Introduction
Definition of a Postdoctoral Research Trainee

The UTHSC Compact .........................................................1-10
Commitments and Work Conditions for Postdoctoral Research Trainees at UTHSC
  I. Commitments by UTHSC
  II. Commitments by Postdoctoral Research Trainee
  III. Commitments Made and Work Conditions Created by Mentor
  IV. Grievance Procedures in the case of Non-Compliance

Infrastructure support and UTHSC policies for Postdoctoral Research Trainees ..........................11-16
  I. The Postdoc Office
  II. The Postdoc Advisory Committee
  III. The UTHSC Postdoctoral Association (PhDA)
  IV. The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA)
List of Policies and Procedures

I. Hiring Procedures
   A. Posting a Position
   B. Applying for a position
      1. proof of doctoral degree
      2. visa status
   C. Filling a position
   D. Completion of training
      1. Training Certificates
      2. Exit Survey

II. Financial Support, Benefits and Other Terms of Employment
   A. Salary information
   B. Leave policies
   C. Insurance benefits
   D. University Health Sciences
   E. Retirement
   F. Housing
      1. On campus
      2. Off campus
   G. Outside Employment
   H. Auditing UTHSC courses
   I. Evaluating and Individual Career Development Plan
   J. Publication
K. Early termination of training by Postdoc or mentor

L. Grievances

III. Other UTHSC work-place policies that apply to Postdocs

A. Worker’s Compensation
   1. Claim process

B. Harassment

C. Drug Free Work Place

D. Accommodation for Disabilities

E. Scientific Misconduct/Research Integrity
INTRODUCTION

Definition of a Postdoctoral Research Trainee

Postdoctoral Research Trainees are individuals who typically come to UTHSC to further their training in a chosen discipline after recently obtaining their terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M.). This training is for a limited term, expected to last no more than five years with any given UTHSC mentor. It is conducted in an apprenticeship mode where the trainee works under the supervision of an investigator who is qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor.

Postdoctoral Research Trainees are classified as special employees of the University with benefits and work conditions as described below. Other individuals, such as Research Associates or Clinical Fellows/Residents completing a period of research training may utilize some of the training principles and goals listed below; however, their benefits and work conditions are different and are described on the Human Resources benefits page: [www.uthsc.edu/hr/Benefits](http://www.uthsc.edu/hr/Benefits) for Research Associates and on the Graduate Medical Education Institutional Policy page: [www.uthsc.edu/GME/policies.php](http://www.uthsc.edu/GME/policies.php) for Clinical Fellows/Residents. In general, UTHSC policies for regular employees do not apply to Postdoctoral Research Trainees unless stipulated below.
Effective April 20, 2009

The UTHSC Compact
Commitments and Work Conditions for Postdoctoral Trainees at UTHSC

The following document is a modified version of the “Compact Between Postdoctoral Trainees and Their Mentors” drafted by the AAMC Graduate Research Education and Training (GREAT) group. Modifications were done to facilitate its specific application to Postdoctoral Trainees and Mentors at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC).

Postdoctoral trainees are individuals who typically come to UTHSC to further their training in a chosen discipline after recently obtaining their terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M.). This training is for a limited term, expected to last no more than five years with any given UTHSC mentor. It is conducted in an apprenticeship mode where the trainee works under the supervision of an investigator who is qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor.

I. Commitments by UTHSC

1. UTHSC oversight will be provided for terms of appointment, salary, benefits, grievance procedures and all other matters relevant to the support of Postdoctoral trainees.

2. A responsible UTHSC official will be designated to provide this oversight and a suitable office will be available for the administrative support of Postdoctoral affairs.

3. UTHSC will work with the faculty to provide a no-cost/partial-cost health insurance plan for all full-time Postdoctoral trainees.
4. Professional development seminars, skill-building workshops, opportunities to present original research (e.g., a Research Day), research ethics seminars, and laboratory safety seminars will be provided by UTHSC for Postdoctoral trainees. (should this be revised; it was included in the RCR workshop)

5. UTHSC will strive to create a safe and pleasant work environment. For example, normally restricted parking lots will be accessible after hours and on weekends and holidays. For example, UTHSC will ensure adequate desk and bench space in the laboratory is available for each Postdoctoral trainee.

6. UTHSC will foster an environment in which trainees are treated with respect, inspired to be good citizens, urged to work in collegial collaboration with co-workers and support staff, and encouraged to participate in community service and help fulfill other missions of UTHSC.

7. UTHSC will work to develop the infrastructure necessary to maintain a database of Postdoctoral trainee information. The information collected will be consistent with the required documentation for National Institutes of Health training grant proposals.

8. An online exit interview will be used to help track Postdoctoral research trainee performance and identify recurring problems associated with individual laboratories.

II. Commitments by Postdoctoral Trainees

1. I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the development of my own career. I recognize that I must take a realistic look at career opportunities and follow a path that matches my individual skills, values and interests.

