

Purpose

Postdoctoral Scholar appointment policies are codified in the [Academic Personnel Manual section 390](#). Regarding length of service, the APM states that:

“The total duration of an individual’s postdoctoral service may not exceed five years, including postdoctoral service at other institutions. By exception, the Chancellor may grant an extension not to exceed a sixth year.” (APM 390-17b)

The Chancellor has delegated the authority to administer postdoctoral scholar appointments to the Dean of Graduate Studies via an official Delegation of Authority ([UCD DA 810](#)). This policy describes the five year appointment limitation and the process for requesting an exception for appointment to a sixth year.

Appointments that count towards the five-year limitation

- Researcher, Postdoctoral Scholar, Postdoctoral Employee, Postdoctoral Fellow, or Postdoctoral Trainee
- Postdoctoral experience in other educational or research institutions
- Mentored postdoctoral experience in industry
- Foreign research experience if similar to U.S. postdoctoral experience
- Other mentored postdoctoral research experience

Appointments that do not count towards the five-year limitation

- Residencies
- Clinical fellow appointments with modest or no research training component
- Appointments in industry which are not mentored
- Non-academic staff appointments

Exceptions

Requests for exceptions beyond the fifth year will be considered if the postdoctoral scholar:

- Has a postdoctoral fellowship that was awarded through a sixth year
- Needs a few additional months beyond the fifth year to complete a research project
- Has accepted a permanent position at another institution that begins a few additional months beyond the fifth year
- Is changing fields/disciplines which requires retraining
- Has five or more years of postdoctoral experience, but is returning from a non-academic/non-research position or from full-time parenting, and needs research retraining
- Suffered a hardship as the result of personal circumstances which are beyond the postdoctoral scholar's control which impacted his/her postdoctoral training progress (e.g., a death in the family which delayed completion of the research training)
- Other well-justified circumstances when the additional training time would be highly beneficial to the scholar

Requests for exceptions should be submitted for review and approval first to the hiring department and then to the Associate Dean for Programs in Graduate Studies for final approval.