Overview: Post-doctoral scholars are individuals receiving advanced training beyond the doctorate in preparation for their careers. They can be found at the University with at least 4 different types of appointments:

1. As UH employees, typically junior researchers.
   The following have no formal UH appointment:
2. As employees of other entities, primarily RCUH;
3. As fellows supported by stipends paid by the University (primarily from extramural awards); and
4. As fellows supported by sources outside the University.

The goal of this document is to propose executive policies and administrative procedures to manage *post-doctoral fellows* on campus (number 3 above). It is expected that post-doctoral scholars employed or supported by non-University entities will be treated at least as well as those supported by the University. Graduate Division is proposed as the administrative unit for UHM supported post-doctoral fellows, as well as the point-of-contact for all post-doctoral scholars who are not UH employees. This is consistent with policies at many mainland universities and recognizes that post-doctoral scholars are really students, albeit students in transition. However, it should be noted that the proposals that follow could easily be implemented in a different unit elsewhere in the research administration infrastructure.

In recent years post-doctoral scholars have become increasingly important to the research enterprise. In some disciplines, post-doctoral experience is required to obtain a university position. The purpose of this draft is to better define the types of post-doctoral scholars found in the University and to more clearly define the conditions and expectations associated with one particular class of post-doctoral scholar, the post-doctoral fellow.

The role of post docs in research is complex and has evolved over time. Some 40 years ago a PhD graduate in a scientific field expected to complete no more than a one to three year post-doctoral training period before becoming eligible for an Assistant Professor position. This model continues today. Such a post-doctoral fellow typically receives support from an extramural source and works under the supervision of a faculty mentor. While the post-doctoral fellow may have been engaged on a specific research project, usually defined in the fellowship application and award, no specific expectations of research accomplishments or time commitments outside of those specified by the granting agency need be imposed by the mentor or the University. While it is hoped that individuals in such positions simultaneously advance their training and the research mission of the University and their mentor, no employee-like expectations can be assumed or expected. This unique status, not being formally considered by the institution to be either a student or an employee, places the post-doctoral fellow at risk. It also places the University and mentor at risk, if the status, expectations, rights, and obligations of both the post-doc and the institution are not clearly delineated from the start.

This pattern described above remains the case in many areas of research and scholarship, particularly as the first step after receiving the Doctoral degree. However, in “high-demand” areas of research at research-intensive institutions, evidence of significant extramural funding has become increasingly required for successful applications for hard-money positions. That is, potential faculty will have to complete at least one and sometime more “post-doctoral”
experiences, perhaps at different institutions, before starting on a permanent career track. Such a
Ph.D. researcher is typically hired as an employee of a grant, rather than on University funds, to
work on a specific project initially at the R-2 level and later in their careers, as an R-3, but on
soft-money. In such positions, there are clear expectations that the individual will work under
the supervision of the Principal Investigator (PI) to achieve the specific aims of a specific
project. In this situation the post-doctoral scholar is clearly an employee, with all the
concomitant rights, obligations, and privileges. While there may be a training component as
part of such employment, it is clearly secondary and should be related to the requirements of the
funding award and not necessarily to the needs or desires of the post-doctoral scholar. The time
frame for employment in this category of postdoctoral scholar position is generally defined by
the period of grant support. As such it may be as long as five years, or with renewal of the grant
or receipt of a new grant, indefinite in length.

The third form of post-doctoral position is what some might describe as a “super-post-doc”. In
some cases faculty PI’s may hire an individual who assumes supervisory responsibility for the
PI’s laboratory and in essence becomes an extension of the PI. This situation occurs often when
a PI is exceptionally successful and has such a large operation that he or she does not have the
appropriate time to directly supervise numerous graduate students, technicians, and junior post-
docs on a daily basis and must delegate much of the day-to-day responsibility to a surrogate. It
also commonly occurs when the laboratory PI also has extensive administrative responsibility in
the University and has time only for the general oversight of the laboratory and its scientific
direction. Often such a post-doctoral scholar evolves into such a position over time without a
clear point in time at which such a metamorphosis occurs. Currently in the University some
individuals occupying these positions are appointed into faculty “Specialist” positions, while
others remain as junior researchers (R-2) or even as grant funded Assistant Researchers (R-3) for
extended periods of time.

