

## **DEFINITIONS FOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AND RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS**

**Research Associate - (Job Code 098063)** – Must have a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate degree in specific field. One year experience in research specialization. Expected to be “long-term or “career” employee, rather than a “temporary” appointment (but there is no security of employment, and like other staff members the individual may be terminated.) Makes a career of assisting faculty in the faculty member’s research – not doing own research. Treated as regular benefits eligible staff employee, and follows all staff employee policies and procedures. Must be paid at least the minimum salary required for exempt employees under state law. Object code is subject to fringe benefits.

**Senior Research Associate - (Job Code 098060)** – Must have a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate degree in specific field. Three years experience in research specialization. Serves as a senior researcher with expertise in field. More professional and distinct than Research Associate. Employee pursues further research. Must be paid at least the minimum salary required for exempt employees under state law. Object code is subject to fringe benefits.

**Research Scientist – (Job Code 098028)** – Must have a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate degree in specific field. Five years experience in research specialization. Serves as a key research scientist who is recognized as a national authority on topics in specialized field. Acts more independently and with a greater degree of freedom than senior research associate. The research is more specialized and complex than at the senior research level requiring a greater degree of expertise. Employee may not be interested in pursuing a faculty appointment at the University. Must be paid at least the minimum salary required for exempt employees under state law. Object code is subject to fringe benefits.

**Postdoctoral Research Associate – (Job Code 098067)** – Must have a Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree in an appropriate field within five years of initial appointment. Postdoctoral Research Associates are “research trainees” for the purpose of enhancing and developing research competencies. Temporary, fixed-term employee. Appointment is for a year at a time, and may be renewed on a yearly basis, up to a maximum of five years on the recommendation of the faculty mentor and at the discretion of the dean. Treated as regular benefits eligible staff employee, except for tuition assistance.

Follows all staff employee policies and procedures. Postdoctoral Research Associates are trainees and must be supported by grants and contracts, department or school funds, or external fellowships, or by a combination of these sources. Postdoctoral Research Associates are normally appointed at 100% time. If an appointment is to be made for a lesser percentage, a statement clarifying the arrangement or describing the additional support from other sources should be included in the appointment papers, and is subject to approval by the Vice Provost for Research Advancement

All Postdoctoral Research Associates, regardless of their source of funding, must be paid at least the minimum salary required for exempt employees. In addition, **Postdoctoral Research Associates must be paid the minimum salary designated for all Postdoctoral Scholars set by the university.** Individual schools are permitted to set higher minimum salaries to reflect market conditions within their individual disciplines. Salaries may exceed the university Postdoctoral Scholars minimum as a reflection of the experience and talent of postdoctoral scholars.

Appointment is not part of any clinical (patient care) training program. Works under the oversight of a senior scholar who is the faculty mentor or under oversight by the department. Does not accrue eligibility toward sabbatical leave.

May not teach more than four courses while at USC unless special permission is obtained from Provost and may never teach more than one course in a semester.

Eligible to serve as Co-Principal Investigators on grant applications, but may not be Principal Investigators unless a special waiver and approval is granted upon recommendation by department and approval of the appropriate dean.

**Any movement from a Postdoctoral Research Associate position to a permanent staff position requires posting the position.**

Object code is subject to fringe benefits.

**Postdoctoral Fellow – (Job Code 098203)** – Fellow must have received a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate degree in an appropriate field within five years of initial appointment. Not an employee, but registered as a non-matriculated, non-degree seeking limited status student of the University. Appointment is minimum of six months, and is renewable annually, up to a maximum of five years on the recommendation of the faculty mentor and at the discretion of the dean. No services can be required of fellows by virtue of their appointment and their stipends do not constitute payment for services rendered. Eligible for student benefits. No tuition assistance. Obligated to abide by University policies.

**The Postdoctoral Fellow category shall only be used when student status is an expectation of the organization that sponsors the postdoctoral appointment. To utilize this category, evidence of this restriction must be provided to the Vice Provost for Research Advancement, who must approve all such appointments.**

All Postdoctoral Fellows, regardless of their source of funding, must be paid at least the minimum salary required for exempt employees. In addition, **Postdoctoral Fellows must be paid the minimum salary designated for all Postdoctoral Fellows set by the university.** Individual schools are permitted to set higher minimum salaries to reflect market conditions within their individual disciplines. Salaries may exceed the university Postdoctoral Scholars minimum as a reflection of the experience and talent of postdoctoral scholars.

The fellow category may not be used for new and renewed postdoctoral fellow appointments funded by unrestricted sources. Funds for postdoctoral fellowships are provided from a variety of sources, including private donors, foundations, corporations, and government agencies (e.g., external training grants such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health). Because the terms and conditions of fellowships vary widely, each must be considered on an individual basis.

The University may supplement the fellowship stipend or provide additional support to offset the cost of living. Supplementation cannot require additional effort from the fellow trainee. No funds from other Federal agencies may be used for supplementation unless specifically authorized by the awarding Federal Agency. If the University supplements the amount provided by the funding agency with “stipends,” then the University cannot ask more effort from the fellow. (See Postdoctoral Fellow-Teaching Associate or Research Assistant regarding compensation supplementation).

