

University of Maryland School of Medicine Scholar Fellow Policy

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# University of Maryland School of Medicine Scholar Fellow Policy

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy statement is to provide guidance for the School of Medicine (SOM) Scholar Fellows. This Policy establishes procedures for hiring and appointing Scholar Fellows, duration of the appointment, pay guidelines, vacation and annual leave policy, professional development opportunities, and grievance procedures. The Dean's Office, through the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars (<http://medschool.umaryland.edu/postdoc/>) and the Office of Academic Administration (<http://medschool.umaryland.edu/academicadmin/fellow.asp>) administers this policy

## **SELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND DURATION OF APPOINTMENT**

Scholar Fellows are generally recruited to the institution by the faculty mentor with whom they will work. Because Scholar Fellows are trainees and not faculty or staff, they are not subject to the University's competitive recruitment and selection practices. However, recruitment and selection of Scholar Fellows must be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the general principles of the University, including those regarding equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

Selection of a candidate and an offer of appointment must be completed with the final approval granted by the Dean or his/her designee. Offers, acceptances and appointments must be made in writing.

A Scholar Fellow is appointed on a yearly basis, and their appointment may be renewed annually based on satisfactory performance and availability of funding. Reappointment requires approval of the Mentor and Unit Head. No individual may be in the status of a Scholar Fellow for more than 5 years; however, the Dean may approve additional terms of appointment for a Scholar Fellow in extenuating circumstances if/when at the end of an appointment it can be documented and justified that there would be an additional or continued mutual benefit to the School and the trainee.

Reappointment letters will be generated by the faculty mentor's department.

Before the reappointment for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of a Scholar Fellow, it is expected that the faculty mentor and the Scholar Fellow meet to discuss training and career-related goals and complete an individual development plan (IDP). This IDP should be submitted to the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars before reappointment for a 4<sup>th</sup> year as a Scholar Fellow. An additional IDP should be filled out by the faculty mentor and the Scholar Fellow and submitted to the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars before reappointment for a 5<sup>th</sup> year as a Scholar Fellow. IDPs should be submitted no later than two months prior to the expiration of the current appointment.

## **SCHOLAR FELLOW TITLES**

The School of Medicine supports the following titles for Scholar Fellows:

For those whose stipend is funded at least 50% through the University of Maryland, Baltimore Payroll System:

*Post-Doctoral Fellow:* This title applies to all fellows who have obtained a terminal doctoral degree and who are paid through University funding sources. These appointments are most typically funded through a faculty member's grant funds but may be funded through other sources.

*Research Fellow:* This title applies to all fellows who have NOT obtained a terminal doctoral degree and who are paid through University funding sources. These appointments are most

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typically funded through a faculty member's grant funds but may be funded through other sources. The expectation is that scholar fellows holding the Research Fellow title will typically be appointed for a much shorter period of time than the 5 years allowed for Post-Doctoral Fellows; to be generally 1 year or less.

For those whose stipend is funded at least 50% by direct agreement between the scholar fellow and an institution outside the University of Maryland, Baltimore:

*Visiting Post-Doctoral Fellow:* This title applies to all fellows who have obtained a terminal doctoral degree and who are compensated directly through an arrangement made between the scholar fellow and an institution outside the University of Maryland Baltimore.

*Visiting Research Fellow:* This title applies to all fellows who have NOT obtained a terminal doctoral degree and who are compensated directly through an arrangement made between the scholar fellow and an institution outside the University of Maryland Baltimore. The expectation is that scholar fellows holding the Visiting Research Fellow title will typically be appointed for a much shorter period of time than the 5 years allowed for Post-Doctoral Fellows; to be generally 1 year or less.

### **OFFER LETTER AND LETTER OF APPOINTMENT**

A written letter of offer/appointment will be provided to the Scholar Fellow candidate. This offer must first be approved by the Department Chair/Program Director/Center Director/Institute Director. The offer may then be reviewed and accepted in advance by the scholar fellow pending final Dean approval as represented by the signature of the Dean or the Dean's designated administrative representative.