The existing BOR policy (below) delegates the authority to manage post-doctoral scholars to the
Vice President for Research and Graduate Education. It also specifies the minimum
qualifications. We propose that this policy be updated to reflect the current administrative
structure and the existing policy on stipends.

However, besides having a BOR policy, the University should have in place executive policies
and administrative procedures that both protect the rights of the University and ensure that post-
doctoral scholars are treated fairly. It is also essential that there be an administrative locus on
campus. This would be the office responsible for ensuring that university policies and
procedures are followed, with the ability to grant exceptions when justified, and the authority to
resolve disputes.

It is important that the University know who these fellows are and where they are located. This
could be accomplished via records maintained in Graduate Division and/or by creating an
appropriate designation in the personnel management system. The latter is preferred inasmuch as
this will give them access to some services on campus, including the libraries. Greater
specificity in defining and distinguishing fellows from post-doctoral researchers (R-2 or
specialists) would therefore be achieved and clarify expectations for all classes of post-doctoral
scholars.

The policies and procedures proposed below represent a basic change in how the University
treats and manages post-doctoral scholars, and its implementation should be carefully monitored
and reviewed periodically.
EXISTING BOR POLICY

BOR Policy 9-2

i. Post-doctoral Scholars shall be classified and compensated in accordance with the following classification and stipends for Post-doctoral Scholars:

1) Post-doctoral Fellow.

Duties and Responsibilities. Under the supervision of a principal investigator of a grant or contract or a senior faculty member, pursues post-doctoral studies by performing experimentation, tests, or observation under close direction in order to acquire the depth of experience and the additional knowledge and skills necessary to become an independent researcher. The range of activity includes those tasks that allow the appointee to profit most from an association with the resident researcher; e.g., assistance with appropriate literature searches, experimental design, analytical observations, data analysis and presentation of results.

Minimum Qualifications: Training represented by a recently awarded doctorate from a college or university of recognized standing in a field appropriate to the fellowship involved.

2) Stipends
(a) The stipend for post-doctoral fellows supported from extramural grants or contracts shall be that amount allowable by the agency providing the funds.
(b) If the agency does not stipulate an amount, the principal investigator shall set the stipend in a range determined by the Vice President for Research and Graduate Education, such range to be based on comparability with portable fellowship stipends provided by Federal granting agencies.
(c) Post-doctoral fellows supported by general funds shall receive a stipend equal to the minimum stipend in the range determined according to b. above. (Nov. 18, 1983)
Proposed New Policies And Procedures

Proposed Revisions to BOR Policy 9-2 (Ramseyer Format)

i. Post-doctoral Scholars who are not employees shall be classified and compensated in accordance with the following classification and stipends for Post-doctoral Scholars.

(1) Post-doctoral Fellow.

Duties and Responsibilities. Under the supervision of a principal investigator of a grant or contract or a senior faculty member, pursues post-doctoral studies by performing experimentation, tests, or observation, or other research under close direction in order to acquire the depth of experience and the additional knowledge and skills necessary to become an independent researcher. The range of activity includes those tasks that allow the appointee to profit most from an association with the resident researcher; e.g., assistance with appropriate literature searches, experimental design, analytical observations, data analysis and presentation of results.

Minimum Qualifications: Training represented by a recently awarded doctorate or equivalent terminal degree from a college or university of recognized standing in a field appropriate to the fellowship involved.

(2) Stipends

(a) The minimum stipend for post-doctoral fellows supported from extramural grants or contracts shall be that amount allowable by the agency providing the funds shall be set by the Vice President for Research to be comparable with portable fellowship stipends provided by Federal granting agencies. Each scholar will also be provided with health benefits equivalent to those provided to employees with no dependents or with an equivalent sum.