2. I will develop under the mentor’s guidance a research project that includes well-defined goals and timelines. Ideally, this project should be outlined and agreed upon at the time of the initial appointment.
3. I will perform my research activities conscientiously, maintain good research records, and catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project. I recognize that as a Postdoctoral trainee I am exempt from certain wage (i.e. overtime) and hour laws, similar to faculty, and that the hours/week put into a project can vary dramatically, requiring commitment of some evening, weekend, and holiday hours.

4. I will respect all ethical standards when conducting my research, including compliance with all UTHSC and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes. I recognize that this commitment includes asking for guidelines when presented with ethical or compliance uncertainties and reporting on breeches of ethical or compliance standards by me and/or others.

5. I will show respect for and will work in collegial collaboration with my coworkers, support staff and other individuals with whom I interact. I will endeavor to be a good citizen in the laboratory, department, university, and community.

6. I will strive to assume progressive responsibility and management of my research project(s) as it matures. I recognize that assuming responsibility for the conduct of research projects is a critical step on the path to independence.

7. I will seek regular feedback on my performance and will request a formal evaluation from my supervisor at least annually.

8. I will have open and timely discussions with my mentor concerning the dissemination of research findings and the distribution to third parties of research materials.

9. I recognize that I have embarked on a career requiring “life-long learning.” To meet this obligation I must stay abreast of the latest developments in my specialized field through reading the literature,
regular attendance at relevant seminar series, and attendance at scientific meetings.

10. I have the option, with my mentor’s approval, to seek opportunities outside the laboratory (e.g., professional development seminars and workshops in oral communication, scientific writing, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary to be successful for my chosen career.

11. At the end of my appointment, in accordance with UTHSC policy, I will leave behind all original notebooks, computerized files, and tangible research materials so that other individuals can carry on related research. I can make copies of my notebooks and computerized files, and have access to tangible research materials which I helped to generate during my Postdoctoral appointment according to UTHSC policy.

12. If English is my second language, I will actively work to become proficient in spoken and written English. I will be open to my mentor’s suggestions for remediation.

III. Commitments Made and Work Conditions Created by Mentors

1. I acknowledge that the Postdoctoral period is a time of advanced training intended to develop the independence and skills needed to promote the career of the Postdoctoral trainee.

2. I will foster an environment in which trainees are treated with respect, inspired to be good citizens, urged to work in collegial collaboration with co-workers and support staff, and encouraged to participate in community service and help fulfill other missions of UTHSC.

3. I will ensure that a mutually agreed upon set of workplace expectations are in place at the outset of the Postdoctoral training
period as outlined in my Individual Career Development plan. This initial discussion will include:

A. hours to be kept for a typical work day and expectations of number of work hours/week

- Hours worked will be consistent with their peers, in the respective departments, at UTHSC and peers in similar areas of research at other institutions within the USA.

- The Postdoctoral trainee will be recognized as a professional committed to obtaining the maximum research productivity. As such, the hours needed to complete tasks will vary.

B. the policy for annual leave (vacation) and holidays

- Vacation days granted for Postdoctoral trainees are typically 2 weeks/year in addition to the week-long UTHSC-wide closing during Christmas and additional Administrative holidays/closing.

- Specific requests for religious holidays should be discussed and honored when they do not present undue hardship to laboratory and career goals.

- The mentor and Postdoctoral trainee should discuss possible situations which will necessitate working holiday hours in order to complete critical experiments, obtain data for grant submissions or bring manuscripts to the submission stage.

C. the policy for sick leave, leave for a family crisis, and maternity leave.

- This policy will be equally applied to all trainees in the laboratory.
A hallmark of such policy will be respect for the individual.

D. an orientation as to the role/job of personnel currently in the lab

- Of particular importance will be to delineate how the Postdoctoral trainee is expected to interact with various lab members, and a discussion on the extent of time the Postdoctoral trainee will train and mentor more junior lab members.

E. the principles of research ethics and integrity, and the lab policy with regard to maintenance of lab records and data books.

4. I will work with the Postdoctoral trainee to create an Individual Career Development Plan within the first few months of his/her arrival to my lab.

   A. This plan will be as specific as is possible in regard to both studies to be completed in the first year, and a plan to reach identified milestones of career development.

   B. The Individual Career Development Plan will be agreed upon, signed by mentor and trainee, and a copy forwarded to the Postdoc Office.

   C. It is understood that these plans may change at the discretion of the mentor depending on laboratory goals and or funding.

5. I acknowledge that open communication and periodic performance reviews, conducted annually, will help ensure that the expectations of both parties are met.

   A. I will encourage the Postdoctoral trainee to write up a summary of our annual performance review, and subsequently review it with them for accuracy and
completeness. A signed copy of this summary will be forwarded to the Postdoc Office.

B. To further the goal of reasonable yearly progress, identified times will be set aside to review weekly progress and discuss experimental and/or general laboratory concerns.

6. I will ensure that the Postdoctoral trainee has sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to become an expert in an agreed-upon area of investigation.

7. I will encourage the interaction of the Postdoctoral trainees with fellow scientists both intra- and extramurally and encourage the trainee’s attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings. Every effort will be made to financially support their annual attendance at a National Scientific meeting.

