

---

## Guidance on Mentorship and Supervision of Postdocs

### I. Purpose

This document is intended to provide guidance, support, and direction to PIs, supervisors, and mentors of Postdoctoral Scholar appointees (often referred to as just “postdocs”) serving at UC Riverside. It outlines best practices for both successful mentorship and supervision. In addition, it also identifies important university policies that must be adhered to.

As a preface, it is important to note the difference between mentorship and supervision. Supervision typically implies an *employer-employee relationship*, and like a TA or graduate student researcher, your supervisory relationship with the postdoc may involve significant direction and management, as well as evaluation of their performance. Serving as a supervisor for any employee is a formalized role, and while some “mentoring” can happen in this vertical, more hierarchical relationship, the nature of a mentoring relationship is something a bit different: not directing, but guiding; not managing, but facilitating; not telling, but asking. This is an especially important distinction for your relationship with your postdoc; they are less in the apprentice stage than graduate students, closer to peers and colleagues, but still needing guidance about and opportunities for their specific and individual growth and development. In many important ways, this is a *partnership* between you and your postdoc wherein you each have rights and responsibilities.

This document assumes you will enter into both mentorship and supervision roles with your postdoc, and varyingly addresses the opportunities and requirements of each.

Lastly, this document contains an appendix with important policy links and other resources for quick reference. The link to the UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement (union contract) for the Postdoctoral Scholars (PX) unit is also included within.

## **II. Table of Contents**

- I. Purpose
- II. Table of Contents
- III. Hiring Right
  - a. *Scope of Roles*
  - b. *Recruitment and Equal Opportunity*
  - c. *Interviewing and Selecting*
- IV. Getting Started
  - a. *Setting Expectations about the Role*
    - i. *Job Duties and Work Expectations*
    - ii. *Mentoring Plans*
  - b. *The Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Skills Self-Assessments*
  - c. *Unit Introductions and Orientations*
- V. Supervision and Mentorship
  - a. *Communication*
    - i. *1:1 Meetings*
    - ii. *Communication Styles*
  - b. *Progress and Performance Management*
    - i. *Formal Intervention*
  - c. *Annual Progress Assessment*
  - d. *Professional Development*
    - i. *Mentoring Network Mapping*
  - e. *Conflict Prevention and Resolution*
    - i. *General Conflict*
    - ii. *Preventing Authorship Disputes*
- VI. Decisions on Reappointment
- VII. Conclusion and Resources
- VIII. Appendix – Resources List

---

### III. Hiring Right

#### *Scope of Roles*

A postdoc appointment is a moderately-independent, mentored research role for recently-graduated PhD students. Under a mentor's tutelage, a postdoc receives advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue their chosen career path. Under this scope, a postdoc can provide a wide range of support and collaboration in a lab or on a project. But as a PI, you should not hire a postdoc title just because you want a broad-scope researcher. When you hire a postdoc, it must be a true postdoc role, with the dedication to mentorship and training that go along with it.

Before hiring a postdoc, the first step is to consider what the needs of your lab or project are. As mentioned above, taking on a Postdoc is a responsibility with additional mentoring and training commitments. When determining what type of research personnel to hire, consider the wide scope of research roles that may be better suited to the work that needs to be accomplished:

- Staff Roles (Lab Assistant and SRA) – Non-academic lab employees that assist in performing experiments and the (non-personnel) management of a lab, but do not directly participate in the direction of the research or publication of results.
- Jr. Specialist – Academic role that requires only a bachelor's degree or equivalent research experience. These roles may support research in similar ways to Lab Assistants or SRAs, but as academics, also participate in shaping the research and publication of results.
- Specialist Series – Academic research role that provides their specialized expertise for a research project or lab. Examples of Specialists may be a statistician for data analysis, or someone knowledgeable on a specific type of research approach or experiment procedure.
- Project Scientist Series – The Project Scientist series is the closest to the Postdoc in terms of scope of role within the lab. They generally are not PIs, but operate with moderate independence to facilitate the research for the lab or project. They generally have broad knowledge on the field of study (as compared to the Specialist), but do not operate at the same level of independence as a Professional Researcher.
- Professional Researcher Series – Operating at the same level of research independence and experience as Senate Faculty (i.e. the Professor Series), the Professional Researcher role is often a PI or Co-PI, or may be a high-level contributor to the project.

