

FAQ FOR DUKE POSTDOCTORAL POLICY
REVISED NOVEMBER 2009

Section 1: Questions Related to Appointment as Research Associate, Postdoctoral Associate, or Postdoctoral Scholar

1. Are postdoctoral positions faculty appointments or staff appointments?

- Postdoctoral appointments are staff appointments. The [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#) outlines differences between postdocs and other staff employees, but in the absence of a stated difference, regular staff policies and procedures apply.

2. Can a postdoctoral appointment be for less than one year?

- The initial appointment for a postdoctoral appointee must be at least 9 months (one academic year). This allows benefits eligibility.

3. What is the correct protocol for hiring a postdoc?

- Departments do not need to go through HR for postdoctoral positions, but should have an established process for hiring. For Campus, each school or department should follow their existing procedure. For the School of Medicine, departments should use the existing procedure of submitting the candidate's CV and offer letter to the [Faculty Appointments, Promotion and Tenure Office](#).
- There is a description for Postdoctoral Associate on the HR website under job code 3820. It is an express classification and does not require a JAQ.
- There is a description for Postdoctoral Scholar on the HR website under job code 2898. The Postdoctoral Scholar job code should be used when the postdoctoral appointee moves from Postdoctoral Associate (compensatory payroll) to the noncompensatory payment system.
- For new hires, please use the [SoM and Campus Postdoctoral Associate Offer Letter Template](#) on the [Office of Postdoctoral Services](#) website.

4. When do I use the postdoc personnel subarea (PSA 0028)?

- The postdoc personnel subarea (PSA 0028) should always be used for appointments as Postdoctoral Associate (job code 3820) and Postdoctoral Scholar (job code 2898). If a postdoctoral appointee cannot be switched from the Research Associate category (job code 1361) due to visa restrictions, then the postdoc PSA should be used so that the appointee can be identified as a postdoc. However, at the time of appointment renewal, Research Associates who fit the definition of postdoc (found in the first section of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#)) should be moved to the Postdoctoral Associate job category.
- The postdoc PSA should **not** be used for Research Associates who do not fit the definition of postdoc.
- The postdoc PSA should **not** be used for any other job category (e.g., Clinical Associate, Research Associate Senior, Research Scientist).

5. Does the 90-day orientation and evaluation period apply to newly hired postdocs?

- Yes. The [Orientation and Evaluation Period Policy](#) should be followed, including completion of the [New Employee Orientation and Evaluation Period Performance Review](#). If the PI wishes to terminate employment during the orientation and evaluation period, the PI must discuss the individual's lack of suitability for the position with the [Office of Postdoctoral Services](#), as well as the departmental Human Resources representative and a [Staff and Labor Relations](#) representative. If the postdoc is international, [Visa Services](#) **must** be notified before taking any action.

