



POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS POLICY

The following information to be completed by the policy owner/custodian:	
Title	Postdoctoral Research Fellows Policy
Approving authority	Senate
Field of application	All staff members
Compliance to	All academic staff.
New or revised policy	New
Last date of approval	
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Stakeholders consulted	DVC: Academic & Research EMC Institutional Forum Rectorate Unions
Policy Management (designation and name)	Executive Director : Research Dr B Johnson
Cross-reference	This policy is to be read in consultation with the Research Policy and the Human Resource

	Policies
Language edited	
Scrutinised by a legal person	

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POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS

POLICY DOCUMENT

Policies Governing Postdoctoral Research Fellows at the Vaal University of Technology

The Vaal University of Technology is developing and growing its research culture. The recruitment of Postdoctoral Research Fellows will play a pivotal role in developing research and postgraduate student capacity at the Vaal University of Technology.

1. Purpose

To describe the terms and conditions for the award of the fellowship, tenure activities and termination of Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDRFs) at the Vaal University of Technology.

2. Definition

Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are normally awarded to individuals within five years of having achieved a doctoral degree. Postdoctoral Research Fellows are neither students, nor employees of the University.

Fellowships are renewed on an annual bases up to a maximum of 2 years. Thereafter, only in exceptional cases will tenure up to 5 years be considered.

The purpose of the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship is to provide an opportunity for experiential learning in research, which may serve as a path for further academic and professional development.

In the context of VUT the PDRF plays a critical role in enhancing the Research culture through:

- i) Publications in DoHET accredited journals
- ii) Contributing to the development of researchers
- iii) Facilitate seminars
- iv) Presenting at seminars
- v) Hosting research related workshops
- vi) Assist with limited teaching

The University expects that all publications, creative works and other academic products of the PDRF will bear appropriate acknowledgement with full affiliation to Vaal University of Technology.

“Department” refers to the academic department which has undertaken to host the PDRF.

“Head of Department” (HoD) refers to the head of department.

“Fellowship” is the grant of money or stipend to support the PDRF. Fellowships are provided from different sources.

“Conditions-of-Award” refers to the conditions of the fellowship concerned.

“Contract” is the agreement between the University and the PDRF, defining the relationship between the Executive Director: Research, HoD and the PI on the one hand and the PDRF on the other defining the expectations of each by the other.

The Research Directorate will be charged with responsibility of administering Postdoctoral Research Fellowships and ensuring that appointments, tenures, activities and terminations comply with these policies and that the terms of individual Memoranda of Agreement are complied with.

“PI” refers to the Principal Investigator or Supervisor.

3. **Background**

Each PDRF is managed by a PI and the Head of Department, and will usually join an established research-group. PDRFs will usually undertake limited supervision of students.

The value derived from postdoctoral training and the broader experience is beneficial to both the University and the country. VUT needs to consolidate Postdoctoral Research Fellows in support of its research and innovation enterprise and to assist with achievement of national, institutional and equity goals.

4. **Advertising, Selection and Award**

PDRFs are individuals who must have achieved a Doctoral degree within five years of being appointed and who wish to train further in specialised research.

The University as a matter of policy will advertise all opportunities for fellowships, so that free and fair competition is ensured. All advertisements must take into account the formal and approved Definition and comply with the approved Advertising Guidelines for Postdoctoral Fellowships.

Selection and recruitment of applicants must be done at Central Level and include the PI, Executive Director: Research, and the Head of Department. In all cases, such selection must take account of the approved Definition and Policy Document to ensure that the prospective PDRF is compliant.

Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are held in terms of the standard contract. The Institution, the Faculty and the Departments must provide equipment and resources necessary to enable the PDRF to effectively carry out her/his research work. These must be documented in the contract. The University, the Faculty and the Department must provide an environment where training and learning will take place and where ongoing mentorship/supervision is ensured.

5. **Conditions of Award**

All PDRF awards are governed by specific and approved Conditions-of-Award. Such conditions provide a framework for the research/study to be undertaken and the basic conditions under which the PDRF is registered.