The academic titles listed above are governed by UCR policy, and further information about their scope and use can be found here: <https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/non-senate-call-ucr-procedures>. For use of the staff roles, please reach out to your local Human Resources contact.

### *Recruitment and Equal Opportunity*

Once you have determined the need for a Postdoc role, the recruitment process can begin. When implementing a postdoc recruitment, you should reach out to your department staff or the Dean's Office Academic Personnel team, who will partner with you through the process.

It is important to allow for as large a candidate pool as possible to find the best possible appointee. As such, you should not solely be looking for candidates from one particular geographic area or background.

UCR is a world-class research university with an exceptionally diverse community, and the University of California overall is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants must receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Further information on this is contained within [UCR's academic hiring policies](#) (Academic Hiring Toolkit and Affirmative Action Guidelines). These guidelines are designed to conform to applicable laws and UC policies, and seek to advance UCR's unequivocal commitment to diversity and equality of employment opportunities.

### *Interviewing and Selecting*

Once your pool is established, selecting the right person to serve as a postdoc is the most critical step in ensuring a successful professional collaboration. There are three areas to consider when making a hiring decision:

- Qualifications – Does their degree and work experience match what you are looking for in a research collaboration? What areas of research specialty are necessary for success?
- Skillsets – What skillsets do they have beyond their education and training? Do they demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, such as good communication, teamwork, and demeanor?
- References – Do they come with letters of recommendation? When contacted, are previous mentors or supervisors providing positive and detailed information about their work ethic?

---

These three areas are assessed through review of a candidate’s CV and letters of recommendation, any previously published work, checking with references directly, and through direct interviews. During the interview, it is important to ask questions that probe both qualifications and skillsets. Two areas of importance are to determine if their knowledge matches their qualifications and if they demonstrate strong interpersonal skills. (If you need examples of general interview questions, they can be provided to you by your Dean’s Office Academic Personnel team.)

During the hiring process, it is important to keep all your candidates apprised of the timeline for a decision and to let those who were not selected know as soon as possible. Once a decision has been made, work with your local Academic Personnel contact to initiate the creation of the appointment letter, which should then be provided to the finalist. *It is critical that no work be started until the appointment letter has been created and signed by the candidate.* Additional obligations for hiring managers are further outlined in the sections below.

## IV. Getting Started

### *Setting Expectations about the Role*

Both prior to hire (e.g. during the interview) and when your postdoc begins their appointment, it is important to take the time to establish clear expectations for them about the job itself and both the supervisory and mentoring relationships.

#### Job Duties and Work Expectations

Under [UC Riverside policy](#), all Non-Senate academic titles must have a Job Description and a Letter of Expectations. For postdoctoral scholars, the Job Description should be written in broad terms as it relates to the field of research, the project(s) they are working on, and the knowledge base required for the role. This document informs the appointee of their scope of employment as a Postdoc in their assigned lab or unit.

The Letter of Expectations (LOE) is an important management tool designed to articulate more detail about the role than what is covered in a job description. It conveys in the clearest terms the expectations of the supervisor regarding matters of attendance, performance and outcomes, conduct, and other workplace items that are required. The LOE document can be as broad or as detailed as the supervisor needs it to be.

---

The LOE's content will also depend on the type of work the postdoc is performing. In some situations, a postdoc is performing regular work in the lab, perhaps alongside those who hold other research titles. In this case, the LOE might be written to be more specific around the lab operations, routine weekly reporting, experiment procedures, and etcetera. Other postdocs might have more independence or are simply in an environment that does not require “hands-on” work. In these scenarios, attendance requirements might just refer to the minimum number of hours, with other expectations perhaps centered around deliverables (such as papers) and deadlines. In all scenarios, conduct standards and commitments by the supervisor to meet regularly must still be established.

An example of a generic LOE can be found in the Appendix to the [UCR Performance Management, Corrective Action, and Dismissal \(PMCAD\) policy](#). It is recommended to start with this example, reworking it to the specific role the appointee is serving and needs of the supervisor. Furthermore, establishing the mentorship dynamic in this letter is highly encouraged. This can be formalized in the LOE itself, or referential to a Mentorship Agreement (*see below*).