6. **What procedures should be followed when switching a Postdoctoral Associate to a Postdoctoral Scholar position (i.e., moving from the comp payroll to the non-comp payment system)?**
- When moving a Postdoctoral Associate to a Postdoctoral Scholar position, change job code 3820 (Postdoctoral Associate) to job code 2898 (Postdoctoral Scholar), flag the postdoc personnel subarea (PSA 0028), and set the rate of pay to zero. These actions alert Benefits that the newly appointed Postdoctoral Scholar should not receive a COBRA notice.
 - For instructions for processing benefits deductions for Postdoctoral Scholars, see the Corporate Payroll Services memo [Instructions for Processing Benefits Deductions for Postdoctoral Scholars](#).
7. **What do postdocs who are moving from a Postdoctoral Associate to a Postdoctoral Scholar position (comp to non-comp) need to know?**
- Postdoctoral Scholars paid through the non-compensatory payment system are not employees of Duke University. Rather, they are trainees of the funding agency. This means they are not eligible for most Duke employee benefits.
 - As former University employees, Postdoctoral Scholars may remain enrolled in Duke health insurance, as well as the dental and vision plans provided by the University. However, Postdoctoral Scholars should note that they will be taxed on the **entire cost** of Duke health insurance (not just the “employee” portion). Because Postdoctoral Scholars are non-employees receiving an employee benefit, the IRS requires that taxes be paid on that benefit (US Tax Code Title 26, Section 106, excludes employer-provided health care coverage from the gross income of an employee, but not from that of a non-employee).
 - It is **strongly** recommended that Postdoctoral Scholars consult the [IRS](#) and/or a [tax professional](#) to understand the tax implications (income and FICA) of their fellowship payments. Because interpretation of tax laws is the domain of the IRS, Duke cannot determine what an individual’s tax status may be, and Duke cannot dispense tax advice.
 - The [National Postdoctoral Association](#) provides useful tax information for non-employee postdocs at <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/postdocs/187-overview-of-tax-issues-for-postdocs>.
 - Postdoctoral Scholars will have 2 payroll records – compensatory and non-compensatory. Therefore, Postdoctoral Scholars may have to submit duplicate NC4 and W4 tax documents in conjunction with their compensatory and non-compensatory payments.
 - New Postdoctoral Scholars will receive both a W-2 tax form for compensatory work performed as a Postdoctoral Associate, and a 1099-MISC Form reporting fellowship stipend.
 - Because they are trainees, not employees, the IRS may not view Postdoctoral Scholars as receiving “earned income”. This may have an implication for child/dependent care tax deductions. Again, it is strongly recommended that Postdoctoral Scholars consult a [tax professional](#) to understand the potential tax implications of their individual situation.
 - Postdoctoral Scholars’ pay date will change from the 25th of the month to the last day of month. Postdoctoral Scholars may have to update their direct deposit information to reflect the new pay date.
8. **Are candidates who are paid directly, either by their home country or by another institution, eligible for postdoctoral appointment?**
- Candidates who are paid directly may be eligible for appointment as ‘Postdoctoral Scholar – Paid Direct.’ For policy and guidelines, please see Addendum 1 of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#): ‘Policies Specific to Paid-Direct Candidates for Postdoctoral Appointment.’

9. A grad student in our department just received his PhD. The PI would like to keep him on as a postdoc for a few months before he moves to his first “real” postdoc position. This way the student can get Duke health insurance. May we appoint the student as a Postdoctoral Associate?

- Postdoctoral Associate is a full-time, exempt appointment for a period of 9 months or greater, and is subject to the postdoctoral salary minimum and other stipulations of the postdoctoral policy. Postdoctoral Associate is not an appropriate category for recent graduates who are continuing their work in the department for a few months until they begin a postdoctoral appointment at another university or find other employment. A recent graduate who is staying on in the department for a short period following graduation may be appointed as an Associate in Research or similar (departments should discuss the appropriate title with the SOM or Campus HR Center). However, in order to be benefits-eligible, he/she must work at least 30 hours a week for at least 9 months.
- Note that [The Duke Student Medical Insurance Plan](#) normally runs from August 1 through July 31 of the following year, giving students coverage for 2 months after May graduation. Students have the option to [extend coverage](#) for up to 6 months following July 31. Another option is to purchase outside insurance:
 - Assurant short-term insurance: <http://hillchesson.com/individual.html>
 - Blue Cross/Blue Shield Blue Advantage individual plan: <http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/plans/individuals/blueadvantage/>

10. Transferring postdocs from Research Associate positions (job code 1361) to Postdoctoral Associate (job code 3820): Do you switch everyone unless there are visa implications?

- Yes, at or before the time of appointment renewal, all Research Associates who fit the definition of Postdoctoral Associate (found in the first section of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#)) should be switched to the Postdoctoral Associate category, unless this raises visa issues. If there are visa issues, the postdoctoral appointee may remain in the Research Associate category, but the postdoc personnel subarea (PSA 0028) must be flagged to identify them as a postdoc.
- Moving forward, all postdoctoral candidates must be hired or reappointed in the Postdoctoral Associate category, using PSA 0028. This allows Duke to identify how many postdoctoral appointees are at the institution.