Each offer letter should contain the following information:

- Scholar Fellow name and degree
- Proposed title
- Mentor name
- Department and division's name
- Stipend level and benefits
- Relevance of background to work
- Expected roles and responsibilities of the Scholar Fellow
- Full-time or part-time; if part-time, the percentage of effort (e.g. 50%)
- Leave allowances
- Start date
- For International Scholar Fellows, statement that the appointment is contingent on the Scholar Fellow obtaining appropriate lawful status and authorization to work in the United States for the period of appointment; and that expiration of such status and/or work authorization is grounds for termination of the appointment
- Overview of Research Career Development Activities

### **UNRELATED ACTIVITIES/ADDITIONAL EFFORT**

Unless otherwise specified in the Letter of Appointment, all Scholar Fellows are considered full-time appointees. Any additional effort that is not related to the Scholar Fellow role and responsibilities must

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be accomplished in time that is above and beyond the work week as specified in the Letter of Appointment. University resources, including laboratory space, offices, equipment and supplies may not be used by the Scholar Fellow for matters unrelated to the role and responsibilities of the Scholar Fellow's University appointment.

If additional effort or non-related activities are deemed by the mentor or supervisor to interfere with duties associated with the Scholar Fellow's roles and responsibilities, the Scholar Fellow must immediately discontinue those responsibilities. Failure to do so is grounds for dismissal.

Activities unrelated to the Scholar Fellow's appointment including those associated with outside employment cannot be conducted during working hours or involve any School/ University resources.

It is anticipated that the faculty mentor will provide appropriate opportunities to the Scholar Fellow for career training. There may be a need to create training opportunities that are important for career development (e.g., teaching, mentoring graduate students, committee service, etc.). Thus, with the approval of the faculty mentor, Scholar Fellows may take on additional short term and special responsibilities at the University (e.g. mentoring students, teaching/lecturing under the designated teacher of record, and participation in University sponsored events). International Scholar Fellows under UMB immigration sponsorship must obtain approval from the Office of International Services prior to engaging in any additional responsibilities outside the scope of their Scholar Fellow appointment.

### **PAY/ STIPEND GUIDELINES**

The faculty mentor or supervisor, in consultation with and approval of the School administration, has discretion to set the amount of monetary compensation for a Scholar Fellow, provided the compensation is equitable as compared to similarly-situated Scholar Fellows within the designated unit, and provided monetary compensation meets the requirements of the School/ University (as stated below) and the funding source.

The School of Medicine (SOM) sets minimum compensation for Scholar Fellows who are appointed at the title of Post-Doctoral Fellow. (This minimum does not apply to Research Fellows, Visiting Post-Doctoral Fellows or Visiting Research Fellows). Regardless of departmental budget constraints, under no circumstances may compensation be less than the amount specified for trainees with "Zero (0) Years Postdoctoral Experience," by the National Institutes of Health, Office of Extramural Research, Guide to Grants and Contracts/Recent Notices. See: <http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm>. Further, the SOM *strongly recommends* that Scholar Fellows with the title of Post-Doctoral Fellow with greater than zero (0) years' postdoctoral experience be compensated with no less than the current amount associated with the Scholar Fellow's years of experience as a Scholar Fellow, as specified for trainees by the National Institutes of Health, Office of Extramural Research, Guide to Grants and Contracts/Recent Notices. See: <http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm>.

The SOM recognizes the periodic stipend level adjustments put forth by the NIH as soon as these new guidelines are announced. It is expected that any fellow with the title of Post-Doctoral Fellow who is making less than the newly announced stipend level for zero (0) years' postdoctoral experience will receive a pay increase by her/ his next annual appointment renewal date to, at minimum, bring her/his stipend level in line with the new zero (0) years' experience level.

*NOTE: These pay guidelines do not apply for those appointed to the Research Fellow, Visiting Post-Doctoral Fellow and Visiting Research Fellow titles*

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## **SICK, ANNUAL, PERSONAL AND HOLIDAY LEAVE**

Scholar Fellows are not covered by the University's vacation or other paid leave policies applicable to staff and faculty. Scholar Fellows are provided with a limited amount of time for absence due to unexpected sickness or family emergency, annual leave, holidays and personal days, as detailed below. Leave allowances are pro-rated for Scholar Fellows who are appointed on a part-time basis (i.e. less than 100% Full-Time) or for a short-term appointment (i.e. less than one year). For example, a Scholar Fellow with a half-time appointment is granted a minimum of 7.5 Sick Days and 5 Annual Days.