Once a draft of the Letter of Expectations is completed, it is highly recommended to share the document with the postdoc for their feedback and input. This will ensure mutual understanding of the professional relationship and any deliverables needed. You should have a similar conversation to discuss the nature of the mentoring relationship, any IDPs that are to be established, and professional development opportunities (*more on that below*). A useful document for helping structure such a conversation, and identifying the best questions to ask, can be found here: <https://ori.hhs.gov/preempting-discord-prenuptial-agreements-scientists>. *Please Note: A research pre-nup, or any initial documentation that sets out agreed upon expectation and responsibilities, is not meant to be the final word. Rather, this agreement should be regularly re-visited, as a matter of course, and contemporaneously updated with any changes in personnel or project which would have an impact on the roles and expectations of the involved parties.*

### Mentoring Plans

---

The Letter of Expectations as described above can form the basis of a broader mentoring plan, an unofficial but extremely important part of the postdoc's experience.

Mentoring plans (agreements, compacts) can serve as a road map for you and your postdoc of the research and professional development activities to be undertaken during the postdoc's tenure, as well as outlining the commitments each of you will make to the other and to the work. Additionally, such plans/agreements will open channels of communication and serve as a reminder of mutual roles and responsibilities for a successful postdoctoral experience.

A mentoring plan can then be incorporated into your regular 1:1 meetings, with its focus on role expectations and assessments of employee performance (*see below*) – elements of which are found in the LOE – but can also include broader discussions about the postdoc's longer-term goals, beyond the postdoc appointment, with the agenda for these discussions set by the postdoc; you might have conversations focused on, for instance, identifying opportunities for professional development.

Examples of other kinds of agreements/plans provided here; these are not meant to be exhaustive but rather meant to provide ideas for your own agreements/plans.

- <https://d1uqitzsuwlnsf.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/163/2016/11/MentorshipAgreementTemplate.pdf>
- <https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/35/2018/03/Mentoring-Agreement-Form.pdf>

### *The Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Skills Self-Assessments*

Increasingly, various funding sources are requiring Individual Development Plans ("IDP") for postdoctoral researchers, and the completion of such an IDP can be part of an overall mentoring plan. IDPs can be very useful for reviewing progress in the postdoc role, per se, and in broader professional development goals. There are several options for structuring an individual development plan, and we offer a few examples here.

One of the more widely used development plan templates is found at myIDP [<https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/Overview/Summary>]. The framework for this plan was first developed by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), and later, AAAS/Science, along with other experts, who collaborated on the expansion of that framework to provide a comprehensive individual development plan. You and your postdoc will need to create an account to access the template and the various sections of the plan, such as the skills

---

self-assessment. (The self-assessment is an important aspect of the IDP and an easy way to enter into this conversation.) Once the sections of the plan have been completed by the postdoc, the IDP can be printed out for review, which is generated from the information provided.

A similar template for those not in the sciences can be found here:

- <https://www.imaginephd.com>

Finally, an example of a written plan template is here:

- [https://postdocs.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj10161/f/opa\\_idp-initial\\_0.pdf](https://postdocs.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj10161/f/opa_idp-initial_0.pdf)

### *Unit Introductions and Orientations*

Once your postdoc is onboarded, you should schedule time to introduce your postdoc to the other members of the lab/unit, with special attention paid to those with whom the postdoc will be working most closely/frequently. Also be sure to introduce them to any faculty and/or other collaborators with whom you/your lab works. It will also be important to show your postdoc their primary workspace, and provide a general tour of the larger workspace (i.e. the lab/building/department), and orient them to any equipment that they might need to be using on a regular basis. If there are additional buildings/spaces in which they will also be expected to work, include those on the tour. Finally, the Postdoc must also be given the opportunity to complete any required and specific training, such as Lab Safety, or Human Subjects Research Protections.

You should also schedule time to review any general lab or unit policies/procedures, as well as provide a review of the general norms and practices of the group. This would also be an appropriate time to connect them with other campus resources: the Riverside Postdoc Association, the Graduate Division (most specifically the Postdoctoral Studies Analyst, the Dean, and the Graduate Student Resource Coordinator who facilitates on-campus professional development opportunities for postdocs), the Academic Personnel Office, the Ombuds, the Housing office, the Dean's Office for Academic Personnel, etc.

Lastly, you must allow time for your postdoc to attend their New Hire Orientation, a requirement under their bargaining unit contract.

## **V. Supervision and Mentorship**

As noted in the introduction to this document, there are important differences between the supervisory relationship and a mentoring relationship. As a supervisor, you have the



official task of managing your postdoc’s work, setting performance expectations and assessing whether those expectations have been met. Obviously, you have an investment in the performance success of your postdoc, as that has implications for the overall success of your lab/research endeavors.

