean, CGPS, on request by the supervisor, but only when such an application is made in advance, in writing.

5.1.5 All PDFs must have a supervisor.

5.1.6 All PDFs are required to adhere to all university policies, the respective collective agreement and relevant legislation as applicable.

5.1.7 At all times, both the offer and the continuation of an appointment as a PDF will be subject to the availability of sufficient funding.

5.1.8 PDFs may be appointed full-time or part-time.

5.4 Research Responsibilities

5.4.1 The supervisor is required to provide a research environment suitable for the completion of the research project(s) that the PDF will undertake. The nature of this research should be appropriate to the PDF's desire to gain additional skills, knowledge, and expertise relevant to future career goals.

5.4.2 The supervisor is required to manage the research space and activity to ensure compliance with university policies including certificates for [Animal Care and Human Ethics](#).

5.4.3 The PDF must acknowledge the role of the supervisor in the general direction of the research and provide all research results and conclusions to the supervisor in a timely and cooperative manner.

5.4.4 The supervisor and PDF must comply with the [Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#), other university policies, the respective collective agreement and relevant legislation as applicable.

6.0 Additional Items

Additional information for appointments of external PDFs is outlined here [LINK]

Additional employment information for in-scope PDFs is outlined in the [USask/PSAC Collective Agreement \(Post Doctoral Fellows\)](#), including hours of work, vacation, leaves of absence, postings and appointments, etc.

Postdoctoral Fellows – CGPS Procedures

Where applicable, these procedures should be read in conjunction with the with the [University of Saskatchewan Policies for Postdoctoral Fellows](#) and the Collective Agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Local 40004 (Post Doctoral Fellows) (<https://careers.usask.ca/agreements/psac/agreements/postdoctoral/psac-pdf-table-of-contents.php>)

1. Recruitment and Selection

- 1.1. Faculty members are responsible for the recruitment and selection of PDFs, must ensure that selected individuals are eligible to hold a PDF appointment at the university and must adhere to the appointment requirements under the applicable collective agreement.
- 1.2. PDF candidates may be required to submit documentation to potential supervisors. Possible documentation may include, but is not limited to: a CV, letters of reference, official transcripts (forwarded directly from the granting institutions), research papers (in press or submitted), and a brief research proposal.

2. Remuneration

- 2.1. In-scope PDFs must receive a minimum salary as outlined in the USask/PSAC Local 40004 (Post Doctoral Fellows) Collective Agreement and are subject to any negotiated annual increases.
- 2.2. All external PDFs must receive a minimum stipend in line with the current minimum salary of in-scope PDFs.
- 2.3. In cases where external funding does not meet the minimum requirement, the funding must be topped up by the supervisor or other internal sources to meet or exceed the minimum requirement. An internal top up will change the appointment category for the PDF; please refer to the appointment categories as outlined in the Postdoctoral Fellows Policy [LINK].

3. Benefits

- 3.1. In-scope PDFs are eligible for benefits as outlined in the USask/PSAC Collective Agreement (Post Doctoral Fellows).
- 3.2. External PDFs are not eligible for the University of Saskatchewan's employment benefits as defined in the PSAC Collective Agreement, as they are not employees of the University.

4. Notice

- 4.1. Written notice of one (1) month is expected for the resignation of an external PDF.
- 4.2. Written notice of six (6) weeks is expected for the termination of an external PDF.
- 4.3. Notice requirements for in-scope PDFs are outlined in the USask/PSAC Collective Agreement (Post Doctoral Fellows).

5. Intellectual Property

Please note that the Office of the Vice President, Research is currently conducting a university-wide review of Intellectual Property policies that might result in a modification to the following language.

- 5.1. Intellectual property is the term used to describe the creative results of research and scholarly activity which may have immediate realizable value or value upon further development and commercial use or production. It may take various forms, such as patentable discoveries and

inventions, copyrightable works (books, paintings, photographs, computing software, graphics, etc.) non-patentable technical knowhow and trade secrets. Ownership of intellectual property rests in the creator but is assignable. University faculty and administrative personnel assign certain intellectual property ownership rights to the university on appointment.

- 5.2. The supervisor will inform a PDF of any prior intellectual property agreements covering any research work that they are to undertake. The commitments made in the agreements, and any benefits or the lack thereof, must be communicated in writing to the PDF. A copy of this intellectual property agreement must accompany the registration, along with an acknowledgement by the PDF that the conditions are understood.
 - 5.3. The supervisor will involve PDFs in any intellectual property agreements for any research work that the PDF will be involved in that may yield patentable or commercial benefits.
 - 5.4. In-scope PDFs should refer to the article on Intellectual Property as outlined in [the USask/PSAC Collective Agreement \(Post Doctoral Fellows\)](#).
6. PDF Research Allowances
- 6.1. Many agencies which provide funding to PDFs from competitions (e.g. Tri-Agency, SHRF, Mitacs, etc.) also provide small research allowances. These research allowances when administered by the University of Saskatchewan may be held by a faculty member (or equivalent) or the PDF, who agrees to manage the funds on behalf of the PDF as per university and funding agency policies.
 - 6.2. Different agencies have specific rules concerning these allowances which are outlined in the terms and conditions of the award. Most granting agencies that provide these funds do so for the benefit of the PDF, not the benefit of the supervisor. These funds are intended to provide support for eligible expenses as outlined in the conditions of the award related to the PDF's research activities (e.g. travel for meetings and conferences, journal subscriptions, computer and software, and possibly moving expenses, etc.) that might not be normally available to PDFs from the supervisor's research funding. In the absence of regulations from the granting agency, all items purchased with these funds remain the property of the University of Saskatchewan.
 - 6.3. Research allowances administered by the University of Saskatchewan, including those provided by the supervisor's research grants, are not considered employment income.
7. Teaching
- 7.1. PDFs may be eligible to participate in a limited amount of teaching activity. Normally, teaching will be limited to a maximum of three credit units per annum.
 - 7.2. While the primary purpose of a PDF is to conduct research, the University of Saskatchewan embraces the teacher/scholar model. PDFs are encouraged to build a teaching portfolio; a PDF who intends to teach should discuss the arrangements with the supervisor and establish whether or not the terms of the grant or fellowship allow teaching. The supervisor must be satisfied that the research obligations and responsibilities of the PDF will not be negatively affected by any teaching duties and responsibilities.
8. Conflict Resolution Procedure
- 8.1. The academic home for PDFs is CGPS.
 - 8.2. A PDF and supervisor are encouraged to resolve any issues informally through discussion. Should this be unsuccessful, the PDF and/or supervisor may bring unresolved issues to the attention of an appropriate authority (Department Head, Director of an academic unit or

centre, or Dean of a College).

- 8.3. If the higher authority is not able to resolve an issue, the authority, supervisor or PDF may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean, CGPS. If necessary, the Associate Dean will work with the Office of the Vice President, Research to facilitate any subsequent actions.
- 8.4. Should the steps outlined in 8.2 and 8.3 be unsuitable, a PDF or supervisor may bypass these steps to bring the issue directly to the attention of the Associate Dean, CGPS.
- 8.5. An alternative reporting option is the safe disclosure reporting mechanism, provided by ConfidenceLine (available 24/7, [online](#) or by phone at 1-844-966-3250).
- 8.6. Additional conflict resolution and formal grievance procedures for In-Scope PDFs are outlined in the [USask/PSAC Collective Agreement \(Post Doctoral Fellows\)](#).
- 8.7. Additional resources include the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy, the Sexual Assault Prevention Policy and the Violence Prevention Policy (<https://policies.usask.ca>).