6 Position, Amenities and Facilities

A PDRF is not a student, nor an employee, but is an academic and professional trainee, known as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow. The Fellowships given to PDRFs provide no fringe-benefits. The PDRF should be given adequate working space, equipment and basic amenities.

7. Contracts - Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement

The PDRF must enter into a legally-binding contract with the Vaal University of Technology, through the Research Office and Human Resources and with the Faculty/Host-Department.

Such agreements will protect both parties and provide recourse to both parties in the event of a dispute or complaint.

The contract will ensure compliance with the University's code of conduct, policies and conditions.

The contract is a bi-lateral agreement between the Postdoctoral Fellow and the Principal Investigator, and provides a framework for the work to be done and a means of monitoring the agreed-upon expectations of both parties.

8. Induction/Orientation

The HoD or PI will provide the entering PDRF with information packs on the Vaal University of Technology and the geography of its precincts guidance to accessing the amenities and facilities available and ongoing service and advice. It will also provide support for any representative group formed by the PDRFs. The HoD or PI will provide the new PDRF with an orientation to the department and introduction to the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

9. Funding

PDRF awards are funded from a variety of sources.

In all cases, Fellowship-funding will be administered by the Research Directorate. All individual requests for tax directives will be made to the SARS by the Vaal University of Technology on behalf of the PDRF.

Postdoctoral Fellows and/or Principal Investigators are required to inform the Research Directorate when a Postdoctoral Fellow terminates his/her tenure at the university. Where such termination occurs before the Postdoctoral Fellow has completed her/his research and/or full tenure, the University reserves the right to recover all or some of the funds that have been paid to the Postdoctoral Fellow in advance.

The PDRF is normally exempt from taxation and application for such exemption will be made on behalf of the successful candidate. The PDRF carries no fringe benefits.

10. Activities

The academic activities of the PDRF will be described in the Conditions-of-Award and the contract. The focus of the PDRFs activities is research outputs including DHET Accredited Journal publications and postgraduate supervision. Through their involvement in research, they will also be required to coordinate research seminars and participate in activities that contribute towards the enhancing the

research culture at the Vaal University of Technology.

The PDRF will also be involved in limited teaching or lecturing. Other work that is integral to the training of the PDRF must be fully recorded in the contract. The contract will be used as informal terms-of-reference and/or a guide to resolve any disputes arising between the Department and the PDRF.

11. Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedures and Complaints

The PDRF must subscribe to the University's code of conduct and policies.

In the event of any dispute, the PDRF will have recourse to a specific Grievance Procedure and will have right of representation in any hearing that may result from a dispute or serious complaint.

12. Tenure

Each PDR Fellowship is awarded for one year only. Fellowships and tenures are renewable up to a maximum of 2 years. Thereafter, only in exceptional cases will tenure up to 5 years be considered.

To ensure that the PDRFs focus on their critical roles assigned they are not permitted to register for any degree whilst registered as Postdoctoral Fellow. Consultancies may be permitted with the express agreement of the PI, the HoD and the Executive Dean of Faculty who will act as the monitoring agents of such consultancy, and be subject to limitations on hours of work and income derived.

13. Professional Development

Because a PDRF is essentially a professional assistant, the Conditions of Award and the contract must describe the kind of training and work to be done by both the PDRF and the Department. In addition to this the University may, from time-to-time provide professional development courses and seminars to assist the PDRFs. The PDRFs may organise seminars and training-courses amongst themselves or for senior students in their specific areas of research, and such events will be hosted and accommodated by the Research Directorate of Vaal University of Technology.

14. Termination.

A PDRF's tenure terminates at the end of the specified period, unless renewal as outlined in No. 12 has been approved by the Vaal University of Technology.

The University reserves the right to request the refund of any PDRF funds paid to the PDRF should the PDRF terminate his/her contract prior to its completion.

15. Termination for cause

The registration 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.