In contrast, a mentoring relationship is focused on the needs and desires of your postdoc and does not include assessment or appraisal as tied to performance. Such needs generally include professional development and may also include psychosocial development. You aren’t meant to be directing or influencing the postdoc to any specific choices, but rather helping them – through listening and advice – to come to their own decisions and take relevant action.

As earlier stated, there is often overlap, and ideally you will consciously include mentoring skills in your supervisory relationship.

### *Communication*

As the professional relationship moves along, maintaining regular and effective communication with your Postdoc is essential.

#### 1:1 Meetings

Under [UC Riverside policy](#), you are required to meet with your Postdoc one-on-one (1:1) *at least* once a month, and preferably do so, in-person (if practicable). This setting will allow you to give meaningful feedback on research progress, address ongoing issues, review or reinforce performance expectations, celebrate employee successes, and further discussions on their professional goals. The four main goals of providing 1:1 meetings are to:

1. Provide positive feedback to reinforce successful behavior
2. Address deficiencies and provide clear expectations and direction
3. Establish greater rapport with the postdoc, to understand their challenges and discern their motivations, expertise, and morale
4. Solicit feedback from them on their perception of you as mentor and supervisor

During these meetings, you should present a welcoming, honest, and mutually respectful environment. This will foster more constructive dialogue, reciprocal feedback, and cultivate greater professional respect from your postdoc.

- ❖ *Note on Team Meetings* – Team meetings are effective tools for PIs to lay out shared expectations, identify shared goals, and receive group feedback. But

communicating only through team meetings will not have the same impact with employees as 1:1 sessions, and are not appropriate venues to single-out individuals' performance issues or other matters that should be delivered (and would be better received) in the 1:1 format.

### Communication Styles

Effective communication with your postdoc will mean the difference between a successful collaboration and a relationship rife with conflict. As their supervisor and mentor, it is your responsibility to identify the most effective way to communicate with, direct, motivate, coach, counsel, and hold accountable the postdoc under your wing.

It is important to keep in mind that not all people respond to the same communication style. When PIs start having difficulty managing or communicating with someone, a change of approach may be appropriate. You should be aware of different communication styles (such as directing vs coaching), and when to use them. Two different ways communication styles come into play are with the personality and experience of the person reporting to you:

- **Experience Considerations:** A brand-new Postdoc may need far more guidance and specific direction than an experienced employee in your lab who can work more independently and needs only to be coached or delegated to.
- **Personality Considerations:** Consider your own default communication style – perhaps you have a more “direct” style, that simply gives a task and expects it to be done. Some may respond with eagerness to your direction, but many others don't. Some may need much more detail and structure to better perform the task or project, some might need to understand the importance (the “why” or “big picture”) of the task or project, and still others might need more pleasantries and positive reinforcement to stay engaged.

Not responding to the individual in the style that is the best fit for them could eventually foster lower morale, or worse, conflict and resentment. PIs should contact [Academic Personnel](#) for additional guidance and resources on effective communication, if challenges arise.

### *Progress and Performance Management*

As the postdoc continues to work with you in your lab or unit, it is an important part of your role to keep them on track for reaching their research and professional goals (including for any IDPs), achieving project benchmarks, and overall continuing to meet your expectations as set forth for their appointment.

Using your regular 1:1 meetings is the best way to check-in on progress for all these key areas. The 1:1 meetings allow you to identify further challenges they may be having, or root out any miscommunications that may have occurred. Simple clarifications on misunderstandings, or verbal coaching or counseling on issues, is natural and best received when delivered in these settings.

In addition, it is important to provide contemporaneous feedback for areas of concern right away. Individuals hearing about problems months after they occurred can become demoralized, and defensive. Raising your perceived concerns right away, preferably in the 1:1 meeting format (rather than just email), will allow for a two-way dialogue for you to have a deeper understanding of why they might have made an error, are not meeting deadlines, etc. With that deeper understanding of the “why”, you can best tailor your response as a supervisor, and use your mentoring skills to help in alleviating the situation.

### Formal Intervention

When significant concerns with a Postdoc’s performance or conduct arise, it is important to know the suite of tools and resources available to you. When implementing any of the following, remember that you are not just a supervisor – you are also a mentor.

