

## **Policy Recommendation on the Annual Review and Evaluation of Progress for Postdoctoral Fellows and Scholars**

In order to achieve excellence in postdoctoral training and mentoring within the School of Graduate Studies at Case Western Reserve University, an annual review of progress is required for every postdoctoral fellow (PF) and postdoctoral scholar (PS). This review has two purposes: i) to support mentoring of PFs and PSs by providing regular and timely feedback that will enhance their success at CWRU including their career goals and professional development, and ii) to evaluate training progress with the ultimate goal of transitioning to their next career position. To achieve these goals, the review should evaluate the previous year's progress, detail the trainee's strengths and areas that need improvement, and make recommendations for future action to promote progress towards achieving career goals.

Each school or department shall develop its own annual review format and timing within these minimal guidelines:

(1) Every PF and PS will submit an annual progress report to their program, department, or school. The report should describe progress in the past year, future plans, and career goals as well as plans and progress in the area of professional development. Best Practices include a clear set of first-year expectations and milestones that should be provided to the PF or PS upon their initial appointment.

(2) The annual review is the primary responsibility of the principal investigator (PI) or primary research mentor. In cases where the position does not involve research, then a supervisor or other person(s) in the best position to evaluate should conduct the review. In cases of joint appointments, all parties should be involved in the review. It is considered "Best Practices" that at least one additional person be included in the review process such as a faculty advisor, a member of the PF/PS mentoring team, a graduate program director, a collaborator, a department Chair, a Center Director, or other appropriate individual.

(3) The final evaluation shall be communicated to the PF or PS in a written report that details the trainee's current status in the laboratory, training progress, career goals and professional development, and makes concrete suggestions for future actions. Communication should include discussion between trainee and PI.

(4) The annual review process is to be completed 3 months prior to re-appointment or completion of the postdoctoral appointment period. Completion of this step is required for the annual re-appointment. A completed, signed copy of the annual review form is required as part of the re-appointment process. The PD/PF and mentor should work closely with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs during this process.

(5) PFs or PSs may not be dismissed from a laboratory without a 90-day notice. The appointment of a PS or PF may be terminated immediately only for just cause. Examples of just cause include grave misconduct or serious neglect of professional responsibilities.

If a department or program already has an annual review policy in place, the program shall inform the School of Graduate Studies and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs of what form that

review takes. For programs that do not have an annual review policy, the School of Graduate Studies and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs requests that they create an annual review policy within one year of the adoption of this policy by Case Western Reserve University. This policy does not mandate the use of one review format. Examples of existing formats for review of progress will be posted on the Graduate Studies and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs website. For some programs, the annual report can be coordinated with other reporting needs (e.g. NIH grants) so as to eliminate redundancy in reporting for the PF or PS.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the School of Graduate Studies and Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. Copies of an individual Postdoctoral Fellow's or Postdoctoral Scholar's annual review that are submitted during the re-appointment or termination process will be on file in the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

The School of Graduate Studies shall conduct a process evaluation two years after implementation of this policy.

Proposed Policy:

# Annual Review of Postdoctoral Scholars and Postdoctoral Fellows

Developed and approved by Faculty Senate Committee  
on Graduate Studies

February 3, 2016



# The Invisible Man

(Gregory A. Petsko, Weill Cornell MC)

- only stage of education/training of scientist that is defined by the period of time and not the position itself
- No agreed upon specific title....  
no agreed upon set of goals or outcomes
- PFs and PSs...not students, not faculty, not staff  
transient training position
- Not always afforded the same/similar  
fundamental employee rights or protections

# Rationale

- To support mentoring of PFs and PSs in order to enhance success at CWRU
- To clarify both the mentor's and PF/PS's expectations
- To promote professional development and transitioning to their next career stage
- To provide regular and timely substantive feedback on their research progress and career trajectory

# Main Points

- every PF and PS will submit an annual progress report
- primary responsibility of the principal investigator or research mentor
- communicated to the PF or PS in a written report – face to face
- required for the annual re-appointment – should be done 3 months prior
- 90 day notice of termination of position – unless grave misconduct/neglect

# PD Termination Policies at other Institutions

- Duke University - 90 days
- Stanford - early termination 30-60 days notice
- Ohio State - at least 30 days...recommend 90 days especially for visas
- Einstein - minimum 60 days
- Penn - 3 months written notice
- Yale - if funding lost, 3 months written notice
- Emory – poor performance or lack of funding – 90 days
- Brigham and Womens - lack of funding, 90 days notice
- Intramural NIH research - approximately 11 to 12 months