The University of Western Australia

Principles Governing University Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

The Principles Governing University Postdoctoral Research Fellowships were first established by Resolution 17/73 of the Research Committee. The Principles have been revised on several occasions since then.

Each department is invited to submit a proposal for a University Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for consideration by the Research Committee. The department must nominate a specific person for the fellowship at the same time. The Committee will usually select around 3-4 proposals each year where the case has been established for a postdoctoral research fellow who will bring special new expertise together with a high level of relevant experience not otherwise available to the department.

As well as establishing the case for the fellowship, departments must provide specific details of the resources which will be available to the fellow and the context in which the fellow will be attached to the department. The Research Committee's support for the fellowship is limited to the salary and related on-costs, a Fellowship Support Grant and a contribution to the relocation expenses of the fellow.

A condition of application for a University Postdoctoral Research Fellowship is that the nominee must, if eligible, apply in the next round also for an ARC Fellowship (Postdoctoral Research Fellowship or Australian Research Fellowship) to be held at UWA. University Postdoctoral Research Fellowship appointees who are offered ARC Fellowships to be held at UWA are required to accept the ARC Fellowship, and so release funds to appoint additional University Postdoctoral Research Fellows in future rounds.

There is no specific application form or set format, but applications must include the attached cover sheet, completed and signed by the Head of Department, and must also address clauses (a)(v), (a)(viii) and (a)(ix), and clause (b) below.

The term "department" in these Principles should be taken to refer to a department, school or centre in which the head of the department, school or centre reports direct to the head of division and, in the case of a centre, the centre is extra-departmental, with significant established research activity.

(a) Proposal

(i) Proposals for University Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are invited once a year in every six months, usually in May and November, with a closing date of 1 March.

(ii) Departments may submit only one proposal in each round, except in cases of inter-departmental collaboration, where more than one proposal involving a department will be accepted.
(iii) Proposals which have previously been selected by the Committee, but have not resulted in a fellow being appointed may be resubmitted by departments in later rounds.

(iv) No more than one fellow will normally be appointed to the same department in any two consecutive rounds, whether on a collaborative basis or not.

(v) Departments must explain the anticipated benefit from the appointment of a postdoctoral research fellow. The case must be that a fellow will bring special new expertise together with a high level of relevant experience which is not otherwise available to the department, and that this is necessary either for the specific proposal, or to bring together separate groups from within or outside the department.

(vi) Fellows will not be appointed to initiate new areas of research unless the new area brings together separate groups.

(vii) Fellows may be appointed to strengthen an existing research activity or to work in a well-defined research area.

(viii) The proposal must include one paragraph, indicating where the research proposed is likely to lead at the conclusion of the fellowship.

(ix) As part of the proposal, departments must provide specific details of the resources that will be available to the fellow and the context in which the fellow will be attached to the department.

(b) Research Project

(i) Project objectives (one A4 page maximum). State the broad long-term objectives and describe concisely and realistically what the specific research described in this application is intended to accomplish.

(ii) Critical assessment (three A4 page maximum). Critically evaluate existing knowledge and specifically identify the gaps the present proposal is intended to fill.

(iii) Preliminary studies (one A4 page maximum). Briefly describe what (if any) preliminary studies have been undertaken for the proposed project.

(iv) Outline design/procedures/methodologies (six A4 page maximum). Outline the experimental design and/or the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Where appropriate, describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies. Discuss potential difficulties and limitations of proposed procedures and alternative approaches, where feasible, to achieve the aims. Provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the investigation.

(v) Applicant's curriculum vitae (five A4 page maximum). Provide details of career history, awards, distinctions and research achievements. Give a full list of publications over the past five years (1991 to 1995), including page numbers,
separated into: (a) refereed papers as sole author; (b) books; (c) refereed papers as joint author; (d) chapters; e) conference papers; and (f) other publications.

(c) Nominees

(i) The University Postdoctoral Research Fellowship scheme is open to all, irrespective of nationality or residence at the time of application. Appointment of a Fellow from overseas is subject to the Australian Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs' approval of UWA's sponsorship for residence, and the Fellow's successful application for an appropriate visa.

(ii) UPRF nominees must, if eligible, apply in the next round also for an ARC Fellowship (Postdoctoral Research Fellowship or Australian Research Fellowship) to be held at UWA.

(iii) Departments must nominate a fellow at the same time as the proposal is submitted, and should arrange for the following information to be included with the nomination:

* full personal particulars, qualifications and relevant experience of the nominee, including a list of publications (please put an asterisk against relevant publications);

* three referees' reports (if the referees' reports are not received by the closing date, the case for the nominee will be weakened considerably).

(iv) Departments must provide evidence that the nominee has satisfied the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the sciences, or its equivalent in other fields, and has published in learned journals or has other accepted evidence of research capability.

(v) Fellowships are normally awarded to accomplished research workers who have held a PhD or equivalent qualification for not more than five years and show evidence of research potential.

(vi) Offers will normally be made to nominees who have completed the PhD requirements. However, where an offer is made to a nominee who has not completed the PhD requirements, the offer shall be conditional upon

- the PhD requirements being completed before the date of appointment; and

- the appointment being taken up within twelve months of the closing date for that particular round of offers.

(vii) Fellowships are not normally available to immediate PhD graduates of The University of Western Australia, since it is the Committee's intention to provide an infusion of ability and expertise from outside; however, graduates of the University who have spent some years elsewhere since graduation are considered equally with those from other universities.

(viii) Short-term visits of less than one year are excluded from consideration.
(ix) The teaching capacity of the nominee is irrelevant to the fellowship.

(x) The salary range for the fellowships is the top three points of Level A ($38,092 - $39,491 - $40,889 pa at 16 October 1995).

(xi) The starting salary will be determined by the Committee in each case.

(xii) All fellows will move up the salary range by single annual increments.

(xviii) A Fellowship Support Grant of $6,000 pa will be awarded to all fellows appointed after 31 March 1991, for expenditure associated with their fellowship. The funds will be held in the fellow's department for use by the fellow during the period of the fellowship. The amount will be in the range of $3,500 - $5,500 pa, as determined by the Committee in each case.

(xxiv) The starting salary and value of the Fellowship Support Grant will be determined on the basis of such factors as duration of the fellow's postdoctoral research experience, the particular field, the outstanding quality, and other special circumstances. Heads of Departments should address these factors in their proposals if recommending to the Committee a starting salary above the minimum of the range.

(xv) Relocation allowances for appointees are in accordance with normal University policy for similar temporary appointments.

(xvi) Fellows may commence their temporary appointments as soon as possible, but no later than twelve months after the closing date of the particular round. The appointment shall normally be for two years in the first instance, with an extension to a third year being treated as an initial application.

(xvii) Fellows who are appointed for two years in the first instance shall be required to join the Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities (SSAU). Fellows may elect to be appointed for less than two years in the first instance to avoid joining the SSAU, with an automatic renewal of appointment up to the full two-year term.

(xviii) Fellows may take part in departmental teaching programmes. The maximum payment for any teaching work shall be restricted to 10% of the fellow's salary each year. Any payment for teaching must come from part-time teaching or other reserves already available to the department concerned.

(xix) At the conclusion of the Fellowship, fellows are required to submit a report of their research activities to the Committee, including details of papers published, or in print.