1. **Training** – Often, additional training or resources are needed to be provided to the Postdoc to help them get back on track. It is helpful to have identified their knowledge gaps early in the hiring and onboarding phases (this is where a skills self-assessment, described above, can be quite useful), but deficiencies may arise later in their appointment. They may need to spend time more with you or another member of your lab/unit performing a specific process or experiment, or perhaps be pointed to some scholarly literature to read in order to close any knowledge gaps. While training is not always a “silver-bullet”, it likely should still be utilized in conjunction with any of the following further options.
2. **Verbal Warning** – Also known as an informal spoken warning, the verbal warning is given in a conversation with the postdoc to address performance deficiencies or specific incidents. You likely are already doing this as part of your 1:1 meetings or when you send an email. These are

best used for first-time deviations of expectations or just minor issues in general.

3. **Counseling Memo** – This is that discussion of identified performance concerns or deviations of expectations also documented in writing and provided to the employee for their reference, generally in an email body or letter format. These are often used for more serious or repeated concerns, and are best handled by sending a follow-up email after a verbal warning, summarizing the concern and the corrective action necessary. It is important not to threaten formal discipline in a counseling memo.
4. **Re-Issuing or Revising the LOE** – Reissuing or revising a Letter of Expectations may become necessary when it is determined that a Postdoc is either not clear on what was intended (even with an initial issuing) or a firm reminder of what was expected. It may also be necessary to add any added expectations in writing, or simply provide more detail to the original letter for clarity. These follow-up issuances can be useful in resetting the understanding that both sides have of their professional relationship.
5. **Performance Improvement Plan (“PIP”)** - A PIP is a structured document designed to give a Postdoc clear identification of unsatisfactory performance and establish measurable goals to demonstrate improvement within a reasonable period of time. The language of a PIP focuses on clear and measurable expectations and the evaluation of results. In the context of a Postdoc, a PIP should be issued after an unsatisfactory Annual Progress Assessment (*see below*) or mid-year only when there are identified performance gaps that necessitate a structured remediation. They are typically best used for Postdocs with more than one-year appointments.
6. **Escalation to Discipline** – When the above interventions fail, or if the issues are severe enough, it may be time to escalate to formal disciplinary action (governed under [Article 5 – Discipline and Dismissal](#) of the PX contract). It is important to speak with your Dean’s Office Academic Personnel Director, Academic Employee Relations (in APO), and/or HR Labor Relations before issuing any formal discipline or dismissal actions.

❖ **Note on Forced Resignations**

**It is never ok to ask your Postdoc to resign when they are not performing to your expectations.** Resignations are voluntary employee actions that only the postdoc can initiate. Proper performance management is the responsibility of all

supervisors at UC Riverside. Failure to do so is a violation of UCR Policy and may also lead to a grievance against you by the Postdoc under their collective bargaining agreement.

### *Annual Progress Assessment*

A Progress Assessment is a formal evaluation of the Postdoctoral Scholar's progress and accomplishment in their assigned research and their professional development. Informal periodic reviews should be conducted verbally on a semi-regular basis, or as part of the regular 1:1 meetings process (*see above*).

Pursuant to the PX Contract, the PI must provide the Postdoctoral Scholar with at least one formal written review per 12-month period. This Annual Review is a comprehensive assessment of the Postdoctoral Scholar's research progress and achievements, and her/his professional development during the previous year. It should be reflective of the expectations set in the LOE and incorporate any formalized professional development plans (such as an IDP).

The PI should utilize the pre-established form when conducting the Annual Progress Assessment, found here: <https://graduate.ucr.edu/document/postdoc-annual-review>. Further questions about administration of an Annual Progress Assessment should be directed to the appropriate Graduate Division Associate Dean.

Should the postdoc fail to meet at minimum a "Satisfactory" rating on the Annual Progress Assessment, and the postdoc appointment period is either renewed or continues after the 12-month period, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) should be implemented to bring their performance back in-line with expectations. When developing a PIP pursuant to [UCR Policy](#), you should contact your Academic Personnel Director in your Dean's Office (or the central Academic Personnel Office at [apomail@ucr.edu](mailto:apomail@ucr.edu)).

### *Professional Development*

It is crucial that your postdoc be made aware of and have supported access to professional development opportunities. Indeed, as noted in university documents, "the nature of a Postdoctoral Scholar appointment is a non-career academic mentored research training position of a limited duration. As such, adequate opportunities for professional development are essential and ... **a reasonable portion of paid work time will be allocated to professional development activities**" (*Paraphrased, [Article 20 – Professional](#)*

*Development, Section A of the Postdoctoral Scholar collective bargaining agreement; emphasis added).*

Many of these opportunities may tie directly back to the goals noted on the IDP, and you and your postdoc should actively seek out opportunities for professional development to meet those goals.

