

**Johns Hopkins University  
Krieger School of Arts and Sciences  
Whiting School of Engineering**

**Postdoctoral Fellow Rights and Responsibilities  
(Effective February 2014)**

***Preamble:** Postdoctoral appointments provide a level of professionalization and training beyond Ph.D. education. The Krieger School of Arts & Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering at Johns Hopkins University are dedicated to providing a productive academic and research environment in which postdoctoral fellows can broaden and augment their scholarly abilities.*

*Emerging from discussions between the Homewood Postdoctoral Association and School leadership, this document is a declaration of the rights and responsibilities of postdoctoral fellows in the Krieger and Whiting Schools at Johns Hopkins University.*

**Summary of postdoctoral fellow rights & responsibilities:**

<u>Postdoctoral fellows' rights:</u>	<u>Postdoctoral fellows' responsibilities:</u>
<b>1. To be informed about their status.</b>	<b>1. To carry out the duties of their appointment to the best of their ability at all times.</b>
<b>2. To receive good mentoring.</b>	<b>2. To take ownership of their own professional development.</b>
<b>3. To advance their scholarly experience.</b>	<b>3. To communicate regularly and effectively with the primary advisor</b>
<b>4. To be treated in a respectful and professional manner</b>	<b>4. To comply with all policies of the university and their individual departments.</b>
<b>5. To have accessible procedures for redress of their grievances.</b>	<b>5. To plan for their departure.</b>

**Rights of Postdoctoral Fellows**

**1. Postdoctoral fellows have the right to be informed about their status.** Postdoctoral fellows should be made aware of all academic and non-academic university and departmental policies and procedures pertaining to their appointment, including: benefits, compensation, and source of financial support; expected terms of contact with the primary advisor; applicable deadlines; and the length of the appointment. In particular, postdoctoral fellows should be notified in writing by the primary advisor regarding plans for extension or termination. This notification must be provided no less than 3 months prior to the end of the appointment. In cases where extension is contingent upon the success of solicited funding, this must be stated explicitly in said notification.

**2. Postdoctoral fellows have the right to good mentoring.** In addition to research discussions and group meetings, postdoctoral fellows should have one-on-one meetings with the primary advisor to provide opportunities for direct oversight, focused feedback on quality and consistency of work, periodic evaluation, and career development discussions; expectations for the frequency of these formal meetings should be established with the primary advisor at the beginning of the appointment

**3. Postdoctoral fellows have the right to advance their scholarly experience and professional development.** Postdoctoral fellows should have access to facilities and resources that support their research and professional development, including career advice and job placement assistance; opportunities should be available for training in general abilities, such as clear writing, public speaking, leadership, teamwork, teaching, technology, networking, and mentoring.

**4. Postdoctoral fellows have the right to be treated in a respectful and professional manner and to have accessible procedures for redress of their grievances.** Postdoctoral fellows should enjoy freedom from discrimination and harassment as well as assurance of reasonable confidentiality in their communications, as governed by university policy. Relevant grievance procedures should include postdoctoral fellow representation, as appropriate.

## **Responsibilities of Postdoctoral Fellows**

**1. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to carry out the duties of their appointment to the best of their ability at all times.** Postdoctoral fellows should conduct their work ethically and work towards the publication of research performed during their appointment in a timely manner.

**2. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to take ownership of their own professional development.** In addition to the expansion of their academic or scholarly research training, postdoctoral fellows should strive to expand their professional network, take advantage of access to special resources (e.g., national and international laboratories, centers, and multi-user facilities), and educate themselves about the multitude of career options available to trainees with postdoctoral experience.

**3. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to communicate regularly and effectively with the primary advisor.** Given that goodwill and clear communication between both parties is critical to the success of mentoring, postdoctoral fellows should identify the skills and training they need to ensure the success of their appointment; this information should be clearly and promptly articulated to the primary advisor. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to keep their primary advisor up to date with research results, paper submissions, etc., to share information about projects they are pursuing, and to discuss the skills and training they desire to move forward.

**4. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to comply with all policies of the university and their individual departments.** Postdoctoral fellows should familiarize themselves with and work towards satisfying requirements mandated by the university and/or their department, including (but not limited to) policies regarding the following: compliance and ethics training, effort reporting, conflict of interest, intellectual property, and technology transfer.

**5. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to plan for their departure.** Given the intermediary nature inherent to their position, postdoctoral fellows should not plan to work indefinitely for the primary advisor, nor should they become complacent and assume their appointment will be renewed. Postdoctoral fellows should be particularly mindful of rights pertaining to appointment extension or termination as detailed earlier in this document.

### **Resources:**

National Academies, *Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience for Scientists and Engineers: A Guide for Postdoctoral Scholars, Advisers, Institutions, Funding Organizations, and Disciplinary Societies* (2000)

AAU, *Committee on Postdoctoral Education: Report and Recommendations* (1998)

National Postdoctoral Association, *Recommendations for Postdoctoral Policies and Practices* (2012)