11. How will the Research Associate position be used in the future?

- A committee is currently defining the rest of Job Family 27. That committee will identify job requirements for positions including Research Associate, Research Associate Senior, and Research Scientist.

Section 2: Questions about “Employee First” Policy (Initial Month of Postdoctoral Appointment on Comp Payroll)

12. Is "Employee First" (all postdocs spending their initial month of employment on the compensatory payroll) a requirement for departments?

- Yes, “Employee First” is a requirement. “Employee First” has been implemented so that Postdoctoral Scholars may have legal access to Duke health insurance. The Employee First policy was vetted by the Deans and Chairs of the Campus and School of Medicine, and approved by the Academic Council.
- Within the School of Medicine, if neither the PI, the department/responsible unit, nor the Chair has funds to cover the costs of the Postdoctoral Scholar’s initial month on comp payroll, the Dean of the School of Medicine has agreed to cover the cost. The [SoM Office of Resource Planning](#) will reimburse the department/responsible unit for those costs, per a request from the

Business Manager. Insurance costs should be processed by the business office of the department/responsible unit and charged directly to an unrestricted departmental 4xx fund code. Reimbursements should be requested on monthly and/or quarterly bases for any recurring charges. E-mail requests for reimbursement with brief explanation of charges to: Rossi Gambardella, Office of Resource Planning, gamba001@mc.duke.edu.

- On the Campus side, salary for the mandatory one-month employee period will come first from the Principal Investigator (or primary Mentor in the case of [NIH NRSA Institutional Research T32 Training Grants](#)), to be supplemented if necessary by funding from the department/responsible unit, or from the Dean/Director.

13. I want to move a recent graduate student to a postdoctoral training grant (non-comp payroll). Does her time on the comp payroll as a grad student count as her “Employee First” time?

- No. The Graduate Student PSA 0006 is not a benefits-eligible personnel subarea; therefore time spent as a graduate student does not count towards Employee First time.

14. Do I need to put Postdoctoral Scholars who were here before the April 1 2008 implementation date of the policy on the comp payroll for one month?

- No, the “Employee First” rule applies only to postdocs appointed after April 1, 2008, the implementation date of the Postdoctoral Policy. Postdoctoral appointees currently paid through the non-compensatory payment system, including those who have never been paid through the comp payroll, should be moved into the Postdoctoral Scholar job code 2898 with the postdoc personnel sub area (PSA 0028) flagged, and placed at a zero rate of pay.

Section 3: Questions Related to Postdoctoral Salary

15. Duke has adopted a minimum postdoctoral salary, but there will still be some disparity among departments. Why didn’t Duke adopt a scaled salary?

- Duke set a minimum salary for postdoctoral appointments equal to the [NIH NRSA](#) stipend for a postdoc with zero years of experience. That minimum was reached on July 1, 2009 (the minimum salary for FY 2008 was \$35,000). The minimum salary is equal across departments/responsible units, both for Campus and the School of Medicine.
- Note that Duke is only setting a minimum, not tying salary to years of experience. This salary minimum is to protect those who are on the low end of the scale. However, in some fields it is common to pay postdocs according to years of experience. The postdoc and the PI are always free to negotiate a salary above the Duke minimum. Duke is setting a floor, not a ceiling.

16. Are there any exceptions to the postdoctoral minimum salary?

- Yes. Grant proposals submitted before April 1, 2007, will not be subject to the salary minimum until renewal of the grant.

Section 4: Questions Related to Postdoctoral Benefits

17. Will postdoctoral appointees have a separate orientation, or will they continue to go to the Duke orientation?

- For the near future, postdoctoral appointees will continue to attend Duke Employee Orientation. The Office of Postdoctoral Services plans to partner with Duke Employee Orientation to present postdoctoral policies to incoming postdocs. An online orientation is also being developed.

18. Are postdocs eligible for benefits?

- Postdoctoral Associates are eligible for most staff benefits. See Section 6-B, “Benefits for Postdoctoral Associates” of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#) for details.