There are both formal and informal professional development opportunities for your postdoc. Formal opportunities include involvement with the [Riverside Postdoctoral Association](#) and the [Graduate Division](#); both are good first-line contacts for your postdoc, and both offer occasional professional development seminars/workshops. For networking and more robust professional development opportunities, you can make your postdoc aware of the [National Postdoc Association](#) and the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) (NCFDD); UCR is an institutional member of NCFDD and so the curricular offerings on the site are available at no cost to the postdocs.

Informal opportunities for professional development occur when your postdoc is included in departmental activities, from committee or other meetings [when appropriate], to social events; ensuring there are teaching opportunities in the department, should the postdoc be interested; and supporting PI status for the postdoc on relevant funding opportunities, encouraging them to talk with RED to explore the process of obtaining a PI-status exception.

Finally, it can be helpful for you to provide introductions to your colleagues within and outside UCR to facilitate independent collaboration opportunities for your postdoc; the mentor network map is a good vehicle to begin the process of identifying those colleagues and making introductions.

#### Mentoring Network Mapping

It is important for both you and your postdoc to realize that one mentor is simply not sufficient to meet the range of needs that a postdoc has in moving toward independence as a researcher/scholar.

Consider having your postdoc fill out a [mentoring network map](#), under your initial guidance, which lists a broad array of mentors – both in and outside of UC Riverside – who can address both intellectual and social support/personal needs. This map will be useful when considering professional development needs and opportunities. Consider reviewing this map along with the yearly review of the individual development plan, and help your postdoc think through any updates that may be necessary/useful.

---

## *Conflict Prevention and Resolution*

Conflict is unfortunately not uncommon in any professional environment, but as the PI, it is your responsibility to ensure that all parties remain professional and to make every effort to deescalate when it occurs. If left unchecked, conflict can result in strains in collaboration for those involved and create a negative work environment for others exposed to it.

### General Conflict

Conflict between individuals generally arises when challenges surrounding communication occur. Therefore it is important to first establish an effective communication routine with your individual postdoc. (*This is elaborated in “Communication Styles” section above.*) Using 1:1 meetings and having a better understanding of what communication style motivates your postdoc, you will be able to head off early concerns that would otherwise balloon into a dysfunctional relationship.

In addition, the goal of having a strong line of communication with your postdoc can reveal strains between them and other members of your lab. Perhaps your postdoc is being supported by a Project Scientist or a more senior Postdoc – and one or both sides seem to be frustrated with the other. Using your meetings, you should be probing both sides to find out the root causes – perhaps there is a misunderstanding of expectations or a lack of training. Either way, it may be an easy fix if caught early on. But if left unnoticed or unresolved, you may find your team becoming out of sync, exhibiting micro-aggressions, or worse, becoming openly hostile to one another.

When serious conflict does occur (including [bullying](#)), it is critical you immediately reach out to your **Academic Personnel Director in your Dean’s Office**, or to contact the **central Academic Personnel Office at [apomail@ucr.edu](mailto:apomail@ucr.edu)**.

Lastly, the following resources may be of service to assist you, depending on the nature of the conflict:

- Department Chair, Associate/Divisional Dean, Dean
- Equity Advisor or Office of DEI (VC of DEI)
- VPAR (if Senate Faculty are involved)
- HR Employee and Labor Relations (if a staff or represented employee is involved)
- Title IX/EOAA Office (When SVSH issues or protected categories are involved)

- Ombuds (Confidential resource available for consultation)

### Preventing Authorship Disputes

It is best practice to have conversations about general authorship expectations and responsibilities early in your postdoc's tenure, and often, throughout the life of any particular project, as you consider the specifics of authorship decisions in those instances. While authorship conventions/practice tend to vary discipline by discipline and often even lab by lab within the same discipline, it is nevertheless crucial that you and your team come to an agreement about, for instance, how you will operationalize the "significant contribution" criterion for assigning authorship attribution.

As much as possible, these guidelines should be written down and made accessible to your lab/research group members.

