

33.99.99.C0.01 Postdoctoral Research Associates



Revised: March 23, 2026
Next Scheduled Review: March 23, 2031
[Revision History](#)

Procedure Summary

The employment of postdoctoral research associates (PRAs) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) is essential to achieve national recognition and competitiveness in research and scholarship. A PRA is a non-faculty employee who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of developing the professional skills needed to pursue their desired career path. This procedure clarifies the PRA role; provides guidelines that are compliant with applicable legislation, system policies and regulations, and university rules and procedures; and facilitates employment and development of a robust postdoctoral research program.

Procedure

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. PRAs report to the assigned principal investigator or project leader who is tasked with mentoring and creating an environment that fosters research experiences and professional development opportunities.
- 1.2. PRAs are required to observe all applicable federal, state, and local laws, including, but not limited to, export control laws and requirements, system policies and regulations, and university rules and procedures.
- 1.3. All non-faculty positions in the system are “at will,” meaning that any non-faculty employee may be dismissed from employment with or without cause. Any such dismissal must be in compliance with federal law, state law, system policies and regulations, and university rules and procedures. PRA terminations must be coordinated through Human Resources who will obtain the system-required approval from the Office of General Counsel. See section 12 of this procedure for additional details.

2. QUALIFICATIONS

PRAs must hold the appropriate doctoral degree in an appropriate academic field

awarded within the previous five (5) years. If the degree had not been conferred at the time the applicant applied for a postdoctoral position, a letter needs to be attached from the school's official graduate office and/or registrar's office certifying that all requirements for the degree have been met and stating the degree conferral date.

3. PROCESS TO HIRE A POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

- 3.1. The process to recruit for and hire a PRA is facilitated by Human Resources. To create a new position, the employing department must submit a position description and a Position Review Form (see Appendix) to Human Resources. Approvals are required from the dean/director/unit head, Human Resources, Budget Office, and the Office of Sponsored Research Administration if applicable. Additional approvals may be required if the funding source is not a grant or contract.
- 3.2. Upon approval of the position description, Human Resources will post the vacancy for a minimum of five (5) business days and list the vacancy with the Texas Workforce Commission as required by state law. Alternatively, an employing unit may request that the vacancy be posted internally or that a current employee be appointed without a search. See university procedure 33.99.01.C0.01, *Filling Staff Vacancies* for additional process requirements.
- 3.3. With justification and approval by Compliance Services and Human Resources, a hiring manager may recommend that a current qualified employee (e.g., a graduate assistant) be appointed as a PRA without a search process. The justification must indicate the benefit of not conducting a search and why the recommended individual should be hired over similarly situated qualified employees. A recommendation to appoint an employee to a vacant PRA position requires a current position description, the submission of an employment application, and the same review and approval process as required for an external hire.

4. APPOINTMENT PERIOD

The intention of the PRA is to provide a continued opportunity for training in a specialty area for a limited amount of time. Generally, the initial salaried appointment period is one (1) year, and the maximum allowable time for an individual to hold a PRA position is five (5) years. Offers of employment should specify the appointment period. Extensions may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family leave, illness) if approved by the mentor, department chair/supervisor, dean/director/unit head, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and if grant funded, the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation. The employing unit is responsible for monitoring extension requests beyond the five (5) year appointment period.

5. SALARY LEVELS

PRAs should be provided with a salary level that reflects both their prior postdoctoral experience and what is customary for the relevant market.

6. BENEFITS

PRAs who are appointed for 20 hours per week or more and 4.5 months or longer and whose funding flows through the university are eligible for benefits as defined by the university and administered by Human Resources. PRAs appointed on a full-time basis are eligible to participate in the Optional Retirement Program.

7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Performance reviews will be conducted on an annual basis in accordance with university deadlines and submitted in Workday.

8. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION

A PRA who holds a full-time appointment may, in rare circumstances, propose to engage other employment. In these cases, the PRA must obtain approval from their immediate supervisor and submit the External Employment Application and Approval Form (see Appendix), subject to mentor and other required approvals. These activities must comply with all relevant university rules and procedures including those on conflict of interest, conflict of commitment, and intellectual property. See university procedure *31.05.02.C0.01, External Employment* for more information.

9. TEACHING

At the discretion of the supervisor, PRAs in some disciplines include a role in teaching. For those that do not normally include such a role, when allowed by the funding source and with the approval of the supervisor, PRAs may teach. In the case of international PRAs, visa regulations may determine whether teaching is allowed, and Human Resources should be consulted.

10. RESEARCH DATA, RECORDS, PRODUCTS, AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

PRAs should be aware that all data, software, research records, and similar materials generated in the course of research at TAMU-CC remain the property of the university, the laboratory, and the mentor; and their disposition must be carried out in accordance with university rules and procedures on intellectual property management and commercialization. In keeping with academic convention, the PRA may retain copies of research data that they were personally responsible for collecting or generating. Future use of such data must appropriately acknowledge TAMU-CC, as well as the PRA's research collaborators and mentor.

11. APPLICATION FOR GRANTS

PRAs may not serve as the principal investigator on a grant but may serve as a co-principal investigator or lower-ranked position. Principal investigator eligibility requirements are outlined in the Eligibility to Serve as Principal Investigator (see Appendix). Certain grant awards involving international activity/participation may be subject to sponsor restrictions and/or export control requirements that may require export control compliance clearance in advance of intended activity.

12. TERMINATION

The appointment of a PRA may be terminated through resignation, nonrenewal of appointment, loss of funding, or dismissal. In the event of nonrenewal, loss of funding, or dismissal (all considered involuntary terminations), the process must be coordinated through Human Resources to ensure compliance with university rules and procedures. Written notice should be provided at least 30 days in advance, or within a reasonable time period of when the relevant information becomes available.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Regulation [33.99.01, Employment Practices](#)

University Procedure [33.99.01.C0.01, Filling Staff Vacancies](#)

University Procedure [31.05.02.C0.01, External Employment](#)

Appendix

[Eligibility to Serve as Principal Investigator](#)

[Position Review Form](#)

[External Employment Application and Approval Form](#) (Authentication required)

Contact Office

Contact for interpretation and clarification: Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation
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