- Because they are not Duke employees, Postdoctoral Scholars are eligible for limited benefits only, as outlined in Section 7-B, “Non-Salary Coverage for Postdoctoral Scholars”, of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#).

19. What if the Postdoctoral Scholar has a fellowship that provides an allocation for health insurance?

- If the Postdoctoral Scholar has an Institutional Allowance (IA), funding for the Postdoctoral Scholar’s individual coverage and for the Duke contribution to health insurance will be taken from the IA first and to the fullest extent possible. The Postdoctoral Scholar may also choose to pay his/her premium (the “employee” or “payee” portion) from the IA, although the Duke portion will be extracted first - in other words, if there is not enough in the IA to cover both the Duke portion and the premium, the postdoc must pay the premium out of pocket.
- The Postdoctoral Scholar may always choose to use the IA for health insurance – other institutional costs, such as lab supplies, may not take precedence over health insurance costs.
- Because Postdoctoral Scholars are non-employees receiving an employee benefit, all deductions for health insurance will be **post-tax** (US Tax Code Title 26, Section 106, excludes employer-provided health care coverage from the gross income of an employee, but not from that of a non-employee). Postdoctoral Scholars should note that they will be taxed on the **entire cost** of Duke health insurance, not just the “employee” portion.

20. What if the Postdoctoral Scholar doesn’t have an Institutional Allowance (IA) to cover health insurance?

- On the Campus side, if the Postdoctoral Scholar does not have an IA or if supplementation is necessary, funding for the Postdoctoral Scholar’s individual coverage and for the Duke contribution to health insurance will come either from the Principal Investigator (PI), the department/responsible unit, or the Dean/Director. The decision of how to allot such funding will be at the discretion of each School/responsible unit.
- Within the School of Medicine, if neither the PI, the department/responsible unit, nor the Chair/Director has funds to cover the costs of the Postdoctoral Scholar’s individual coverage and the Duke contribution to health insurance, the Dean of the School of Medicine has agreed to cover the costs. The SoM Office of Resource Planning will reimburse the department/responsible unit, per a request from the business office. Insurance costs should be processed by the business office of the department/responsible unit and charged directly to an unrestricted departmental 4xx fund code. Reimbursements should be requested on monthly and/or quarterly bases for any recurring charges. E-mail requests for reimbursement with brief explanation of charges to: Rossi Gambardella, Office of Resource Planning, at gamba001@mc.duke.edu.

21. What procedures should be followed for benefits deductions when switching a postdoc from the compensatory to the non-compensatory payment system (in other words, moving a Postdoctoral Associate to a Postdoctoral Scholar position)?

- When moving a Postdoctoral Associate to a Postdoctoral Scholar position, change job code 3820 (Postdoctoral Associate) to job code 2898 (Postdoctoral Scholar), flag the postdoc PSA 0028, and set the rate of pay to zero. These actions alert Benefits that the newly appointed Postdoctoral Scholar should not receive a COBRA notice.
- For instructions for processing benefits deductions for Postdoctoral Scholars, see the Corporate Payroll Services memo [Instructions for Processing Benefits Deductions for Postdoctoral Scholars](#) dated April 4, 2008.

22. Is switching from the compensatory to the non-compensatory payment system (Postdoctoral Associate to Postdoctoral Scholar) a qualifying event? Will Postdoctoral Scholars be able to enroll in new benefits, or drop benefits?

- No, moving to the non-compensatory payment system is not a qualifying event. To enroll in new benefits or drop benefits, the Postdoctoral Scholar must wait until the next open enrollment session, unless he/she has a true [qualifying event](#).

23. We have a paid-direct candidate who does not meet the requirements for [Postdoctoral Scholar-Paid Direct](#) status and therefore is not eligible for Duke health insurance. What are his/her options for health insurance?