(b) The stipend for post-doctoral fellows supported from extramural grants or contracts shall be that amount allowable by the agency providing the funds or the stipend plus benefits specified in (a), whichever is greater. If the agency does not stipulate an amount, the principal investigator shall set the stipend in a range determined by the Vice President for Research and Graduate Education, such range to be based on comparability with portable fellowship stipends provided by Federal granting agencies.

(c) Post-doctoral fellows supported by general funds shall receive a stipend equal to the minimum stipend in the range determined according to b. above. (Nov. 18, 1983)
Proposed Revision to BOR Policy 9-2

i. Post-doctoral Scholars who are not employees shall be classified and compensated in accordance with the following classification and stipends for Post-doctoral Fellows:

(1) Post-doctoral Fellow.

Duties and Responsibilities. Under the supervision of a principal investigator of a grant or contract or a senior faculty member, pursues post-doctoral studies by performing experimentation, tests, or observation, or other research under close direction in order to acquire the depth of experience and the additional knowledge and skills necessary to become an independent researcher. The range of activity includes those tasks that allow the appointee to profit most from an association with the resident researcher; e.g., assistance with appropriate literature searches, experimental design, analytical observations, data analysis and presentation of results.

Minimum Qualifications: Training represented by a recently awarded doctorate or equivalent terminal degree from a college or university of recognized standing in a field appropriate to the fellowship involved.

(2) Stipends

(a) The minimum stipend for post-doctoral fellows shall be set by the Vice President for Research to be comparable with portable fellowship stipends provided by Federal granting agencies. Each scholar will also be provided with health benefits equivalent to those provided to employees with no dependents or with an equivalent sum.

(b) The stipend for post-doctoral fellows supported from extramural grants or contracts shall be that amount allowable by the agency providing the funds or the stipend plus benefits specified in (a), whichever is greater.
E 5.600 Post-doctoral Scholars Executive Policy (New)

I. Introduction

Section 9-2 of the Board of Regents Policies establishes the category of Post-Doctoral Scholars and specifies general compensation guidelines.

The intent of this policy is to establish the minimum compensation level and benefit package for post-doctoral fellows system-wide. (Fellows are not employees.). If the Post-doctoral Scholar is not being compensated via UH, the unit providing the affiliation should ensure that the benefits are equivalent to the benefits offered by UH.

II. Objectives

To provide a definition of a Post-Doctoral Scholar and to clearly define the benefits provided to the Post-doctoral Fellow.

III. Definition

A post-doctoral fellow is one who:

1. Has recently been awarded a doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., Pharm.D., D.V.M., Dr.P.H., D.N.S., or equivalent terminal degree) from an regionally accredited institution or the foreign equivalent where at least 3 years of undergraduate study are prerequisite to admission to the graduate degree program (Note: Many funding agencies require that the terminal degree be awarded within the past 5 years);

2. Has received an award (such as a fellowship, traineeship or equivalent) for research and training at the post-doctoral level;

3. Will be under the direction of a (research) mentor who will provide advanced training to prepare the post-doctoral fellow for his/her subsequent career;

4. Will have the expectation of and the opportunity for research and publication of findings as determined by mutual agreement of the post-doctoral fellow and the mentor;
5. Will pursue a full-time program of research and training approved by a department or research unit, except by mutual agreement; and

6. Has been appointed as a post-doctoral fellow.

III. Benefits

The minimum benefit package provided to post-doctoral fellows shall include:

1. Health insurance equivalent to what is available to single employees. (The unit has the option of providing an equivalent amount to be used for insurance.)

2. Days off
   a. Personal leave – Minimum of 20 days/year, including State holidays. Personal leave does not accumulate across years and cannot be used as terminal leave. Scheduling of leave is subject to approval of the supervisor.
   b. Family leave (birth or adoption of a child or care of a family member), up to 6 weeks/year w/o compensation.

