



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

**Approved by:** Faculty Senate

**Effective Date:** February 2, 2015

**Responsible Official:** Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

**Responsible University Office:** Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

**Revision History:** February 2015, July 2021

**Related legislation and University Policies:** Postdoc Unsatisfactory Performance and Corrective Action Policy

**Review Period:** 5 years

**Date of Last Review:** July 1, 2021

**Relates to:** Postdoctoral Scholar and Postdoctoral Fellows

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. 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.