- If the paid-direct appointee is international, he/she should first discuss insurance options with [Visa Services](#) and the [International House](#).
- Options for US insurance coverage include:
 - Assurant short-term insurance: <http://hillchesson.com/individual.html>
 - Blue Cross/Blue Shield Blue Advantage individual plan: <http://www.bcbsnc.com/content/plans/individuals/blueadvantage/>
 - The [National Postdoctoral Association](#) (NPA) and [Garnett-Powers and Associates, Inc.](#) have joined together to offer the [Postdoctoral Scholar Injury and Sickness Insurance Plan](#) to full, individual NPA members who do not have access to health insurance. Benefit coverage for the plan is provided through StudentResources, a UnitedHealthcare company specializing in university health programs.

24. Are postdocs eligible for the Duke retirement plan?

- Postdoctoral Associates are eligible to participate in the [Duke Savings for Retirement Plan](#). This plan is funded by voluntary pre-tax contributions. Duke does not contribute to this plan. Postdoctoral Associates are eligible to participate immediately in the plan.
- Because they are not Duke University employees, Postdoctoral Scholars are not eligible to participate in the [Duke Savings for Retirement Plan](#).

25. Are postdocs eligible for the Employee Tuition Assistance Program?

- Postdoctoral Associates are eligible for the Employee Tuition Assistance Program if they meet the criteria at http://www.hr.duke.edu/benefits/education/tuition_assistance.html.
- Because Postdoctoral Scholars are not employees, they are not eligible for the Employee Tuition Assistance Program.

26. Are postdocs covered by Workers Compensation?

- Postdoctoral Associates are covered by Workers Compensation. For details, see <http://www.hr.duke.edu/workcomp/> and http://www.hr.duke.edu/policies/health_safety/workers_comp/index.html.
- Because Postdoctoral Scholars are not Duke employees, they should contact their funding agency for Workers Compensation guidelines.

27. Are postdocs eligible for the Kiel Memorial Voluntary Vacation/PTO Donation Program (shared leave program)?

- Postdoctoral Associates are eligible if they meet the requirements listed at http://www.hr.duke.edu/policies/time_away/kiel_program/index.html.
- Because they are not Duke employees, Postdoctoral Scholars are not eligible for the Kiel Program.

Section 5: Questions Related to Postdoctoral Leave

28. Do postdocs accrue vacation like regular employees? If they leave Duke, are they paid out for vacation?

- Postdoctoral Associates may accrue up to 20 days vacation, per Section 6-B of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#), but will not be paid out for it upon termination or transfer to Postdoctoral Scholar status (non-comp payment system).
- Postdoctoral Scholars are not Duke employees, and therefore do not accrue leave from Duke. However, subject to the terms of the funding agency, Postdoctoral Scholars may take up to 40 personal days of absence (this number of days corresponds to the temporal distribution of leave for Postdoctoral Associates: 15 vacation days, 12 sick days, and 13 holidays and discretionary days as observed by the relevant school of the University). Upon termination or transfer to a Postdoctoral Associate position, a Postdoctoral Scholar will not be paid out for unused days of absence.

29. Should monthly accrual of vacation/sick days for postdocs be tracked on a calendar basis (January-December year, like discretionary days), or by appointment date?

- Postdoctoral Associates accrue vacation from the first day of employment on a prorated basis. Departments should keep a spreadsheet with the Postdoctoral Associate's date of appointment and track accrual accordingly, as for regular staff.
- Postdoctoral Scholars are not Duke employees and therefore do not earn vacation/sick leave from Duke, but they may take up to 40 personal days of absence, subject to the terms of the funding agency. Days of absence should be tracked from the date of the appointment as Postdoctoral Scholar (i.e., from the time that the postdoctoral appointee transferred from the compensatory payroll to the non-comp payment system).

30. When postdoctoral appointees transfer to the non-compensatory payment system, can they "bank" their unused vacation in case they return to the compensatory payroll?

- No, accrued vacation must be utilized before transfer to the non-compensatory payment system.

31. For postdocs who were here before the policy went into effect, can departments set their own parameters for grandfathering vacation/sick leave if the postdoc's time had not previously been tracked?