8. I will provide a training environment that is suited to the individual needs of the Postdoctoral trainee in order to ensure his/her personal and professional growth. I will encourage a progressive increase in the level of responsibility and independence to facilitate the transition to a fully independent career.

   A. To further this goal, Postdoctoral trainees will not be treated as technicians. They will be treated as professionals training to be able to independently formulate meaningful hypotheses, design research projects, and conduct interpretable experiments.

   B. To further this goal, Postdoctoral trainees will share in the duties needed to maintain the lab, but will not be primarily responsible for lab management and training. There is an expectation that Postdoctoral trainees will supervise students in the lab and, as such, learn how to be an effective mentor. However, these opportunities will depend on the project, the availability of students and the abilities of the Postdoctoral trainee.
C. The development of skills, including oral and written communication, grant writing and laboratory management, are understood to be integral to the training of Postdoctoral trainees.

D. Consistent with a commitment to fostering career growth, a policy of zero tolerance for racism, sexism, creedism, favoritism, or nepotism will be maintained. See UT policies on equity and diversity for details (http://uthsc.edu/oed/)

E. For Postdoctoral trainees who are not US citizens, pressure with respect to visa status / loss of status will not be used to intimidate and extract extraordinary efforts.

F. Two Postdoctoral trainees will not be assigned identical projects, but may be assigned to portions of a project that lead to a single shared publication.

9. I will promote all ethical standards for conducting research including compliance with all UTHSC and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, and use of radioisotopes. I will clearly define expectations for conduct of research in my lab and make myself available to discuss ethical concerns as they arise.

10. I will provide the required guidance and mentoring, and will seek the assistance of other faculty and department/institutional resources when necessary. Although I am expected to provide guidance and education in technical areas, I recognize that I must also educate the Postdoctoral trainee by example and by providing access to formal opportunities/programs in complementary areas necessary for a successful career.

11. I will ensure that the research performed by a Postdoctoral trainee is submitted for publication in a timely manner and that he/she receives appropriate credit for the work he/she performs. I will acknowledge his/her contribution to the development of any
intellectual property and will clearly define future access to tangible research materials according to UTHSC policy.

A. To further this goal, the laboratory policy of authorship on manuscripts will be clearly defined at the outset of training or at the start of a new study. This policy will be based on journal guidelines. Typically, authorship requires the contribution of at least one figure or piece of data critical to the publication of the manuscript.

B. Should it be necessary for a project to be reassigned, the mentor and Postdoctoral trainee will discuss the reasons for reassignment.

12. I recognize that there are multiple career options available for a Postdoctoral trainee and will provide assistance in exploring appropriate options. I recognize that not all Postdoctoral trainees will become academic faculty. To prepare a Postdoctoral trainee for other career paths, I will direct him/her to the resources that explore non-academic careers, and discuss these options. Further, wherever possible, I will provide opportunities to gain experience in skills such as teaching and lab management.

13. I will commit to being a supportive colleague to my Postdoctoral trainees as they transition the next stage of their career and to the extent possible, throughout their professional life. I recognize that the role of a mentor continues after the formal training period.

IV. Grievance Procedures in the Case of Noncompliance

1. Informal Resolution of Grievances: A Postdoctoral trainee with a grievance should first discuss the grievance with one of the following people: his/her faculty mentor, the department Chair, Associate Dean, Postdoc Office, Dean of the Graduate School or the Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity. If the grievance
cannot be resolved informally, then the Postdoctoral trainee 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, Postdoc Office, 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, Postdoc Office, will then appoint an ad hoc grievance committee

C. The ad hoc grievance committee will review the complaint and do what is necessary to 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, 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, Postdoc Office, may then take the following actions:

1. meet with the departmental Chair and the faculty mentor to discuss how the issue will be resolved

2. in the case of repeated grievances, identify the faculty mentor as unsuitable for Postdoctoral mentoring and encourage the departmental Chair to include this failing in the annual faculty review of that mentor

3. 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):

   A. Contact the Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity

   B. Procedures to be followed can be found on the Office of Equity and Diversity Homepage for UTHSC.
Infrastructure support and UTHSC policies for Postdoctoral Research Trainees

The guiding principles and guidelines of the Compact listed above represent an agreement made among the Postdoc, mentor and the University regarding the overall goals of the Postdoctoral training period. Based on the principles of the Compact, campus-wide UTHSC Postdoctoral Research Trainee policies have been developed and are described below. Postdoctoral Research Trainees will be referred to as Postdocs in the remainder of this document. In accordance with University requirements, these campus-wide policies have been approved by the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs and the Faculty Senate.