### **ANNUAL LEAVE**

Scholar Fellows are entitled to **10 days of compensated/stipend covered annual leave per year**. An increased number of annual leave days may be negotiated between the Scholar Fellow and mentor. The award of additional annual leave days should be managed on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis through the unit (Department, Center, Institute, Division, etc.).

All annual leave schedules must be approved by the mentor or supervisor. Whenever feasible, annual leave time should be requested in advance to allow for accommodation of the absence (suggest one-week advance notice for requesting one day of leave; two weeks of advance notice for two-five days of leave and three weeks of advance notice for leave requests that are longer than 5 days). Progress in the Scholar Fellow's research and the scheduling of experiments (for laboratory-based scholars) or other responsibilities may be considered when setting annual leave schedules and approving requested leave.

### **SICK LEAVE**

Scholar Fellows are eligible to receive **up to 15 days of compensated/stipend covered sick leave per year**. This leave is available for absences due to sickness and appointments with health care providers. When possible, Scholar Fellows should provide reasonable notice to their mentor when scheduling non-emergency health appointments.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE**

Scholar Fellows are eligible to receive **up to 3 days of compensated/stipend paid personal leave per year**. Personal leave may be requested with minimal notice.

### **HOLIDAY LEAVE**

Scholar Fellows are entitled to **compensated and/stipend paid holiday time on appropriate university-acknowledged holidays**. UMB's Office of Human Resource has the following on its website regarding holidays: <http://www.umaryland.edu/hrs/benefits/leave-programs>

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PAID LEAVE BENEFITS**

- No annual leave, sick leave, personal leave or holiday leave may be carried over to a new reappointment year. Leave does not accrue and any unused leave hours/days from one appointment year can/will not be carried over to a new or re-appointment year.
- Annual, personal and sick leave will be made available in total on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Scholar Fellow appointment and with reappointment annually.
- Unused annual, personal, sick leave will not be paid out when the Scholar Fellow appointment ends.
- Scholar Fellows are expected to follow the unit guidelines for requesting and reporting leave. Tracking leave is the responsibility of the unit in which the Scholar Fellow is appointed.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY (LOAWOP)**

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Scholar Fellows may request a Leave of Absence Without Pay (LOAWOP) normally not to exceed 16 weeks. In most situations, it is expected that the individual requesting the leave has been serving as a scholar fellow for at least 12-months to be eligible for a LOAWOP. A LOAWOP for a scholar fellow requires the approval of the scholar-fellow's supervisor, unit head (chair or director), Dean's Office and Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPA). The scholar fellow must make a written request to the supervisor including start date, end date and reason for request. If supported by the supervisor, a written request must then be forwarded to the Dean by the unit's Director/Chair. The request must include name of fellow, fellow's supervisor, start date, end date, reason for leave and indication of support. The Dean's Office will then seek Dean/Designee and UMB Vice President for Academic Affairs/Designee approval. If the Scholar Fellow has health insurance through UMB/payroll deduction, and is not on approved Family Medical Leave (FML) as described below, the fellow on LOAWOP would have to continue health insurance via COBRA or another healthcare option.

### **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FML)**

Scholar Fellows compensated via UMB payroll may be eligible for Family and Medical Leave (FML) if they have been employed with UMB, USM, or another State of Maryland Agency for at least one year and have worked at least 1,040 hours in the year immediately preceding the date of requested leave. Since leave for Scholar Fellows is granted at the beginning of an appointment and on the appointment anniversary and unused leave is not rolled over into successive years, Scholar Fellows using FML are not required to use their annual, holiday, sick, or personal paid leave during all or a majority of this time.