- If a written leave record does not exist, the postdoc should discuss his/her leave with the PI, with oversight from the departmental Chair or his/her designee. After agreement has been reached on the number of vacation and sick days previously used or accrued, the agreed-upon balance may be used as a starting point (note that vacation accrual may not exceed 20 days, and sick accrual may not exceed the normal staff accrual rate of 1 day per month). The postdoc and PI should submit their signed leave agreement to the department and the Chair.
- If the postdoc cannot reach agreement with the PI, the postdoc should consult with the [Office of Postdoctoral Services](#).

32. Some Postdoctoral Associates have seen previous postdocs get a payout for their vacation. Will they be grandfathered a leave payout as well?

- Because there was no policy about vacation payout previous to April 2008, the decision of whether or not to pay postdocs out for vacation was left up to the department and/or the PI. If the department and/or the PI have traditionally paid out their postdocs for vacation, it would be appropriate for the postdoc to have a discussion with the PI and/or departmental manager as to whether his/her vacation should also be paid out.

33. Will the Postdoctoral Scholar get a fresh 40 days if they change laboratories/departments?

- No, unless the terms of the funding agency specify otherwise.

- 34. Are Postdoctoral Scholars required to use up their leave in the year earned or lose it?**
- Subject to the terms of the funding agency, Postdoctoral Scholars must use their leave in the year earned or lose it. Unutilized days of absence do not accrue from year to year, and will not be carried over if the Postdoctoral Scholar changes labs or departments/responsible units.
- 35. What happens if a postdoc uses up all of his/her vacation and sick leave and requests more?**
- Whether a Scholar or an Associate, if the postdoctoral appointee requests additional time off after exhausting their leave, the request must be discussed with the PI.
 - If a Postdoctoral Associate requests more leave after exhausting his or her accrued leave, Duke staff policies and procedures apply. See http://www.hr.duke.edu/policies/time_away/index.html and <http://www.hr.duke.edu/absences/>.
 - If sick leave has been exhausted, Postdoctoral Associates may take time without pay. A pay exception must be processed for that month.
 - Postdoctoral Scholars should contact their funding agency for leave requests. The funding agency's regulations always supersede the Duke Postdoctoral Policy and Duke Staff Policy.
- 36. Do postdocs get parental leave?**
- For Postdoctoral Associates, the parental leave policy is the same as the [staff leave policy](#) (must use own time for first three weeks and second three weeks will be paid time off).
 - Because Postdoctoral Scholars are not employees, they do not accrue paid leave from Duke, but subject to the terms of the funding agency, the parental leave period for Postdoctoral Scholars is the temporal equivalent of the staff parental leave period: 6 weeks.

Section 6: Questions Related to Time Tracking and Hours Worked

- 37. Are postdoctoral appointments and yearly renewals tracked by the appointment date, or does the appointment term begin July 1, like faculty?**
- Postdoctoral appointments should be tracked by the appointment date, as with regular staff appointments.
- 38. Will the system that the School of Medicine is currently using to track time off change?**
- A Paid Time Off (PTO) tracking system is currently under development. Until the PTO system is implemented, departments/responsible units should continue to use their present systems to track monthly staff.
- 39. May a postdoctoral appointee work a part-time schedule at Duke?**
- No. The Postdoctoral Policy defines a postdoctoral appointment as a full-time position.
- 40. How many hours worked per week meets the definition of a full-time postdoctoral appointment?**
- Postdoctoral Associates must work an **average minimum** of 40 hours a week. Note that 40 hours is the **minimum**. Postdoctoral Associates are monthly (exempt) employees, and therefore not subject to overtime pay. More than 40 hours a week may commonly be required to complete assigned tasks.
- 41. May postdocs work from home?**
- For Postdoctoral Associates, flexible work options may be allowed at the discretion of the PI and/or the department. Flexible work options must be requested and documented in accordance with the Duke HR guidelines at <http://www.hr.duke.edu/flexwork/index.html>.
 - Postdoctoral Scholars are not Duke employees, but may arrange flexible work options at the discretion of the PI and the funding agency.