In addition to the [research pre-nup](#), as described above in the Getting Started section, there are several resources to help you in having these conversations/ making these determinations about authorship:

- ICMJE: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>
- COPE: <https://publicationethics.org/resources/discussion-documents/authorship>
- CSE: <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-2-authorship-and-authorship-responsibilities/>
- APA: <https://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2015/06/determining-authorship>
- Credit: <https://casrai.org/credit/>
- Nature article: <https://media.nature.com/original/magazine-assets/d41586-021-01574-y/d41586-021-01574-y.pdf>
- Authorship Guidelines example: <https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/compliance/integrity/conduct/authors-hip-guidelines.shtml>

Should these proactive attempts somehow fail, there should be a clear understanding in your lab/research group about how disputes will be resolved, and who the final arbiter in authorship decisions will be.

Further information about Authorship Disputes can be found at: [https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/research-ethics#authorship\\_disputes](https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/research-ethics#authorship_disputes)



## VI. Decisions on Reappointment

Typically, an initial Postdoctoral Scholar appointment is for a 12-month period. Under current contractual requirements, should you choose to reappoint, their next term will be for a 24-month period (with 12-month minimum periods for all subsequent reappointments).

The decision to reappoint or non-reappoint a postdoc is at the sole discretion of the PI, and may be for nearly any reason, or no reason at all. However, below are certain factors that are commonly assessed when making reappointment decisions for postdocs:

- Funding Limitations

Funding limitations are the most common reason a PI cannot continue to support a Postdoc appointment. The allocation of funding remains the PI's prerogative. When approaching your postdoc's end date, if you are not anticipating further funding for their role, it is important to communicate with them early so they can plan on identifying their next position.

❖ *It is important to note that you retain the right to implement a layoff of a Postdoc for a lack of appropriate funding before their appointment end-date, pursuant to Article 11 of the PX contract. It is critical that you contact your Academic Personnel team in your Dean's Office as soon as possible should you determine the need to layoff, as a minimum amount of notice to the employee and union is required.*

- Poor Performance or Misconduct

Another common reason for a non-reappointment is if a Postdoc has not been meeting performance expectations or has been exhibiting misconduct in the workplace.

Annual Progress Assessments (*see above*) are highly recommended to determine the postdoc's performance standing prior to a reappointment decision but are not a required element. Should the annual progress assessment be utilized this way, it is highly recommended to communicate this to the Postdoc, so they understand the importance of the written assessment, and the implications of a negative outcome.

Should a postdoc be exhibiting [misconduct](#) that was not satisfactorily resolved through other means, it is highly recommended not to reappoint.

- Other Factors

While there cannot necessarily be an exhaustive list, other factors may include a lack of work available to sustain the role, a programmatic change, or an otherwise desire to change direction in the research operation you oversee. It is, however, important to note that a non-reappointment decision should not be made for discriminatory or otherwise prohibited reasons under the law.

Ultimately, it is important that you carefully assess your needs, the postdoc's performance, and the postdoc's relationship with you and your lab/program, before you make the important decision to reappoint or non-reappoint for subsequent period(s).

## **VII. Conclusion**

The goal of this document is to provide you with the tools, guidance, and resources to have a successful postdoc relationship – both as their supervisor and as their mentor. It is important to view both roles (supervisor and mentor) equally, and incorporate a climate of professional growth and development to ensure they have the best experience at UCR. Each postdoc that moves on to become faculty, enter industry, or continues on to another mentored role elsewhere, will carry forward the lessons and experiences you leave with them – and as such, they are all a part of the legacy left by you and UCR.

As a final note, it is recommended you review and keep handy the important policies, resources, and contacts listed in the appendix below.

---

## Appendix – Resources List

### Policy links:

- Graduate Division Information on Postdocs:
  - <https://graduate.ucr.edu/postdoctoral-studies>
- Postdoctoral Scholars Collective Bargaining agreement (PX contract):
  - <https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/px/>
- UCR Performance Management Policy (Non-Senate titles):
  - <https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/performance-management-policy>
- Academic Personnel Office – Postdoc Policy links:
  - [https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/Non-Senate-Academics#postdoctoral\\_scholars\\_postdocs\\_px](https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/Non-Senate-Academics#postdoctoral_scholars_postdocs_px)
- Academic Employee Relations:
  - <https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/employeerelations>
    - [\*Standards of Conduct for academic employees\*](#)
- Research Ethics:
  - <https://graduate.ucr.edu/research-ethics>
  - <https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/research-ethics>
  - <https://research.ucr.edu/ori> (*Office of Research Integrity*)
- Research and Economic Development (RED) Policies:
  - <https://research.ucr.edu/policies>
- Other Policies:
  - UCR General Campus Policies:
    - <https://fboapps.ucr.edu/policies/>
  - Academic Personnel Manual (APM):
    - <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/academic-personnel-policy/>
  - DEI-Related Policies, including links to SVSH and Discrimination policies:
    - <https://diversity.ucr.edu/policies-and-guidelines>

