

POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLAR APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

For Faculty Members and Administration

The following checklist has been designed to help faculty members learn and implement procedures for recruiting and appointing Postdoctoral Scholars at Western. Your specific departments/units may have additional requirements but in general you will need to do the following to ensure a smooth appointment process occurs.

The University defines a Postdoctoral Scholar as an individual who meets the following criteria:

- the individual has received their doctoral degree within five years;
- the individual holds a postdoctoral appointment that is time limited, for a period of up to four years (i.e., counted from the first appointment at Western), with the possibility of a one-year renewal (for a maximum length of five years);
- the appointment involves full-time research, scholarship, and creative activity;
- the individual is encouraged and expected to publish and disseminate their research during the period of the appointment; and
- the individual will work independently in association with a faculty mentor.

The Search

In some cases you may be approached by a potential scholar whose interests align with your own. In other cases, you may wish to advertise for a postdoctoral scholar who will bring a specific skillset to your research group, or who will work on a predefined project.

When creating a job description, consider the following:

- What skills are necessary/desirable?
- What level of compensation and duration of appointment can you commit to? For Postdoctoral Associates (PDAs), include details about benefits as per Article 31 (12.06) of the Postdoctoral Associates Collective Agreement in the job posting.
- What is your recruitment plan? Where will you advertise? Are there communication opportunities that will allow you to reach a broader/more diverse audience? Have you considered equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization (EDID) in your approach? Remember to send the job posting to mharmos@uwo.ca and use your own professional network to advertise.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Researcher Toolbox – support for hiring and fulfilling supervisory responsibilities.

Research Finance – financial management of grants and contracts, and use of grant funds.

Equity and Human Rights Services – the University's discrimination and harassment policies, employment equity and diversity, and other human rights-related issues.

The Hiring Process

When interviewing candidates be prepared to discuss the following:

- Compensation: Postdoctoral Associates are governed by a [Collective Agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada](#) (effective January 1, 2025 the minimum salary is \$40,845.00, and the benefit recover rate is 14% of employment earnings).
- Time off (holidays, sick days): Postdoctoral Fellows are considered trainees. As per the Canada Revenue Agency, the nature of this relationship is not considered employment and therefore there is no minimum vacation pay nor statutory benefits to be paid by the individual or the University.
- Travel costs or moving expenses.
- Teaching and supervisory opportunities.

Meet and interview the candidate – You will likely choose to interview qualified candidates via Skype, Zoom, etc. This will often be followed by a one-on-one interview, a presentation on current research, and an opportunity for interaction with members of the lab/department/unit/faculty.

Take the opportunity to describe your lab/research environment, including your expectations of the role, policy on authorship, policy on scholarly independence, etc.

When checking references, ask questions regarding the candidate's attention to detail, perseverance, creativity, originality, commitments, teamwork, and address any concerns based on the candidate's CV.

NOTE - Hiring international postdoctoral scholars can take up to six months.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Western Human Resources – assistance with your planning and hiring.

Faculty Research Officers/Facilitators – Faculty-based grant application support and information on grant policies and procedures.

Completing the Appointment Process

Completing the appointment process includes the following steps:

- A meeting at the commencement of the appointment to discuss the research expectations, including the associated duties and responsibilities and the professional development goals, using the Individual Development Plan (IDP), as per the Collective Agreement (section 12.09). Provide the PDA with a written record of the discussion within seven days of the meeting.
- The postdoctoral scholar must initiate their appointment by completing the Appointment Form online: <http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral/scholarappointment/>.
- Upon completing the form, you will be alerted of this proposed appointment via email, and be prompted to confirm additional details (duration, compensation etc.).
- The postdoctoral scholar will subsequently receive an email summarizing the details of the proposed appointment and requesting confirmation.
- Based on the information provided, a Postdoctoral Fellow Agreement or Letter of Appointment will be generated depending upon the nature of the appointment. This document must be generated and signed by both parties prior to the commencement of the appointment.
- Once the appointment letter has been signed, the scholar must email mharmos@uwo.ca to arrange an intake meeting with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (IGAB 1N07). The scholar must bring the signed agreement or letter, proof of PhD degree, individual development plan and, if applicable, Canadian Work Permit to this meeting.
- The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will validate and forward the appointment package and supporting documents to Human Resources for processing.

NOTE - Most of the services available to postdoctoral scholars at Western cannot be accessed until this entire process is completed.

ONLINE RESOURCES

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – information and assistance on processes and procedures for postdoctoral scholars.

First Day of Postdoctoral Scholar Arrival at Western

If the appointments process described above has not yet been completed, this should take priority upon arrival at Western. Once this process has been completed, a Western ID can be obtained from Western Technology Services, a staff ID card can be generated at the Student Services Building, and necessities like email, swipe card access, facility keys, etc. can be established/obtained.

NOTE: these steps occur sequentially, and can take one-to-two weeks depending on when the appointments process was initiated/completed.

You should take an opportunity to meet with and orient the postdoctoral scholar, including:

- An orientation to campus and city services that may be useful.
- A discussion of expectations.
- An introduction to the people they will be collaborating with.
- An introduction to the facilities they will be using.
- A discussion about any departmental or research-specific requirements to the scholar.

Tasks to be completed within the First Month of the appointment

- Complete all health and safety and orientation training as required by you and your department.
<https://www.uwo.ca/hr/learning/required/index.html>
- Address any additional skills training and professional development necessary to excel.
- Establish a regular meeting schedule to create and foster a strong research and development plan to assess important aspects of the postdoctoral scholar's progress.
- Discuss opportunities to seek advice and collaborative opportunities from other faculty members/labs/units.
- Provide guidance on resources at Western that will make the most of their postdoctoral experience.
- Encourage the postdoctoral scholar to play an active role in seeking career and research advice, both from you and from their mentors.

ONLINE RESOURCES

National Postdoctoral Association – institutional guide to postdoc mentorship and conferences.

References

"Staffing Your Laboratory" chapter from Making the Right Moves: a practical guide to scientific management for postdocs and new faculty, Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Burroughs Wellcome Fund: <http://www.hhmi.org/resources/labmanagement/moves.html>

Staffing the Lab: Perspectives from both sides of the bench, Burroughs Wellcome Fund: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2544488/Staffing-the-Lab-Perspectives-from-Both-Sides-of-the-Bench>