I. 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 Postdocs and their mentors. The overall goal of the Postdoc Office is to help ensure and enhance the quality and quantity of Postdocs and their training experience. The Postdoc Office has specific responsibility for developing and overseeing policies that relate to Postdoc training and work conditions as outlined in the Compact and described below. The Postdoc Office is housed in the 920 Madison Building, Room 407, 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:
Postdoctoral Office
University of Tennessee Health Science Center
920 Madison, #807
Memphis, TN  38163

Office Location:
920 Madison Building, Room 407
The Postdoc Office website, www.uthsc.edu/Postdoc

Associate Dean
Monica M. Jablonski, PhD, FARVO
UTHSC, Postdoc Office
Professor, Department of Ophthalmology
mjablonski@uthsc.edu
901-448-7572

Administrative Coordinator
Jeddie Maxwell, BA
UTHSC Postdoc Office and College of Graduate Health Sciences
jmaxwell@uthsc.edu
901-448-2661
II. The Postdoc Advisory Committee

The Postdoc Advisory Committee provides advice to the Postdoc Office. Its members include faculty, Postdocs, business managers, the Director of International Affairs, and the Faculty Senate Research Committee Chair. Rotating 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.

Advisory Committee (2013 – 2014)

Permanent Committee Members:

Associate Dean, Postdoc Office:
Monica M. Jablonski, PhD
UTHSC Postdoc Office

Administrative Coordinator
Jeddie Maxwell, BA
UTHSC Postdoc Office

Director, International Affairs Office
Connie Childs, MA
International Affairs
Chair, Faculty Senate Research Committee
Christopher Waters, PhD
Physiology

Dean, College of Graduate Health Sciences
Donald Thomason, PhD

Rotating Committee Members:

Committee Chair:
Vacant

Members:
Robert (Bob) Baker, BA  Department of Physiology
Bendahmane, Mounir  Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology
Ian Brooks, PhD  Department of Biomedical Informatics
Chandaka, Giri  Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology
Barbara Frederick, MPA  Department of Pathology
Detlef Heck, PhD  Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology
Scott A. Heldt, PhD  Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology
Young In Kim Hoehamer, PhD  Department of Pediatrics
Ronald Laribee, PhD  Department of Pathology
Vanessa Morales-Tirado, PhD  Department of Ophthalmology
Tayebeh Pourmotabbed, PhD  Department of Micro Immuno & Bioch
Radhankrishna Rao, PhD  Department of Physiology
Shankar Swaminathan, PhD  Department of Ophthalmology
Charles R. Yates, PhD  Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
Fuming Zhou, MD, PhD  Department of Pharmacology

III. The UTHSC Postdoctoral Association (PhDA)

UTHSC PhDA was established in 2007 as an affiliate of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) and received the award for the best new NPA chapter in 2008. The PhDA sponsors research and career development seminars, an orientation program, research poster awards, and travel awards for Postdocs, 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 Postdocs needs, address problems and plan upcoming events. More information on the PhDA, including PhDA by-laws and membership application, can be found at www.uthsc.edu/PhDA

2013 – 2014 Officers and Steering Committee

Mounir Bendahmane, PhD  Co-President
Giri Chandaka, PhD  Co-President
Nichole Poritsanos, PhD  Secretary/Treasurer
George Haddad, PhD  Member
Padala Kamala, PhD  Member
David New, PhD  Member
Snigdha Roy  Member
Korah Pushpamangalam Kuruvile, PhD  Member
Sridhar Jaligama, PhD  Member
Young In Kim Hoehamer, PhD  Faculty Advisor

**Past Events:**

2013  Postdoc Year-End Celebration Event
2013  Postdoc Career Development Event
2013  Postdoctoral Research Trainee and Distinguished Mentor Awards
2013  Postdoc Valentine’s Day Event
2013  Postdoc Research Day
2013  National Postdoc Celebration Week
2013  Meet & Eat Event

**Postdoc Quick Links**

**IV. The National Postdoctoral Association (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 Postdocs may join the NPA for free as an affiliate, non-voting member by registering using their @uthsc.edu email address. Postdocs may also join as individual dues-paying members and will receive their own vote.

The NPA also hosts an Annual Meeting every spring, and travel awards are available. Please visit the National Postdoctoral Association website at http://www.nationalPostdoc.org for more information and to join.
LIST OF POSTDOC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. HIRING PROCEDURES

A. Posting a position

- Faculty who wish to post a Postdoc position must contact the designated departmental business manager and provide an electronic copy of tags (key words that applicants can use in searching for a position), a one-paragraph position description, a list of candidate qualifications and, if desired, a list of any targeted candidates along with his/her e-mail addresses.

- The business manager will cut and paste this information into the Postdoc posting request form available at: http://academic.uthsc.edu/Postdoc/bm.html Business managers must submit this form electronically to the Postdoc Office as the initial step in the hiring process, while continuing to enter IRIS information as required. The electronic posting request is sent to the Postdoc Office for rapid review and approval (usually within 24 hours). *No new Postdoc appointment will be completed without this first approval step.*

- After approval, information about the specific job description plus other information about standard Postdoc benefits at UTHSC, is posted on the following websites: 1) Naturejob.com, 2) HigherEdjobs.com and 3) the UTHSC Human Resources employment page.

- By virtue of initiating a Postdoc job posting, the faculty mentor agrees to guidelines and policies set forth in the Compact and the
Postdoc Handbook. By applying for the position, the candidate agrees to the same.

- Postdoc positions are considered full-time employment; however, the Postdoctoral Office may authorize part-time employment in unusual circumstances.