Section 7: Questions Related to Reappointment Letters, Evaluations, and Grievances

42. Must I do reappointment letters for postdocs in my department?

- Yes. Written terms of appointment must be renewed 90 days prior to the end of each appointment term for Postdoctoral Associates and postdoctoral appointees currently classified as Research Associates due to visa restrictions. Reappointment letters provide protection both for the postdoctoral appointee and the department by spelling out length of appointment, salary/stipend, and duties. A sample reappointment letter may be found at <http://www.postdoc.duke.edu/policies.html>. Note that an individual may not hold a postdoctoral appointment at Duke for more than 5 years total, except under extraordinary circumstances approved by the appropriate Dean or the Vice Provost for Research.
- Reappointment letters are not mandated for Postdoctoral Scholars, but the funding agency's renewal form(s) should be kept in the personnel file and/or submitted to HR.
- If a Postdoctoral Associate moves to a Postdoctoral Scholar position in the middle of his or her appointment term, the funding agency's appointment form(s) should be kept in the personnel file and/or submitted to HR in lieu of a reappointment letter.

43. Do PIs and postdocs have to do yearly evaluations? Why? Who keeps up with the document?

- Per the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#), written evaluations must be completed on a yearly basis. According to the [2005 Sigma Xi National Postdoctoral Survey](#), postdocs who establish a written plan with their advisor early in the postdoc period are likelier to report greater productivity, greater satisfaction, and better relationships with their advisor. Providing written feedback is an important part of the PI's mentoring duties, just as supervisory evaluations are important for regular staff. Evaluations also provide a safeguard in the event of a grievance, as documentation of performance.
- The PI, the postdoc, and the department should all keep a copy of the evaluation, as for regular staff. A sample evaluation may be found at <http://www.postdoc.duke.edu/policies.html>.

44. Can postdocs file grievances?

- Postdoctoral Associates are eligible for the [Duke University Dispute Resolution Process](#).
- Because Postdoctoral Scholars are not Duke University employees, they are not eligible for the Duke University Dispute Resolution Process. However, a Postdoctoral Scholar who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly should first discuss the problem with the Faculty Mentor and/or the Chair of the department/responsible unit. Each school should designate a faculty member, or member of the administration experienced in postdoctoral education, whose duties are to serve as a resource to the Postdoctoral Scholar in addressing and resolving grievances. If a resolution cannot be reached at the level of either the department/responsible unit or through the efforts of the designated resource person, the Postdoctoral Scholar should present the grievance to the Dean for informal evaluation and, as necessary, adjudication. The determination by the Dean is the final step in the grievance process.

Section 8: Questions Related to Grandfathering and Term Limits

45. Are postdocs who were appointed before the Duke Postdoctoral Policy went into effect subject to the 5-year term limit?

- Postdocs who were appointed prior to the April 1, 2008 implementation date of the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#) will be grandfathered a term limit of 3 more years (i.e., through March 31, 2011) or a term total of 5 years, whichever is greater.
- Following the 5-year training period, a postdoctoral appointee must either be moved into a non-training position (e.g., Research Associate Senior, Research Scientist, Laboratory Research

Analyst) or terminated. In the case of termination, at least 90 days written notice must be given to the postdoctoral appointee.

46. Will postdocs on visas receive the grandfathered term limit of 3 more years?

- Immigration rules and regulations always take precedence over the [Duke Postdoctoral Policy](#). Postdoctoral appointees holding visas and their department/responsible unit must check with [Duke Visa Services](#) to determine what regulations apply.

47. Can extensions be granted to the 5-year term limit?

- Yes. In extraordinary circumstances, extensions may be granted to the 5-year term limit by the appropriate Dean in the case of professional schools and/or the Vice Provost for Research.

48. What if a postdoc spent time at another institution?

- If a Postdoctoral Appointee has spent part of the training period at another institution or in another field, then the total time of training should not exceed 6 years, except under extraordinary circumstances approved by the appropriate Dean or the Vice Provost for Research.