Scholar Fellows may be eligible to use up to 12 weeks of approved FML per calendar year, however after the initial 8 weeks, they will need to use their paid leave hours (annual, holiday, sick, or personal) to remain in paid status. For example: if a Scholar Fellow is approved for 12 weeks of FML, they would use the 8 weeks of guaranteed paid leave and the remaining 4 weeks would require either using their paid leave or they would be placed on leave without pay.

Note: While on approved FML, the employer (UMB) portion of premiums for health insurance (if the Scholar Fellow has health insurance through UMB/payroll deduction), will continue to be paid. If the Scholar Fellow will be unpaid for any portion of FML, the Scholar Fellow will be responsible for making direct-pay arrangements for their portion of the health insurance premiums.

### **PARENTAL LEAVE**

All Scholar Fellows within the School of Medicine who are eligible for parental leave will be granted a minimum of 8 weeks of paid "parental leave" (\*) per the recommendations of NIH. These 8 weeks of paid parental leave would run concurrently with any approved FML. Weeks 9-12 (the remaining 4 weeks after paid parental leave expires) would require either using paid leave or would require being placed on leave without pay. Scholar Fellows may use up to 60 days (12 weeks) of parental leave during a six-month period surrounding: the birth of a newborn; or the recent adoption of a child under the age of 6. Since leave for Scholar Fellows is granted on an annual basis and unused leave is not rolled over annually, Scholar Fellows using parental leave are not required to use their annual, holiday, sick, or personal paid leave during the first 8 weeks of paid "parental leave."

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Eligibility for Parental Leave: Scholar Fellows are eligible for parental leave after 6 months of UMB employment and written affirmation that the Scholar Fellow will be the child's primary caregiver during the parental leave period. For Scholar Fellows that are employed less than full time, the amount of approved parental leave will be prorated to match their FTE.

In order to be granted paid "parental leave", the Scholar Fellow must put a request in writing to the appropriate PI/Mentor or departmental authority and have that signed/approved. Copies of the approval should be given to the department payroll rep as well as the person in the department who tracks/audits/monitors all paid leave use for Scholar Fellows. A copy of the signed/approved request should also be sent to the SOM Dean's Office of Academic Administration for the Scholar Fellow's file.

*(\*) Note: "parental leave" as it relates to Scholar Fellows and this SOM policy is **not** referring to the UMB policy on Parental Leave that covers Faculty and Staff. Paid "parental leave" for Scholar Fellows will be tracked internally within departments in the same manner as all other paid leave use for purposes of payroll.*

*(\*\*) In order to be granted paid "parental leave", the Scholar Fellow must put a request in writing to the appropriate PI/Mentor or departmental authority and have that signed/approved. Copies of the approval should be given to the department payroll rep as well as the person in the department who tracks/audits/monitors all paid leave use for Scholar Fellows. A copy of the signed/approved request should also be sent to the SOM Dean's Office of Academic Administration for the Scholar Fellow's file.*

Scholar Fellows compensated via Accounts Payable who have been granted approval for a leave of absence for **Family and Medical Reasons, including Parental Leave**, from the Scholar Fellow's granting authority (usually NIH) may receive continued health insurance coverage for up to twelve (12) weeks. This paid leave will reduce the 12 weeks eligibility for continued health insurance coverage under the approved leave of absence period from the granting authority.

### **APPLYING FOR AWARDS**

The following policy applies to post-doctoral Scholar Fellow trainees ("postdocs") within SOM who wish to apply for extramural grants from NIH, other federal granting agencies, foundations, or industry.

#### **Purpose:**

SOM identifies grant preparation and development of an independent research program as two independent critical steps in the career development of a postdoctoral fellow as they progress to independent scholarship. SOM policy regarding postdoc grant submissions is designed to support postdoc education, and subsequent transition to faculty status, when appropriate, as defined by the postdoc's faculty mentor and Unit Head/Department Chair. The faculty mentor is generally defined as the faculty member whose grant pays the postdoc's salary and who is directing the postdoc's research effort.