- Postings remain active for 60 days but, if desired, can be closed or renewed indefinitely by the business manager either electronically on the posting application or by contacting the Postdoc Office.

- All information regarding job postings and job applicants is automatically captured and maintained in the UTHSC Postdoc database in order to supply Postdoc information required in various grant applications and for other University-authorized purposes.

B. Applying for a position

Applicants must apply for open positions through one or more of the website postings: NatureJobs.com; HigherEdjobs.com; UTHSC Human Resources homepage. All open positions at UTHSC are displayed on the posting page; candidates must specify the job posting(s) for which they intend to apply. UTHSC does not accept applications to a general UTHSC Postdoc pool.

1. Proof of doctoral degree

Employment at UTHSC will become effective only after an application and proof of completion of a doctoral degree have been
submitted. The candidate should provide an official copy of his/her transcript, demonstrating the highest level of education completed.

If trained in the U.S, a sealed copy of the official transcript must be mailed directly to the Human Resources Department at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center at:

Department of Human Resources
910 Madison Avenue, Suite 722
Memphis, TN  38163.

Education received at foreign colleges or universities, the applicant must submit an evaluation of the coursework from an organization recognized for accreditation by the Department of Education that shows that the coursework is equivalent to that gained at an accredited U.S. college or university by submitting an evaluation of coursework to a university-approved foreign credential evaluation agency that specializes in interpretation of foreign educational credentials and such education has been deemed at least equivalent to that gained in an accredited U.S. college or university. Visit http://www.uthsc.edu/hr/employment/verification.php for additional information on education verifications and a list of approved foreign credentialing evaluators.

If the final degree has not yet been formally conferred, but all requirements have been met, the candidate must have the prospective home institution Registrar Office or Dean of Graduate Students send to UTHSC Human Resources department evidence of completion of the degree together with a statement of completion
of all requirements. This statement should indicate the date within the current year which all requirements were completed and the expected degree conferral date. If the degree is not formally conferred by the projected date within six months of the date of hire, the Postdoc shall be terminated.

2. Visa status

A Postdoc candidate must prove that he/she is eligible to work in the United States by completing Form I-9 and providing appropriate documentation. The hiring department will provide this form. Postdocs coming from abroad may require UTHSC sponsorship before beginning an appointment at UTHSC. The University’s International Affairs Office, located at 227 Johnson Building, can provide information regarding non-immigrant visas. (See contact information below.) The sponsoring faculty member or department will provide assistance in completing the appropriate application.

UTHSC International Affairs Office

Connie L. Childs, Director
cchilds@uthsc.edu
phone: 901-448-8484
FAX: 901-448-1870
C. Filling a position

The official job offer to the selected Postdoc candidate must be made by written letter from the faculty advisor. The letter must have the approval of the departmental chair in case of the professional schools. The departmental Business Manager informs the Postdoc Office and the department of Human Resources of the selection by:

a. generating a provisional offer letter stating that the offer is contingent on the contents of the Background Check Report and Verification of Education and obtaining the Faculty Advisor and Department Chair and Postdoc Office Associate Dean signatures (the candidate is not required to sign nor return the provisional offer letter).

   • If a PDF of the provisional offer letter has been generated (containing the Faculty Advisor and Chair signatures), the Postdoc Office will provide an electronic signature on the letter

   • The provisional letter template can be found at http://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/pdfs/ProvisionalPostdocOfferLetter_Template.pdf

b. sending a copy of the online application along with CV and references to The Postdoc Office and Human Resources.
c. departmental Business Manager emails the provisional offer letter to the candidate along with:
   
   - the Fair Credit Reporting Act Disclosure and Authorization to Release Information form; and
   
   - request for Education verification letter.

d. The postdoc candidate sends the completed forms directly to Human Resources.

e. Human Resources informs the departmental Business Manager if they have not received the required documentation from the candidate.

f. The departmental Business Manager follows up with candidates who have not sent the required documentation to Human Resources.

g. UTHSC administration and Human Resources determine if the candidate is suitable for hire by UTHSC based upon the verification of education and the contents of the background check report and inform the departmental Business Manager.

h. The departmental Business Manager generates the final offer letter and obtains all signatures.
   
   - If a PDF of the final offer letter has been generated (containing the Faculty Advisor and Chair signatures), the Postdoc Office will provide an electronic signature on the final offer letter

i. The departmental Business Manager sends the final offer letter to the candidate.

j. The candidate signs the final offer letter and sends it back to the departmental Business Manager. A template for Postdoc offer letters can be found at http://www.uthsc.edu/postdoc/pdfs/FinalPostdocOfferLetter_Template.pdf
k. Although the exact text of the letter may be modified according to the department requirements, in all cases, the appointment letter must include the following details:

i) Postdoc’s name and address
ii) name of the college making the offer
iii) beginning and ending dates
iv) monthly or annual stipend
v) funding source account number and faculty advisor’s name.
vi) income tax information
vii) benefits
viii) contingency of employment
ix) a statement of Postdoc’s responsibilities
x) signatures of principal investigator, department chair/dean, Postdoc Office Associate Dean.

