



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1.	PREAMBLE.....	1
2.	PURPOSE.....	1
3.	SCOPE.....	1
4.	GENERAL DEFINITIONS	1
5.	ADVERTISING	2
6.	SELECTION AND AWARD.....	2
7.	POSITION AND HOSTING	3
8.	AMENITIES AND FACILITIES.....	3
9.	CONTRACTS	3
10.	INDUCTION/ORIENTATION.....	4
11.	FUNDING	4
12.	ACTIVITIES	4
13.	CODE OF CONDUCT.....	5
14.	GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND COMPLAINTS	5
15.	TENURE	5
16.	TERMINATION	5
17.	UNIVERSITY POLICIES	5
18.	MONITORING AND REVIEWS	6
19.	CONCLUSION	6
20.	REVIEW.....	6

Policy on the Appointment of Postdoctoral Fellows

I. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. DUT is committed to promoting research excellence and fostering the professional development of early career researchers through the appointment of postdoctoral fellows.
- 1.2. This policy seeks to provide a supportive and conducive environment for postdoctoral research and scholarship, guided by the core values of transparency, honesty, integrity, respect, and accountability, and the principles of fairness, professionalism, commitment, compassion, and excellence.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. This policy outlines the principles, procedures, and conditions governing the appointment of postdoctoral fellows at Durban University of Technology (DUT).
- 2.2. It is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, professionalism, and adherence to ethical standards in the recruitment, selection, and management of postdoctoral fellows.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy applies to the recruitment, selection, appointment, management, and termination of postdoctoral fellows at DUT.

4. GENERAL DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Activities	The primary duty of postdoctoral fellows is research, with a minimum teaching load and possible additional departmental roles to support academic development. Fellows are also expected to engage in scholarly activities such as publishing, presenting at conferences, and participating in seminars and workshops.
Advertising	Postdoctoral fellowship vacancies will be advertised internally and/or externally according to university policies. Advertisements will outline eligibility criteria, application procedures, and fellowship terms and conditions.
Amenities and Facilities	Postdoctoral fellows will have access to necessary amenities and facilities for research, subject to availability. This may include library, parking, sports memberships, health services, housing, and limited teaching opportunities.
Code of Conduct	Postdoctoral fellows must adhere to high standards of ethics, integrity, and professionalism, following DUT's code of conduct and research ethics policies.
Contracts	PDFs are appointed as professional trainees on fixed-term contracts with set performance targets. They receive no fringe benefits and must adhere to DUT policies and conditions. Dual full-time contracts within or outside the university are prohibited.
Funding	PDF awards are funded from various sources, with specific conditions approved by the Institutional Research Committee. Fellows receive stipends or salaries per DUT policies, with possible additional funding for research expenses through grants.
Grievance Procedures and Complaints	Postdoctoral fellows with grievances regarding their appointment or conditions should follow DUT's grievance procedures. Complaints will be handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

Induction/Orientation	Upon appointment, PDFs undergo an induction program covering DUT's policies, procedures, and available resources. Orientation on their research project and professional development is provided by their mentor, faculty, and the Research Office.
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	A document that defines the mutual expectations between the host institution and the Postdoctoral Fellow.
Monitoring and Reviews	The Host is to set up a performance agreement on the commencement of the PDFs period and must review their performance annually.
PDFs	Acronym for Postdoctoral Fellows.
Position and Hosting	PDFs must conduct research at DUT unless approved for external visits. They will be placed in academic departments or research centres for mentorship, with primary hosting managed at the faculty level. Co-mentoring is permitted with DVC approval.
Postdoctoral Research Fellowships	Temporary training and research-based appointments usually awarded within five years of earning a doctoral degree. Fellowships typically last up to two years, with a possible one-year extension under exceptional conditions, focusing on experiential learning and research innovation.
Selection and Award	The Research and Postgraduate Support allocates postdoctoral fellowships. Selection committees assess candidates based on qualifications, research experience, and alignment with DUT priorities, ensuring equity and grant requirements are met.
Tenure	Fellowships are fixed-term, usually for up to two years, with an optional one-year extension based on performance and available funding and other operational needs. PDFs cannot register for any degree or hold full-time employment while on a fellowship at DUT.
Termination	PDF tenure ends at the contract period's close or may be terminated early for cause, performance issues, or misconduct, following DUT's policies and procedures.
University Policies	PDFs must comply with all applicable DUT policies, including those on research, intellectual property, finance, and ethics. Updated policies will be communicated to fellows.