#### **Policy regarding post-doctoral training or research grants:**

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With approval of their faculty supervisor-mentor and the departmental chair, UMSOM postdocs may apply for any grant that specifically identifies postdocs as candidates, such as postdoc fellowship training grants from federal (e.g. NRSA) and non-federal [e.g. professional subspecialty society] sources. Generally, these may be training grants that support salary, research grants that provide direct support for a particular research project, or hybrid grants (partial support for salary and research expenses) for which a faculty appointment is not a prerequisite.

Procedure regarding post-doctoral training or research grants:

Faculty mentor and department chair approval of a grant submission is required for training or research grant submission by a postdoc. All such awards to postdoc are administered by the faculty mentor's department. No special documentation of departmental approval or Dean's office waivers are necessary beyond standard routing procedures, unless they are required by the funding agency in the request for proposals. Each decision by UMSOM and UMB regarding grant submission is on a case by case basis.

Policy regarding Independent or transitional research grants submission by a postdoc:

The relevant department chair has final approval regarding whether to offer a faculty appointment to a postdoc as a prerequisite for the postdoc to submit an application for an independent research grant.

Procedures regarding Independent or transitional research grant submission by a postdoc:

The faculty mentor and the department chair must agree that the postdoc is ready to apply for mentored or independent faculty research funding, such as an NIH R (R03, R21, or R01), NIH K (K03, K08, K99), or an independent research project grant from a foundation (e.g., AHA or ACS faculty research grant) that requires a faculty appointment as a criterion for submission.

*The fact that a candidate may technically meet the qualifications to apply for external funding should not be interpreted as an entitlement to apply for the award as School/department resources may not be available and/or the department's research vision may not be compatible with the commitment to advance the candidate to faculty status.*

The candidate's career plan and proposed faculty title (e.g. Instructor, Research Associate, etc.) are discussed and agreed with the department chair, and a faculty mentoring plan developed. It is the department chair's discretion whether or not to support the postdoc's candidacy for a faculty appointment. Support must be conveyed in writing as a condition for routing and approval of the grant application by the SOM Research Office. In doing so, the chairperson stipulates the space, and institutional support and duration of support, including a recommendation for a faculty appointment. If departmental support for faculty appointment is conditional upon the outcome of the grant application process, this condition must be disclosed in writing to the postdoc and the candidate's faculty mentor.

Upon receipt of a Notice of Award or other advice indicating that the postdoc's independent grant application will be awarded, and as a prerequisite to routing of the grant award by SOM, a request for faculty appointment is routed through the Office of Academic Administration for approval through

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standard channels (FRIS routing and approval, position advertisement or waiver approval, etc; please refer to: [http://medschool.umaryland.edu/academicadmin/appt\\_full.asp](http://medschool.umaryland.edu/academicadmin/appt_full.asp)) Assuming that all required elements of the appointment are provided and meet with the Dean's approval, the School of Medicine will then support award acceptance, and route the award for campus approval through COEUS. Each decision by UMSOM and UMB regarding grant submission, award acceptance, and faculty appointment is considered on a case by case basis.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Orientation and Information: The Office of Postdoctoral Scholars (OPS) will provide an annual orientation of campus resources and access to websites that contain all relevant policies and procedures applicable to postdoctoral scholars.

Professional Development Opportunities: The Office of Postdoctoral Scholars (OPS) will support professional development opportunities for Scholar Fellows which may include: seminars, workshops and individual career and funding opportunity counseling sessions. More information is available at <http://postdoc.umaryland.edu>.

Information for Faculty Mentors and Staff: Faculty and staff who supervise and/ or administratively support Scholar Fellows must be familiar with the School/ University policies and procedures. More information is available at <http://postdoc.umaryland.edu>.

Faculty members are expected to make reasonable efforts to provide time for Scholar Fellows to engage in research career development provided that ample notice is given and that attendance will not excessively negatively impact the research mission.

The Office of Postdoctoral Scholars (OPS) recommends that all faculty mentors and postdoctoral scholars utilize a formal Career Development Plan. Form is located at: <http://postdoc.umaryland.edu>

### **GUIDANCE AND MEDIATION**

The Office of Postdoctoral Scholars is available to all postdoctoral scholars and faculty mentors to:

- Clarify policy questions and concerns
- Provide guidance and mediation on issues related to the Scholar Fellow's appointment

### **CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

All Scholar Fellows are expected to engage in the responsible conduct of research and to comply with the ethical precepts and codes of the academic profession, federal laws, State of Maryland laws, and University policies that govern those who use University resources. Violation of any of these constitutes the basis for disciplinary action.