3. Compensation - greater or equal to $3,000 per month excluding benefits. All costs must be borne by the grant, or if not possible, by the Department or Research Unit.

IV. Delegation

Detailed policies and procedures for post-doctoral scholars at the University of Hawai‘i, including but not limited to, the appointment, conduct, compensation, evaluation, reappointment, and certification of completion are the responsibility of the respective chancellors.

Note: The current (2008) NIH minimum stipend for post-doctoral fellows is $36,996 and the NSF minimum is $36,000.
Procedures for Post-Doctoral Scholars at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (New)

These procedures are promulgated by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education.

The administrative unit is Graduate Division, Spalding 360

These are the general procedural guidelines for the management, recognition, and compensation of post-doctoral scholars who are not UH employees at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Inasmuch as post-doctoral scholars undertake a wide range of activities and there are a variety of funding options, it is almost certain that exceptions will be necessary. A key component of this policy is that Graduate Division will have the authority to grant exceptions.

1. Post-doctoral appointments will be proposed by faculty and principle investigators and made by deans and directors, and subject to review by the Graduate Division. Each individual will be under the direct supervision of a faculty member.

2. Recruitment. The availability of a fellowship for post doctoral study should be posted so that qualified individuals on-campus as well as in the broader academic community are informed.

3. Appointment
   a. An appointment letter is issued by the unit (with a copy to Graduate Division). Minimally, the letter must include the appointment period, compensation levels, the benefits package, and the basis of for performance evaluation. A copy of the relevant policies and procedures, including the University policy on intellectual property must be included. A signed release from the post-doctoral scholar stating that he or she has read and agreed to abide by the IP policy is required.
   b. All appointments should be temporary with defined terms.
   c. The maximum appointment period should be specified (no more than 3 years unless an exception is granted).
   d. Training and mentoring guidelines must be made available to the appointee, including the expectations of both the primary mentor and the post-doctoral scholar.
   e. If, exceptions are required, the unit must obtain prior approval from Graduate Division.
   f. The J-1 (professor/researcher exchange visitor) is the appropriate visas for international post-doctoral scholars. (Note: If the scholar will be employed by an external source, e.g., RCUH, the HIB as well as the J-1 visas are possibilities.)

4. Progress
   a. The primary mentor must evaluate the post-doctoral scholar at least annually. The evaluation should cover the post-doctoral scholar’s research and professional progress, pointing out both strengths and areas for improvement. A copy of the evaluation must be co-signed by both the mentor and the post-doctoral scholar and be submitted to the Graduate Division.
   b. If the post-doctoral scholar has a complaint that cannot informally be resolved, he or she should follow the procedures available at Graduate Division.
c. **Conduct.** Recognizing that post doctoral scholars are professionals and apprentice faculty, the same policies, standards, and procedures regarding ethical behavior and personal conduct that apply to faculty will apply to post doctoral scholars.

5. **Completion**
   a. At the end of the appointment, upon the recommendation of the unit, Graduate Division will provide a Certificate of Completion.
Summary of Appointment and Management Processes

1. Appointment - Unit recommends and the relevant Dean or Director makes the appointment subject to Graduate Division review.

2. Orientation
   a. Graduate Division will provide copies of relevant University policies, including:
      i. Policies on intellectual property. The post-doctoral scholar must sign and return a copy.
      ii. An outline of post-doctoral scholars’ rights at UHM,
      iii. University grievance procedures, as well as
      iv. Basic survival skills for living in Hawai’i.
   b. The department, research unit, and/or PI will provide:
      i. Orientation on the operation of the lab or unit, and
      ii. Detailed expectations, both for the post-doctoral scholar and for the mentor.

3. Evaluation
   a. Periodic evaluations, at least annually, of the Post-doctoral scholars’ progress will be carried out by the supervisor.
   b. The evaluations will be shared with the post-doctoral scholars and the post-doctoral scholar will have the opportunity to respond.
   c. Copies will be filed with Graduate Division.

4. A certificate of completion will be provided by Graduate Division.