l. The departmental Business Manager sends a copy of the final signed offer letter to the Faculty Advisor, the Postdoc Office and Human Resources.

m. The departmental Business Manager processes necessary employment paperwork (PIF) and sends completed packet (with necessary signatures) to Postdoc Office for signature. *An original signature will be required on PIFs.*

n. The departmental Business Manager or Postdoc Office takes employment packet to Director (College of Medicine) or Human Resources (other colleges).

o. On the first day of work, the candidate visits Human Resources to fill out an I-9 form. If necessary, the candidate delivers visa-related paperwork to the Office of International Affairs.
D. Criminal Background Check

Prior to appointment, UTHSC requires a criminal background check to be conducted on all prospective postdoctoral research trainees. Postdoctoral Research Trainee candidates who are US citizens will undergo domestic background and reference checks following the established UTHSC policy. Those candidates who are non-US citizens will undergo international and, if applicable, domestic background and reference checks following the established UTHSC policy. The background check will be conducted by an independent professional investigation firm through the UTHSC Human Resources Department.

Criminal Background and education checks must be completed prior to offering a postdoctoral research trainee candidate an offer letter.

If the final results of the background check are not yet available and the hiring department feels that it is essential to proceed with the hiring process while awaiting the results, the hiring department chair/head and mentor may extend in writing a conditional offer to permit the selected candidate to report for work pending the results of the criminal background check no earlier than 30 days after the request was submitted to UTHSC Human Resources Department. If the results are unacceptable, the offer will be withdrawn or, if the Postdoc has started employment, the Postdoc will be terminated.

Conviction of a crime will not necessarily bar employment. Factors such as age at the time of the offense, type of offense, remoteness of the offense in time, and rehabilitation will be taken into consideration in determining suitability for employment.

If a Postdoc is arrested for a crime while employed by the UTHSC, the Postdoc is required to immediately notify his/her mentor and the Postdoc
Office. The criminal matter will be investigated and a determination made whether to retain the Postdoc. The Postdoc may be placed on administrative leave for a reasonable period of time while the investigation is completed.

E. Completion of training

Postdoctoral training in a given mentor’s lab is expected to be completed within five years. Plans to extend beyond five years should be discussed with the Postdoc Office before re-appointment for additional years. It is the mentor’s responsibility to support and, when possible, assist in the Postdoc’s transition to the next stage of his/her career. When the mentor concludes that the training is nearing its conclusion, he/she shall meet with the Postdoc to discuss a transition plan. Following this meeting, the mentor will provide the Postdoc with written confirmation of the agreed-upon date for termination as well as plans for transition of lab duties. It is expected that this notice shall be provided to the Postdoc at least three months prior to the anticipated transition date unless precluded by extenuating circumstances such as changes in the availability of funding. Should the Postdoc wish to terminate training at a time of his/her choosing, he/she should discuss the timing of this termination with his/her mentor. Notice should be given to the mentor at least one month prior to the planned termination in order to assure a smooth transition of laboratory duties. Copies of resignation letters and/or of the mentor’s plans for termination should be provided to the Postdoc Office.

It is the policy of UTHSC that all original notebooks, research data and reagents generated in UTHSC research groups are the property of UTHSC. Before leaving the University, Postdocs should provide these items to the faculty mentor sufficiently organized to allow for smooth continuation of the research project(s). These materials must remain with the faculty mentor; however, the Postdoc may be provided copies of these data and access to the materials unless otherwise restricted by UTHSC policies.
Upon leaving UTHSC, Postdocs are required to return to the UTHSC Campus police all keys to buildings, offices, labs and other facilities. University IDs should be returned to the Campus police. Campus police may inactivate an ID within 24 hours of the end of an appointment, rendering the ID inoperable when used to access parking lots and locked buildings. Postdocs must also complete a UTHSC Employee Clearance Record form provided by the home department. The form must be signed by the home department, library, bookstore, parking service, cashier’s office, human resources and payroll office in order to clear Postdocs of outstanding books, tools, phone card, uniforms, equipment, parking citations, return checks charges. Any unresolved charges will be deducted from Postdocs’ final paychecks.

Training Certificates

The Postdoctoral Office offers certificates to Postdocs to recognize the completion of their training. These certificates will display the Postdoc’s name, training program or project, departmental affiliation, and dates of training and contain the embossed seal of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. To request a certificate before leaving UTHSC, Postdocs should go to the following website: http://www.uthsc.edu/Postdoc/pdfs/RequestforCertificateofCompletion.doc

Exit Survey

Upon leaving a Postdoc position at UTHSC, Postdocs are expected to complete an exit survey. Information from the survey will be used in a confidential manner to help enhance the Postdoc program for future Postdocs and mentors. A copy of the exit survey can be found at the following Website: http://www.uthsc.edu/Postdoc/pdfs/Postdocexitsurvey.doc
II. Financial Support, Benefits and Other Terms of Employment

A. Salary information

Postdoc salaries are based on experience and on the prevailing wage minimum set by the US Department of Labor and updated annually in July. As of April 1, 2008, it is required that all UTHSC Postdoc appointments, meet or exceed the minimum salary level that had been established at the time of hire. The Federal Government requires this same wage scale for all Postdocs with H-1B visas.