### **TERMINATION**

Prior to the end-date of a Scholar Fellow's appointment, the Scholar Fellow may be terminated by the Unit Head (Dean, Chair, Director or designee), with or without cause. The Scholar Fellow and mentor or supervisor may consult with the Unit Head, school administration and Human Resource Services to determine how early termination may affect ongoing research, funding, Scholar Fellow employee benefits, and other issues.

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A. Termination without Cause:

Prior to the end-date of a Scholar Fellows appointment, the Scholar Fellow may be terminated by the Unit Head (Dean, Chair, Director, or designee) without cause for any reason. The Scholar Fellow must be provided with three months (90 days) of notice. During the three-month (90 day) notice period, the Scholar Fellow is expected to continue to perform duties, unless otherwise directed by the Unit Head or designee.

When a Scholar Fellow's appointment is to be terminated, the Chair/Director will take the following steps:

- Consult with the Office of Postdoctoral scholars regarding the proposed appointment to be terminated.
- Notify the Scholar Fellow researcher at least three months (90 days) in advance of the termination date.
- Provide the notification of termination to the Scholar Fellow both verbally and in writing; the 90 calendar days (notice period) will begin on the date of notification (note: the written notice of termination may not be backdated or retroactive).
- Continue to pay the Scholar Fellow's full stipend/salary for the duration of the notice period.

All official termination letters will be submitted by the PI for signature of the Chair/Director. The department administrator will then forward copies of the fully executed letter to the following:

- SOM Academic Administration Office
- International Scholars Office (if Scholar Fellow is on a visa)
- Office of Postdoctoral Scholars

It should be noted that the requirement of the three months (90 day) notice prior to termination is the minimum period of acceptable notice. Whenever feasible, PIs are encouraged to give Scholar Fellows as much notice as possible to assist in facilitating the Scholar Fellow's search for a new position.

B. Termination for Cause

Under certain circumstances, a Scholar Fellow's employment may be terminated immediately, without any period of notice. These circumstances may include but are not limited to the following and will require discussion between the PI and/or Chair/Director of the Department/Center/Program and the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars before action is taken. The ultimate decision to terminate a Scholar Fellow's appointment for cause is within the sole discretion of the SOM Dean's Office.

- i. Lack of adherence to SOM or UMB policies and procedures
- ii. Illegal Actions
- iii. Willful Neglect of Duty or Abandonment of Job
- iv. Insubordination or Serious Breach of Discipline

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- v. Failure to Meet Performance Expectations as Documented in a Performance Evaluation and/or Disciplinary Action
- vi. Medical Condition Causing Inability to Perform Essential Job Duties with Reasonable Accommodations Required by Law
- vii. Professional or Scholarly Misconduct
- viii. Gross Misconduct, Wantonly Offensive Behavior, or Serious Breach of Professional Behavior
- ix. Severe Safety Violations
- x. Failure to Accept Reassignment

## C. Termination for Financial Exigency

In the event of the sudden or unexpected suspension or termination of a grant or contract, termination of the Scholar-Fellow's employment may be done with less than 90 days' notice, where the University receives less than 90 days' notice of the loss of funds. Termination for financial exigency requires pre-approval by the SOM Dean's Office before notice is given to the fellow.

## **GRIEVANCES**

The SOM is committed to providing an appropriate professional and educational environment for Scholar Fellows. To this end, the SOM has adopted a grievance policy specific to Scholar Fellows in order to ensure that certain matters (specifically enumerated below) are dealt with fairly and expeditiously.