5. ADVERTISING

- 5.1. Vacancies for postdoctoral fellowships will be advertised internally and/or externally, per university policies and regulations.
- 5.2. The advertisement will include information on eligibility criteria, application procedures, and the terms and conditions of the fellowship.

6. SELECTION AND AWARD

- 6.1. Allocation of postdoctoral fellowship is under the authority of the Research and Postgraduate Support
- 6.2. Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee appointed by the relevant faculty or research centre in consultation with Research and Postgraduate Support.
- 6.3. Candidates will be assessed based on academic qualifications, research experience, publication record, proposed research project, and alignment with DUT's research priorities.
- 6.4. Shortlisted candidates may be invited for interviews, presentations, or other assessment activities as deemed appropriate.
- 6.5. Successful candidates will receive a formal written appointment offer outlining the fellowship's terms and conditions.

- 6.6. The final approval of the appointment is the responsibility of the deputy vice-chancellor responsible for research and innovation.
- 6.7. Consideration must be given concerning grant and DUT equity requirements in selection processes

7. POSITION AND HOSTING

- 7.1. Postdoctoral fellows must conduct their research at DUT unless authorized to visit another university or institution in line with DUT policies.
- 7.2. Postdoctoral fellows must be placed in academic departments/ research institutes/ research centres and mentored by staff members in the academic department for quality supervision.
- 7.3. Co-mentoring of postdoctoral fellows by staff outside the academic department may be permitted after approval by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for research and innovation.
- 7.4. Each PDF shall be managed at the faculty level and the Executive Dean or their delegated individual acts as the primary host. They must join an academic department, established research group, research focus area, research institute or research centre.
- 7.5. PDFs will be expected to undertake limited teaching and be involved in the co-supervision of students, dependent on the specific grant conditions they are appointed under.

8. AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

- 8.1. Postdoctoral fellows will have access to the necessary amenities and facilities required to conduct their research, subject to availability and approval.
- 8.2. Executive Deans or Directors of Institutes/Centres must ensure that necessary amenities and facilities required to conduct research are available to PDFs before they start with research activities.
- 8.3. Any requests for additional resources or support should be submitted to the relevant department or research centre for consideration.
- 8.4. The PDF should be given adequate working space, equipment and basic amenities, and be eligible for the following, subject to availability and successful application where applicable:
 - *Library borrowing facilities.*
 - *Parking facilities*
 - *Membership of sports and other clubs*
 - *Student Health Services*
 - *Student Housing*
 - *Part-time teaching, including conducting tutorials and laboratory sessions.*

9. CONTRACTS

- 9.1. A PDF is not an employee, nor a student, but is a professional trainee.
- 9.2. The Fellowships given to PDFs provide no fringe benefits. Terms of appointment, such as leave, are dependent on the source of the grant and are to be included in the letter of appointment.

- 9.3. Postdoctoral fellowship awards are governed by specific and approved conditions of awards.
- 9.4. Postdoctoral fellows will be appointed on fixed-term contracts, with annual performance targets set in the MOU and evaluations conducted by their host to assess their suitability for renewal.
- 9.5. Postdoctoral fellows may not hold two contracts simultaneously within or outside the university, and such an offence may result in immediate dismissal. PDFs are permitted to be employed part-time for a maximum of 24 hours per month, either in an additional capacity to their fellowship at DUT or external to the institution.
- 9.6. Postdoctoral fellows must sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the host.
- 9.7. The contract must ensure compliance with the university's code of conduct, policies and conditions.
- 9.8. Individuals may not be appointed to a DUT-funded post-doctoral fellowship if they have had a previous appointment as a post-doctoral fellow, whether based at DUT or elsewhere.

10. INDUCTION/ORIENTATION

- 10.1. Upon appointment, postdoctoral fellows will undergo an induction program to familiarize themselves with DUT's policies, procedures, and facilities.
- 10.2. They will also receive orientation and training related to their research project and professional development opportunities available at DUT. Orientation is to be conducted by the respective mentor, faculty and the Research Office.