Annual raises for Postdocs 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 Postdocs are funded through research grants from NIH and their salary guidelines may be accessed through the following website: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-033.html

Postdocs are exempt from certain wage and hour laws such as 40-hour work weeks and do not receive overtime pay for hours worked over 40. A United States Social Security Number (SSN) must be reported on the I-9 form. If the candidate does not have a SSN, he/she should apply for one at a local office of the Social Security Administration. Any employee who will be paid on the University payroll must have a Social Security Number.
Postdocs who are paid by UTHSC are subject to mandatory federal and state taxes. Each Postdoc 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). Employee’s withholding allowance can be changed at any time by completing a new form. Foreign Postdocs receiving U.S. funding may or may not be exempt from FICA and/or federal taxes.

The tax treaty between the U.S. and the Postdoc’s home country determines whether a Postdoc is subject to paying taxes. If you have employment-based tax questions, please contact UTHSC Payroll Office at 448-3401.

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 you with all the paper work necessary for employment.

**B. Leave policies**

A Postdoc is recognized as a trainee committed to maximizing their research productivity and is expected to work extended hours as needed to achieve this goal. Postdocs are not eligible for overtime pay or payment for any approved leave time that is not taken. A mutually agreed upon set of workplace expectations regarding work hours, annual leave and sick leave will be formulated at the
outset of the Postdoctoral training period. It is expected that hours worked and leave time will be consistent with Postdoc peers in the comparable departments at UTHSC and with peers in similar areas of research at other institutions within the U.S.

- **Vacation time**

  The mentor and Postdoc will discuss possible situations that may necessitate working holiday hours to complete critical experiments, obtain data for grant submissions or bring manuscripts to the submission stage. Vacation days granted for Postdoctoral research trainees are typically 2 weeks/year in addition to the week-long UTHSC-wide closing during Winter Break and approximately 7 days of additional Administrative holidays/closings. (See [www.uthsc.edu/holidays.php](http://www.uthsc.edu/holidays.php) for the UTHSC calendar.) This totals approximately 4 weeks of vacation time each year. Any additional vacation time beyond the 4 week total must be approved by the mentor in writing using the Request for Extended Leave for Postdocs form, and the Postdoc must be placed on unpaid leave of absence.

- **Insurance coverage during leave of absence**

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

Specific requests by the Postdoc for religious holidays will be discussed with the mentor and the Postdoc and will be honored unless they cause undue hardship to the laboratory. Leave for religious holidays may be unpaid.

• **Sick leave**

In addition to expected vacation time and administrative holidays/closings, Postdocs will be provided with reasonable amounts of sick leave and funeral and bereavement leave as requested by the Postdoc and approved by the mentor on a case-by-case basis. Sick leave may be requested for the Postdoc or family members. Approvals will be consistent with standard practices on campus and equally applied to all Postdocs in the mentor’s laboratory.

C. **Insurance Benefits**

UTHSC provides health insurance for Postdocs. Coverage begins at the start date of employment. All Postdocs are automatically eligible for coverage and are automatically enrolled in the approved Postdoc Health Insurance plan. (See current insurance carrier contact information below.) Individual coverage is provided at no cost to the Postdoc. Dependent children, spouse and family coverage is also available with copayment to be provided by the Postdoc.

**Current Insurance Carrier:**

Holland Insurance

888-393-9500

[www.gholland@hollandinsuranceinc.com](http://www.gholland@hollandinsuranceinc.com)
D. University Health Services

University Health Services (UHS) welcomes UTHSC residents and Postdocs. Details of services can be found on the UHS website http://www.uthsc.edu/univheal/

Insurance will be filed for office visits and services at UHS. Postdocs are responsible for deductibles required by insurance policies.

E. Retirement

UTHSC Postdocs are considered special employees and are not eligible for retirement benefits.

F. Housing

- **On Campus**: Not available

- **Off campus**: A private commercial company, Off Campus Partners, provides a resource to help Postdocs find housing for rent or for sale. At no charge, Postdocs 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
G. Outside Employment

Postdocs who hold a full-time UTHSC appointment should consult the Postdoc Office and faculty advisor prior to engaging in additional employment activities such as consulting or teaching. Such 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. Federal law prohibits foreign nationals from working outside UTHSC in most cases.

H. Auditing UTHSC courses

Postdocs are eligible to audit (not for credit and not recorded on a transcript) UTHSC graduate courses during the academic year. Classes audited by Postdocs should be consistent with the Postdocs’ training objectives and the Postdocs should discuss their plans with their faculty advisor to ensure that the coursework does not interfere with research activities. Postdocs must have the permission of the instructor and dean of the Graduate School to audit.

I. Evaluation and Individual Career Development Plan

Within the first few months after arrival, the Postdoc and mentor will jointly develop an individual career development plan outlining specific milestones and goals. A bullet-point summary of this plan will be agreed upon and signed by mentor and Postdoc. The mentor will provide the Postdoc an annual performance review of progress on the anniversary of the initial
appointment date. The mentor will discuss the review with the Postdoc and summarize the discussions. Copies of 1) the annual summaries signed by both parties along with 2) the signed initial career development plan should be retained by mentor and Postdoc for the remainder of the training period and a copy forwarded to the Postdoc Office each year.