### **Informal Resolutions**

It is strongly encouraged that all parties concerned make serious attempts to resolve disputes informally. This is particularly true for disputes that occur in a relationship of great importance, such as that between a Scholar Fellow and mentor. UMB and the School of Medicine have several resources available to assist Fellows in the informal resolution of problems. Confidential resources include: The [Office of Postdoctoral Scholars](#), the [SOM Human Resources Office](#), the [UMB Office of the Ombuds](#), and [UMB Mediation Services](#). Further information about these resources is available below. It is also recommended that Postdoctoral Scholars consider talking with a trusted faculty member if that would be helpful and appropriate.

- **Office of Postdoctoral Scholars** You can contact the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars for (Jennifer Aumiller, Director [jaumiller@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:jaumiller@som.umaryland.edu) and/or Renee Cockerham, Program Manager [rcockerham@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:rcockerham@som.umaryland.edu)) The Office of Postdoctoral Scholars will provide consultation regarding the available methods to resolve the issue underlying the complaint and may recommend escalating the matter through formal reporting mechanisms.
- **University of Maryland Office of the Ombuds** The Office of the Ombuds is another confidential place to go with concerns and questions. You can find more information about the UMB Ombuds Office here: <https://www.umaryland.edu/ombuds/what-to-expect/>

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- **UMB Workplace Mediation Services** Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process to address conflicts. In mediation, parties have a private conversation in an informal setting that is facilitated by a trained, neutral mediator. Each party has an opportunity to discuss what is concerning them, what is important to them, and to hear the other person's point of view. The mediator assists the parties in clarifying issues, exploring interests, and generating solutions that are acceptable to all participants. You can find more information about the UMB Workplace Mediation Services here: <https://www.umaryland.edu/mediation/>
- **UMB Employee Assistance Program** The Employee Assistance Program is a free, confidential counseling and referral service available to all employees and their family members. For more information about the Employee Assistance Program, please see here: <https://umb-eap.org/>

## Formal Resources Outside of Scope of the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars

a)

### *UMB Hotline*

*Scholar Fellows may report concerns anonymously by using the [UMB hotline](#). This goes through the UMB campus and may take time for due process, but anonymous feedback and follow-up is possible. Concerns about research misconduct, Title IX violations and discrimination may be reported to the UMB hotline as well. The Hotline is managed by the Office of Accountability & Compliance.*

**Title IX** The University of Maryland, Baltimore is committed to fostering an environment in which its students, faculty, and staff are free from sexual harassment and violence or illegal discriminatory practices. These behaviors impede learning and positive working conditions and, therefore, are not tolerated. For more information on how to report, please see:

<https://www.umaryland.edu/oac/report-a-concern/report-sexual-misconduct/>

**Research Misconduct** University policy defines research misconduct as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting research results. For more information see: <https://www.umaryland.edu/oac/areas-of-responsibility/research-integrity-office/research-misconduct/> You can submit a report through the UMB hotline ([hotline link](#) or 866-594-5220) You can contact Stephan Vigues, Research Integrity Officer ([svigues@umaryland.edu](mailto:svigues@umaryland.edu) or 410-706-0149).

**Authorship Disputes:** For more information see: <https://www.umaryland.edu/policies-and-procedures/library/academic-affairs/policies/iii-111d.php>

**Bias and Discrimination:** The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental disability, marital status, protected veteran's status, or age in its programs and activities. For more information see: <https://www.umaryland.edu/non-discrimination/>

## Grievance Process with the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars

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The SOM is committed to providing an appropriate professional and educational environment for Scholar Fellows. To this end, the SOM has adopted a grievance policy specific to Scholar Fellows to ensure that certain matters (enumerated below) are dealt with fairly and expeditiously. This grievance process is only intended for scholar fellows to resolve disputes with their primary faculty mentor.

## **Overview of Scholar Fellow Grievance Policy**

This policy is to be used when a Scholar Fellow has concerns regarding:

- Workload volume and scheduling
- Inappropriate work assignments
- Non-renewal or termination of an appointment for improper reasons including potential retaliation for filing a good-faith grievance

The decision whether to renew an appointment or terminate an appointment early is at the discretion of the supervising faculty member and is not subject to this grievance process. However, as noted above, there are two exceptions: a grievance alleging arbitrary or capricious reasons for non-renewal/termination or violations of the University's prohibition on retaliation based on the filing of a grievance.