Appointment is not part of any clinical (patient care) training program. Must be registered each semester while in residence. Works under the oversight of a senior scholar who is the faculty mentor or under oversight provided by the department. Supported by external training grants or with USC or external stipends. Cannot be funded with federally sponsored research funds. International Fulbright Scholars are classified as Postdoctoral Fellows to be consistent with J-1 visa immigration status (i.e., they can not be regularly employed), but may work in a part-time capacity and only on the University campus. Object code is not subject to fringe.

**Postdoctoral Fellow – Teaching Associate – (Job Code 098211) or Postdoctoral Fellow-Research Assistant – (Job Code 098215)** – Must meet all Postdoctoral Fellow requirements. Not an employee, but registered as a non-matriculated, non-degree seeking limited status student of the University. Obligated to abide by University policies.

A Postdoctoral Fellow may, by serving as teaching associate or research assistant, receive compensation supplementation under certain conditions as specified by the agency providing the trainee fellowship. For example, see Compensation Supplementation conditions under NIH and NSF awards:

1. Compensation Supplementation under NIH awards: An institution may provide additional funds to a trainee in the form of compensation (as salary) for services such as teaching or serving as a research assistant. A trainee may receive compensation for services as a research assistant or in some other position on a Federal research grant, including a DHHS research grant. However, compensated services should occur on a limited, part-time basis apart from the normal research training activities, which require a minimum of 40 hours per week. In addition, compensation may not be paid from a research grant supporting the research training experience. [Salary supplementation should not exceed 10-20 hours per week of compensated work. If a fellow is granted the opportunity to teach a course it is necessary to translate the fellow’s teaching effort in terms of hours per week.]
2. Compensation Supplementation under NSF awards: There is no flexibility for salary supplementation: “...and [fellows] are expected to devote themselves full time to the fellowship activities for the duration of the fellowship.” [Unlike, NIH terms and conditions, NSF does not address supplementation at all. Apparently,

NSF does not allow compensation supplementation without the explicit permission from the NSF research-program manager.]

A Teaching Associate at USC may teach no more than one course per academic year and no more than four courses while at USC. The Postdoctoral Fellow-Teaching Associate and Postdoctoral Fellow-Research Assistant job codes are utilized for informational, record keeping, and tracking purposes.

Object codes are subject to a reduced fringe rate.

**Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow – (Job Code 098071)** – Must have received a Ph.D. degree or equivalent in an appropriate field. A temporary, fixed-term employee of the University. If teaching will be a significant component of a Postdoctoral Scholar's activity, Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow is the preferred category of appointment. Teaching is permitted up to 50% of total effort, not to exceed instruction in three courses per year. Eligible for benefits provided University staff employees, with the exception of tuition assistance benefit. Not part of clinical (patient care) training programs. Works under oversight of a more senior scholar who is the faculty mentor. Obligated to abide by University policies.

**Appointed for a period of at least one and no more than two years, without possibility of extension.** Appointed by the dean of a school on the nomination of a department on the basis of (1) distinguished academic record and high potential for securing a tenure-track job, (2) the individual's need for teaching experience, (3) the department's need to have specific courses taught, and (4) the availability of a mentor, who was not the Ph.D. advisor, and a strategy for mentorship leading to a tenure-track appointment.

All Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows, regardless of their source of funding, must be paid at least the minimum salary required for exempt employees. In addition, **Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows must be paid the minimum salary designated for all Postdoctoral Scholars set by the university.** Individual schools are permitted to set higher minimum salaries to reflect market conditions within their individual disciplines. Salaries may exceed the university Postdoctoral Scholars minimum as a reflection of the experience and talent of postdoctoral scholars.

Since Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows are staff and not faculty members, they do not accrue eligibility toward sabbatical leave. May be supported on internal funds or on grants. However, grant funding can only be used to compensate research effort occurring during fellowship, unless the funder explicitly permits compensation for teaching activity.

Eligible to serve as Co-Principal Investigators on grant applications, but may not be Principal Investigators unless a specific waiver and approval is granted upon recommendation by the department and approval of the appropriate dean of the school.

Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows may not accept any contemporaneous employment, either within or outside the University.

Object code is subject to fringe benefits.

The University, through the Office of Research Advancement, shall annually set minimum compensation for all categories of postdoctoral scholars.

**Fellowship Holder – (Job Code 032020)** – Must have appropriate credentials for field. Individual must have a distinguished career in industry, government, etc. Non-employee, non-benefits eligible. Not required to register as a student. Fellowship holders are not degree candidates and no services can be required of them by virtue of their appointment and their stipends do not constitute payment for services rendered. No term limit except as imposed by funding agency. Grant specified appointments, either federally or non-federally. May not be part of any clinical (patient care) training program. Obligated to abide by University policies. Object code is not subject to fringe.