

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP POLICY

## POLICY ON POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

### KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI, GHANA

#### **Preamble**

The mandate of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology includes undertaking research. The purpose of this postdoctoral fellowship policy is to enhance research activities of the University. Postdoctoral Fellows are valued members of the University and they contribute immensely to the University's research agenda. Postdoctoral fellowships are strategically developed to engage persons who have recently completed a doctoral degree and are in preparation for a faculty member position in an academic institution, industry, government, or nonprofit sector. The research fellow conducts research under the supervision of a mentor who is an experienced faculty member. The position provides essential experience and training thereby enhancing research, teaching and professional skills of the fellow. Their contribution is to bring on board expertise, insights, creativity and innovations that will propel and improve the research and educational activities of the University. This policy defines the conditions of appointment, shared responsibilities and expectations of postdoctoral fellows in the University.

#### **Definition**

A **postdoctoral fellowship** is a temporary position that allows a PhD holder to continue his/her training as a researcher in order to gain skills and experience that will prepare them for a career in academia, industry, government or the non-profit institution.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

- The appointment is temporary and supported by either a fellowship or other external funding.
- The appointment is a full-time contract with a limited term of one year to two years and can be renewed for another term.
- The duration of engagement for postdoc with KNUST should not be more than 5 years in total.
- The appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time career in academia, industry, government or the non-profit sector and the beneficiary should be supported to make applications for faculty/industry/government openings.
- The appointee should have:
  - Received a Ph.D. degree or equivalent doctorate recently or not more than five (5) years in a field directly related to the field of research for which s/he is being considered
  - Received written confirmation of having met all graduation requirements for a doctoral degree from the University in question in cases where the doctorate degree has not yet been obtained.
  - Received an award letter indicating an offer of research fund by a funding agency and the duration of the fund should be no less than six (6) months.
  - A mentor or supervisor who is a faculty member and is ready to engage him/her.
  - Previously not held a full-time academic position since PhD graduation
  - No full-time employment with KNUST.

## **Appointment Procedures**

The appointment is made by the registrar (human resource) acting upon recommendations from the Director of the Office of Grants and Research (OGR) following consideration by a KNUST faculty member.

- **Recruitment Process**

- The postdoc vacancy position should be advertised (when possible) detailing the procedure to apply
- The Head of the department or institute involved shall constitute a panel to shortlist and conduct a selection interview.
- The interview panel should not be less than three (3) but not more than five (5) and should include at least a Senior Lecturer.
- The interview panel shall submit its recommendations in a report not later than two weeks after the interview.
- The recommendations must include the following:
  - A completed application form with information on the project title, duration of appointment, financial support and description of the academic support
  - Curriculum vitae and a copy of doctoral certificate of the recommended candidate(s).

An academic Supervisor or head of the supervisory team must sign the recommendation indicating their availability to support the applicant. The recommendation letter must reach the Registrar at least one month prior to the expected date of appointment for consideration. A letter of appointment will be issued indicating the duration of appointment, the amount and nature of the compensation and services or benefits.

## **Expectations or Responsibilities**

- **Postdoctoral Fellow**

- The postdoctoral fellow has the sole responsibility of carrying out the research as agreed upon with the funding agencies and in accordance with the university's policies
- The appointee is expected to conduct research and publish the findings in peer-reviewed journals.
- The appointee postdoc may undertake teaching responsibilities up to a maximum of one full course per semester. Irrespective of other responsibilities, the appointee should devote not less than 80% of his/her time to research
- The appointee may assist in the training of graduates and undergraduate students under the supervision of the mentor.
- The appointee may opt for any other job opening after the stipulated period of the contract.
- Postdoctoral fellows are encouraged to share their research findings at seminars and conferences within the University and beyond.
- Postdoctoral fellows are encouraged to engage in grantsmanship

- Fellows are expected to adhere to all policies and safety precautions of the university
- Fellows are encouraged to register for skills development workshops/short courses organized in KNUST.
- Fellows must not engage in contract research or consulting during their tenure.

- **Mentor or Supervisor**

- Shall provide a conducive environment wherein other applicable skills and/or knowledge may be acquired by the postdoctoral fellow;
- Shall ensure that postdoctoral fellows are appropriately recognized for their contributions in research outcomes, including publications, patents, teaching and service to the University;
- Shall provide whatever resources are required to support the collaborative research activities;
- Shall regularly and frequently meet with postdoctoral fellows and provide guidance for their research;
- Shall ensure that the Postdoctoral fellow is familiar with all the relevant University policies;
- Clearly communicate the required working hours in writing to the Fellow on or before the uptake of fellowship;
- Keep all on going records of the research done by the Fellow;
- Shall provide career advice and job placement assistance; and
- Shall demonstrate Collegial conduct toward the Fellows.