### Guidance Links:

- Resources for Academic Supervisors:
  - [https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/employeerelations#resources\\_for\\_academic\\_supervisors](https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/employeerelations#resources_for_academic_supervisors)
- Resources for Determining Authorship:
  - [https://education.ucr.edu/graduate-students#determining\\_authorship](https://education.ucr.edu/graduate-students#determining_authorship)
  - **ICMJE:** <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>
  - **COPE:** <https://publicationethics.org/resources/discussion-documents/authorship>

- **CSE:** <https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/2-2-authorship-and-authorship-responsibilities/>
- **APA:** <https://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2015/06/determining-authorship>
- **CRedit:** <https://casrai.org/credit/>
- **Nature article:** <https://media.nature.com/original/magazine-assets/d41586-021-01574-y/d41586-021-01574-y.pdf>
- Authorship Guidelines example: <https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/compliance/integrity/conduct/authorship-guidelines.shtml>
- Resources for IDPs
  - <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/Overview/Summary>
  - <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/CareerAdvancementGoals/QuickTips>
  - <https://www.imaginephd.com/my-plan>
  - <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/Skills/QuickTips>
  - <https://www.imaginephd.com/assessment>
- Resources for mentoring
  - <https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/35/2018/03/Mentoring-Agreement-Form.pdf>
  - <https://ictr.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/163/2016/11/MentorshipAgreementTemplate.pdf>
  - [mentoring network map](#)
- Resources on Avoiding or Resolving Conflict:
  - Research agreements: <https://ori.hhs.gov/preempting-discord-prenuptial-agreements-scientists>
  - Ombuds Office: <https://ombuds.ucr.edu/tools>
  - APO: [Conflict Management](#)
  - Office of DEI: <https://diversity.ucr.edu/climate-resources>
  - Research Ethics Education Program: <https://graduate.ucr.edu/research-ethics>

### Campus Resource links:

- **Graduate Division:** <https://graduate.ucr.edu>
  - Grad Success: <https://graduate.ucr.edu/gradsuccess>
  - Research Ethics Education Program: <https://graduate.ucr.edu/research-ethics>
- **Academic Personnel Office (APO):** <https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/>
- **Office of the Ombuds (Confidential Resource):** <https://ombuds.ucr.edu/>
- **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** <https://diversity.ucr.edu/>
  - [Climate Resources](#) on improving climate within your unit
  - [Learning Resources](#) for fostering inclusive work environments
  - [Training Resources](#) for yourself and to request training from the DEI office for a unit

- Office of Research and Economic Development (RED): <https://research.ucr.edu/>
- Chief Compliance Office: <https://compliance.ucr.edu/>
  - Title IX, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office: <https://titleix.ucr.edu/>

**Other Resource Links:**

- [National Postdoc Association](#)
- [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#)

**Important Contacts:**

- Department and Dean's Office Contacts:
  - At any time, you can reach out to your Department Chair or Associate/Divisional Dean for questions or assistance with matters relating to Postdocs.
  - For immediate assistance with Postdoc employment matters, it is recommended you reach out to your Dean's Office Academic Personnel team.
  - A list of Chairs, Deans, and Dean's Office Academic Personnel Directors can be found in the **Deans, Chairs, and Directors list** posted here: <https://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/quick-links>
- Academic Personnel Office – [academicpersonnel@ucr.edu](mailto:academicpersonnel@ucr.edu)
  - For Academic Employee Relations matters – use [APOMail@ucr.edu](mailto:APOMail@ucr.edu)
- Labor Relations – For matters relating to postdoc grievances: [labor.relations@ucr.edu](mailto:labor.relations@ucr.edu)
- Chief Compliance Office and Title IX/EO/AA Office:
  - For matters of discrimination or harassment – [TitleIX@ucr.edu](mailto:TitleIX@ucr.edu)
  - For matters of whistleblower or other policy violations – [ldo@ucr.edu](mailto:ldo@ucr.edu)
- Ombuds Office – [ombuds@ucr.edu](mailto:ombuds@ucr.edu)
- Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – <https://diversity.ucr.edu/contact-us>