

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE
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The management and administration of the Postdoctoral Research Fellows in South Africa is governed by a SARS (South African Revenue Services) Binding Class Rule. This Ruling was passed by SARS in 2010 and revised in 2015 in response to an application made by Universities South Africa (previously HESA) on behalf of all the Higher Education Institutes in South Africa.

The SARS, through the Ruling, interprets the awarding of postdoctoral fellowships as a means to enable postdoctoral researchers to enhance their knowledge and expertise through continued research. Similarly, the HEIs in South Africa (represented by Universities South Africa) have adopted and undertaken a best-practice policy that includes rules and processes for the recruitment, appointment, tenure, extensions and termination of postdoctoral researchers.

These policies and rules are outlined below and apply in all cases where an academic department undertakes to host a postdoctoral researcher.

The University of Cape Town upholds the SARS Binding Class Rule, policies and best practice – and holds the following definition of a Postdoctoral Research Fellow (PDRF):

*Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are normally awarded to individuals within five years of having achieved a doctoral degree. **Postdoctoral Research Fellows are individuals who have not yet held any full-time permanent professional or academic positions, and who within five years of having achieved a doctoral degree, undertake research and gain professional experience for a future academic career, under the supervision and mentorship of a Principal Investigator.** Fellowships are negotiable up to 2 years after which extension of tenure may be considered for up to a maximum of five years. The purpose of the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship is to provide an opportunity for experiential learning in research, which may serve as a path for further academic and professional development.*

The SARS Binding Class Ruling prescribes the following conditions when a PDRF is taken on by the university.

1. Conditions of Award. Once funding has been secured and an academic department decides to host a PDRF, a document, outlining the conditions of award - including the call for applications and the terms of reference - must be compiled. The value of the fellowship as well as any anticipated 'top-up' funds must be clearly stated in the Conditions of Award. This document ensures that all PDRFs who apply for the fellowships do so in competition with one another, and are subjected to the same conditions, and that the university consistently follows the same process. The conditions of award must be approved by the Chair of the URC before the conditions of award/call for application is made public and/or advertised. PDRFs may be taken on for two years. However, extension for a third, fourth and fifth year may be applied for.

2. Advertising. The SARS Binding Class Ruling specifies that all postdoctoral fellowship opportunities must be advertised. Such advertisement must appear in at least one public forum (eg the NRF's website, newspapers, flyers/pamphlets, etc) other than the university's internal electronic notice boards. Copies of the advertisement must be forwarded to the PDRF Co-ordinator in the Postgraduate Centre & Funding Office (PGC&FO) for record-keeping purposes.

3. Managing applications.

3.1 Applications. The university (either the URC or the host-academic) is responsible for accepting and acknowledging applications for fellowship opportunities. Applications have to be checked to ensure that the applicant is eligible for the fellowship and that he/she fits the university's definition of a PDRF and that he/she has the academic qualifications required of a PDRF.

3.2 Selection. Selection of eligible candidates must be completed by the host-academic and an appropriate sub-committee, or the URC. The result of selection must be communicated to the applicant by the interviewing panel, and the relevant documentation of selected candidates must be forwarded to the PDRF Co-ordinator in the PGC&FO.

4. Registration process.

All PDRFs taken on by the university are required to register. Registration takes place at the PGC&FO, and the PDRF is required to enter into and sign the university's MoA - Memorandum of Agreement – which is the legal agreement between the university and PDRF; as well as MoU – Memorandum of Understanding - the bilateral agreement between the principal Investigator and the PDRF which records the agreed upon research to be undertaken, funding details, regular meetings and general expectations.

5. Payment of PDR Fellowships.

All fellowships must be paid via the postdoctoral UCT account. This entails a transfer of funds (usually to the PGC&FO's control account) and a subsequent transfer, by the Office, to the PDRF's UCT account. Funds are then transferred to the PDRF's banking account. Payments are made quarterly or bi-annually in advance. Single annual payments are not permitted. All payments subsequent to the initial payment must be accompanied by a progress report that indicates satisfactory academic progress.

6. Remuneration for Additional Work.

PDRFs are not permitted to engage in employment related to their research (eg Contract research). However, as part of their professional development they may engage in paid work such as teaching and supervision (but such activities may not constitute part of the basic teaching provisioning of a department) for up to a maximum of 12 hours per week. Such employment must be paid via the university's Human Resources Department at the going rate.

PDRFs engaging in paid employment are required to sign a declaration in which they undertake to repay the value of their fellowship should they fail to complete the agreed-upon postdoctoral research to be undertaken or contravene and any other condition of award.

Annexure 1 provides the *GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP POSTDOCTORAL CONDITIONS OF AWARD AND FOR ADVERTISING POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS IN THE MEDIA.*

The documentation governing the take-on tenure and termination of a PDRF have been amended to include the rules laid down by SARS. The updated documents will be available from the following URL as at 01 January 2016:

<http://www.uct.ac.za/research/pgfo/funding/>



Professor D Visser
Chair: University Research Committee

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