- **Institute/Head of Department/College/ OGR**

It is the responsibility of the sectional head to;

- Provide the postdoc with office and laboratory space;
- Give approval to request for funds based on the University's laid down policies;
- Receive and administer Postdoctoral fellowships; and
- Advertise positions (when applicable).

- **Responsibilities of the University**

- Ensure enabling environment for research; and
- Recognize the right to form representative bodies to champion their specific interests.

## **Registration**

The postdoc regardless of whether the funding comes directly from a funding agency or the University, must register with the Office of Grant and Research. The Office of Grant and Research shall coordinate the registration of postdoctoral fellowships. The University shall issue an official appointment letter and registration card stating the period of engagement to the postdoctoral fellow. After having reported to duty, the Postdoctoral fellow will receive copies of KNUST policies including rights and responsibilities as explained in this policy. Email and identification card will be made for the postdoctoral fellow.

## **Duration**

The period of postdoctoral fellowship shall not exceed five (5) years. Renewals are due yearly.

## **Funding**

The Postdoctoral fellowship may be funded by grants or contracts held by faculty members, external organizations, the University's endowment or operating funds or from a combination of these sources.

The Postdoctoral Fellow is required to disclose all his/her source of funding. The award letter indicating the agreement between the postdoctoral fellow and the funding agency should be made available to the Head of Department who will take the necessary actions.

The College Finance Office shall manage all funds to the Department. The funds should be directed to the Finance Office in the name of the Project and the name of the postdoctoral fellow. Request of funds shall be made through the Head of Department with prior knowledge of the supervisor.

Where the postdoctoral fellow is a grant awardee, the financial accounts report requested by funding agency shall be provided by the postdoctoral fellow with the support of the College Finance Office.

In cases where the agreement is between the supervisor and the funding agency, it is no longer the responsibility of the postdoctoral fellow.

## **Compensation**

The postdoctoral fellow shall receive non-taxable stipend. The value should not be less than the basic salary of an Assistant lecturer. In cases where the funds cannot support the value, the University may top up. This is subject to approval by the hiring Department or College.

The postdoctoral fellow shall be offered staff accommodation and other benefits deemed appropriate if available.

When the Postdoctoral fellow holds direct financial support from external agency, the restrictions of these granting agencies must be observed. There is no set range for financial support of Postdoctoral fellows but current and competitive rates are expected. Postdoctoral fellowships from other Ghanaian Universities may be used guidelines by the University to negotiate with Government for tax waivers.

## **Termination of Appointment**

Postdoctoral positions are subject to a 90-day probationary period. Prior notice should be sent to the Office of Grant and Research (or Registrar, Human Resource) three months ahead. This should be done by writing through the Head of Department.

A Postdoctoral appointment may be terminated prior to the 1-year contract or the term of engagement with a minimum of:

- 30-day notice for each completed year of service if the funding supporting a Postdoctoral fellow ends
- Two week notice for failure to adhere to the expectations described above or continued unsatisfactory performance of the duties of the position following at least one warning presented to the Postdoctoral appointee in writing
- The University may terminate the postdoctoral contract without notice in cases of breach of university policies, ethics or standards (e.g. Health and Safety, Sexually harassment, etc.).

Should a Postdoctoral fellow wish to terminate his/her fellowship prior to the date agreed upon in the contract, s/he should give at least 2 months written notice to the Supervisor.

Where such termination occurs before the Postdoctoral fellow has completed her/his research or full tenure, the University reserves the right to recover all or some of the funds that have been paid to the Postdoctoral fellow in advance.

## **Ownership of Intellectual Property (IP)**

Terms of the KNUST policy in respect of the commercial exploitation of intellectual property pertaining to KNUST students shall apply mutatis mutandis to postdoctoral fellows regarding the IP created during the term of their stay at KNUST.

## **Amendment**

The Office of Grants and Research of the university shall consider all matters not covered in this policy subject to approval by the Vice-Chancellor of the University.

## **Leave**

Postdoctoral fellows are eligible to employee leave conditions of the University. Any unutilized or spent leave days will not be paid in lieu of leave.

## **Health Insurance**

Postdoctoral fellows may participate in KNUST's employee health insurance subject to human resource policies, whereas Postdoctoral fellows are not considered employees and currently may acquire their own private health insurance or may choose to participate in the National Health Insurance Scheme.

## **Grievance**

The supervisor and the Postdoctoral fellow should first attempt to resolve issues themselves through discussions. The Supervisor or the Postdoctoral fellow may bring unresolved issues to the attention of the Head of Department.

If the Head is not able to resolve an issue, the head, the Supervisor or the Postdoctoral fellow may bring the issue to the attention of the Director of OGR, who will act as an impartial facilitator.

Postdoctoral fellows have access to the same grievance policy as regular employees.