**J. Publications**

Research performed by a Postdoc will be submitted for publication in a timely manner with appropriate credit given for the work performed. The laboratory policy of authorship on manuscripts will be clearly defined at the outset of training or at the start of a new study. This policy will be based on journal guidelines. Typically, authorship requires the contribution of at least one figure or piece of data critical to the publication of the manuscript. Two Postdoctoral research trainees will not be assigned identical projects, but may be assigned to portions of a project that lead to a single shared publication.

A Postdoc’s contribution to the development of any intellectual property will be recognized and future access to tangible research materials provided in accordance with UTHSC policy.

**K. Early termination of training by Postdoc or mentor**

If a Postdoc decides to resign prior to the completion date set by the mentor, he/she should inform the mentor in writing of the intent to resign one month prior to departure. The notice establishes the end-of-employment date. The mentor will confirm the acceptance of the resignation in writing.

A Postdoc may be terminated by the mentor during the course of his/her training period if performance is unsatisfactory. Usually, Postdocs who are
to be terminated or are not going to be reappointed should be provided a written notice of the termination and be given at least one month to arrange alternative plans. However, in instances of gross negligence or significant violations of UTHSC policy, the mentor reserves the right to terminate a Postdoc without such written notice, provided that written documentation is provided of the policy violation or of the significant performance deficiency and prior counseling about that deficiency. The Postdoctoral Office should be consulted in these cases.

Under all circumstances, a Postdoc leaving employment has the obligation to leave the research records, laboratory reagents, etc. in a state that will allow continuation of the project and ensure compliance.

L. Grievances

(The Grievance policy outlined in the Compact is repeated below for the sake of completeness.)

1. Informal Resolution of Grievances: A Postdoctoral research trainee 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, Dean of Graduate School. Office or the Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, then the Postdoctoral research trainee 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.

c. The ad hoc grievance committee will review the complaint and do what is necessary to 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 Postdoc 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):

   a. Contact the Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity
   
   b. Procedures to be followed can be found on the Office of Equity and Diversity Homepage for UTHSC (www.uthsc.edu/oed).
III. Other UTHSC work-place policies that apply to Postdocs

A. Worker’s Compensation

Workers’ Compensation Overview

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 supervisor immediately!

2. COMPLETE AND SIGN the State of Tennessee "Accident Report" immediately and return it to your supervisor.

3. YOUR SUPERVISOR 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 You can also obtain names of authorized physicians from the HR-Benefits office or the Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc. (see phone numbers below.)

   • To fill prescription on the first day of an injury, a “First Fill” form must be presented to the pharmacy: http://treasury.tn.gov/wc/PDFs/FirstFill.pdf
• Additional information and forms may be found on the following website:
  http://www.uthsc.edu/hr/benefits/workers_compensation.php

**Important Numbers**

• UTHSC Human Resources - Workers Compensation
  901-448-5577

• Sedgwick Claims Management - Customer Service
  1-800-526-2305

• Sedgwick Claims Management - Claims call in
  1-866-245-8588

• Prime Health Services Inc.- Medical provider info
  1-866-348-3887

**B. Harassment**

The University of Tennessee Health Science Center and University Wide Administration are committed to providing a harassment free environment for the entire campus community (faculty, staff, students, Postdocs, and applicants).

**A. Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
• Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment or status in a course, program, or activity.

• Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic (grades, academic progress, internship, etc.); or

• Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work performance, academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

(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
http://www.uthsc.edu/oed/sexual_harassment.php
C. Drug Free Work Place

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.
D. 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

E. Scientific Misconduct/Research Integrity

UTHSC Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures covers situations involving fabrication, falsification or plagiarism may be reviewed by going to the Clinical Practice Compliance Office website http://www.uthsc.edu/compliance/

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

Online CITI training is required for all current postdoctoral research trainees. A certificate of completion is provided.

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.

The UTHSC Postdoc Office sponsors online CITI training that is required for all current postdoctoral research trainees. Completion is required within 2 months of your start date. Postdocs should send a copy of certificate of completion to the PDO to be maintained in the postdoc’s file. Below are the instructions for completing RCR training:

1. Go to www.citiprogram.org
2. Create an account, if you do not already have one, or login, if you have an account
3. Go to section "My Learner Tools for University of Tennessee Health Science Center – Memphis"
4. Click on the link "Add a Course or Update Learner Groups"
5. Scroll down to Question 4 and select "RCR for Post-docs"
6. This will bring up 6 required modules
   - Research Misconduct (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1215)
   - Data Management (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1308)
   - Authorship (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1380)
   - Collaborative Research (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1450)
   - Conflicts of Interest (RCR-Biomed) (ID: 1622)
   - Export Controls and National Security (RCR-Interdisciplinary) (ID: 14770)
An average score of 80% must be achieved on all 6 modules to receive a certificate