Alternate policies exist if a Scholar Fellow wishes to file a grievance regarding: alleged harassment or discrimination based on sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, color, national origin, religion, age, marital status, genetic information or other protected status, research misconduct, or authorship disputes. These are noted in the Formal Resources Outside of the Scope of the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars Grievance Process section: <https://www.umaryland.edu/oac/oac-services/>

## **PROCEDURE FOR FILING A GRIEVANCE**

### **1. Attempt an Informal resolution.**

A Scholar Fellow who has concerns about a matter relating to their appointment must first attempt to resolve concerns informally with the appropriate mentor(s), supervisor(s), and/or department or unit head.

### **2. Appeal of informal determination.**

If the concern is not resolved to the Scholar Fellow's satisfaction through the informal process, the Fellow may appeal the outcome by submitting a formal written grievance as detailed below.

### **3. Procedure for filing a formal written grievance.**

A. The Scholar Fellow must submit a written and signed statement of the alleged grievance to the Assistant Dean of the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars or their designee. The written grievance must be received within 30 business days following the informal resolution process. Under exceptional circumstances, the time for filing may be extended at the discretion of the Assistant Dean.

B. The written grievance must: i) Contain a clear description of the facts giving rise to the grievance and any additional evidence the Scholar Fellow believes is relevant to the matter, and ii) set forth the desired resolution.

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## **Procedure for resolving a formal written grievance**

1. Upon receipt of formal written grievance, the Assistant Dean or designee will solicit a written response from the faculty mentor of the Scholar Fellow.
2. The Assistant Dean along with the Director and Program Manager of the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars may choose to review and provide a decision regarding the grievance themselves; or they may select an appropriate panel of individuals to review the grievance and make a recommendation to the Assistant Dean.
3. If the Assistant Dean chooses to appoint a panel, the following procedures will apply:
  - i) The panel will consist of the Director and Program Manager of the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars, at least one Graduate School faculty member (one of whom shall chair the panel) and one Scholar Fellow. Each panel member shall be familiar with the Scholar Fellow's research area but may not be from the same lab or department.
  - ii) Either party involved in the grievance (complainant and respondent) may request, in writing, to the Assistant Dean that a panel member be removed based on a potential conflict of interest. The decision to remove a panel member is solely within the discretion of the Assistant Dean.
  - iii) The Assistant Dean or designee will provide the panel with a copy of the formal written grievance and the written response of the mentor.
  - iv) If the panel so chooses, it may ask questions of the Scholar Fellow, the faculty mentor, and other relevant parties.
  - v) Participants may seek advice from legal counsel or other advisors. An attorney or advisor may provide a written submission on behalf of a party but otherwise may not participate in this process.
  - vi) Formal rules of evidence do not apply.
4. Upon conclusion of its investigation, the panel shall provide the Assistant Dean with a written report containing a statement of the issues, the panel's findings of fact, the relevant policy provisions, the panel's conclusions regarding the merits of the grievance, and a recommended disposition of the grievance, including any suggested resolutions.
5. The Assistant Dean will carefully review the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the panel and will have the final decision regarding the outcome of the grievance. The Assistant Dean will take necessary steps to implement any accepted resolutions.
6. The Assistant Dean will provide their final decision in writing and, where appropriate, indicate the appropriate recommended resolution(s)/action(s) to the Scholar Fellow, the faculty mentor, department chair, the UMSOM Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development, Office of Accountability and Compliance as well as any other relevant parties. In most cases, this will be done within 30 business days of receipt of the formal written grievance. The time may be extended at the discretion of the Assistant Dean.
7. The decision of the Assistant Dean regarding the merits of a grievance is final and cannot be appealed.

## **APPEAL OF TERMINATION**

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In the event the Scholar Fellow believes a termination decision was made for an improper reason, the Scholar Fellow may appeal to the Dean of the school in writing. An appeal will not affect the effective date of termination unless the Dean decides otherwise for good cause shown. The Dean, in consultation with the Senior Vice President, and Chief Academic and Research Officer will determine and implement the school or campus due process procedure applicable to the appeal.