11. FUNDING

- 11.1. PDF awards are funded from a variety of sources. Each will have specific conditions which must be approved by the Chair of the Institutional Research Committee.
- 11.2. Postdoctoral fellows will receive a stipend or salary per DUT's remuneration policies and/or funding/grant availability and conditions.
- 11.3. Additional funding for research-related expenses may be available through competitive grants or external funding sources.
- 11.4. The stipend must be reviewed regularly in line with university policies.
- 11.5. Postdoctoral Fellows and/or Supervisors are required to inform the Administrator responsible for PDFs in the Research Office when a Postdoctoral Fellow terminates his/her tenure at the university.

12. ACTIVITIES

- 12.1. The primary duty of postdoctoral fellows is research, but they may be allocated a minimum teaching load and other extra-departmental duties (such as an ordinary member of DRC) by their departments to facilitate their development as future academics.
- 12.2. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to actively engage in scholarly activities, including publication of research findings, presentation at conferences, and participation in academic seminars and workshops.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 13.1. Postdoctoral fellows are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity, and professionalism in all aspects of their work.
- 13.2. They must comply with DUT's code of conduct, policies, and regulations governing research ethics, academic integrity, and professional behaviour.

14. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND COMPLAINTS

- 14.1. Postdoctoral fellows who have concerns or grievances related to their appointment or working conditions should follow the established grievance procedures outlined in DUT's policies and regulations.
- 14.2. The PDF will have recourse to a specific Grievance Procedure and will have the right of representation in any hearing that may result from a dispute or serious complaint.
- 14.3. All complaints will be handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially, with appropriate measures taken to address any issues raised.

15. TENURE

- 15.1. Postdoctoral fellowships are typically awarded for a fixed term, with the possibility of renewal based on satisfactory performance and availability of funding.
- 15.2. Each Postdoctoral Fellowship is awarded for a period defined by the individual grant conditions and must be noted in the letter of award.
- 15.3. The maximum duration of a postdoctoral fellowship at DUT is two years and is subject to a satisfactory performance review annually. Under exceptional circumstances, a further extension of one year may be considered by the University, subject to review and extension as deemed necessary. Further extensions are not permitted beyond a total of three years.
- 15.4. PDFs are not permitted to register for any degree whilst appointed as Postdoctoral Fellows at the DUT, nor are they permitted to be employed full-time by any party within or outside of the University.

16. TERMINATION

- 16.1. A PDF's tenure terminates at the end of the specified period; unless renewal has been approved by the Durban University of Technology based on the annual research performance.
- 16.2. The appointment of postdoctoral fellows may be terminated at the end of the contract period or for cause, per DUT's policies and procedures.
- 16.3. Postdoctoral fellows may be subject to termination if they fail to meet performance expectations, violate university policies, or engage in misconduct or unethical behaviour.
- 16.4. The appointment of a Postdoctoral Fellow may be cancelled at any time due to a material breach of contract and following a hearing, or on disciplinary grounds.

17. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- 17.1. Postdoctoral fellows are required to comply with all relevant university policies, regulations, and guidelines applicable to their appointment and conduct.
- 17.2. Any updates or revisions to university policies will be communicated to postdoctoral fellows promptly.
- 17.3. PDFs are responsible for observing policies of the University which will be provided upon registration. They are also on the University website at www.dut.ac.za. These include the areas below:
- *Research*
 - *Intellectual Property*
 - *Financial Policy and Procedures*
 - *Institutional Research Ethics*
 - *Minimum Expectations for Research Output*

18. MONITORING AND REVIEWS

- 18.1. This policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with DUT's strategic objectives and values.
- 18.2. Feedback from postdoctoral fellows, faculty mentors, and other stakeholders will be solicited to inform ongoing improvements and enhancements to the policy and its implementation.
- 18.3. Title of Manager responsible for Monitoring: Director Research and Postgraduate Support.
- 18.4. Timelines and Mechanisms for Monitoring: The Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate shall submit annual reports to the DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement and the report shall contain the number of Postdoctoral Fellows affected by the policy, Duration, Remuneration, performance of all appointments, necessary and relevant statistics.

19. CONCLUSION

- 19.1. This policy provides a framework for the appointment of postdoctoral fellows at DUT, guided by principles of transparency, honesty, integrity, respect, and accountability, and the values of fairness, professionalism, commitment, compassion, and excellence.
- 19.2. It is designed to support the professional development of early career researchers and contribute to the research excellence of the university.

20. REVIEW

- 20.1. The policy shall be reviewed by the Executive responsible for Research, Innovation and Engagement after every 3 years.