

Postdoctoral Fellows Salary Structure and Benefits

Setting PGY Level

Postdocs should be assigned an appropriate PGY (Postgraduate Year) level at the time of onboarding. PGY level will be determined and validated by Human Resources at time of onboarding based on years since graduation date. PIs may apply for an exception if they feel PGY level should be discounted (ex. postdoc took time away from research after graduation, postdoc completely changed scientific disciplines, etc.). Criteria used to determine PGY level must be consistently applied across a PI's group.

Once a PGY level is determined, the postdoc should be placed in the appropriate Research Fellow job code at the appropriate salary (see below) for their PGY level. At the conclusion of each training year, the PI must work with their Department to ensure the Fellow is bumped up to the next PGY level with a commensurate increase in PGY salary level. If a Fellow is already on a scale that is higher than the NRSA base stipend level (see below), that higher scale should be proportionately applied for each subsequent promotion to higher PGY level.

In addition, every year, the PI should conduct an Annual Career Conference with each Fellow to review prior performance, set goals for the upcoming training year and discuss the Fellow's pathway to independence.

New Salary Structure

The job market for postdoctoral research fellows is robust and is evolving quickly. As a result, the [NIH/NRSA stipend scale](#) is not necessarily a strong benchmark for what is considered a competitive salary in our regional job market. Many institutions in the Boston area are adjusting pay, and the current market is moving toward 20% over the NIH/NRSA salary scale. **It is strongly recommended that PI's make every effort to increase salary rates as soon as possible to be competitive in attracting and retaining the best candidates.**

Group Salary Increase

If a PI chooses to adopt a salary scale for their research group that is higher than the NIH guidance, all Fellows in the research group must be increased in an equitable manner. For example, if a PI chose to pay a PGY2 Fellow at 20% over the current NRSA scale, all Fellows in the PI's research group (regardless of PGY level) must also be increased by the same percentage.

These processes only need to be documented at the time of the adjustment by completing the **Lab Salary Structure Documentation Form** (see below) and submitting to the Department's/Division's Human Resources contact. Completing this form is required, but documenting the justification for increase wages is not required if the same percentage increase is applied to all postdocs in the lab equitably.

Individual Fellow Salary Increase:

In rare exceptions a PI may have the flexibility to compensate an individual Fellow at a higher rate than other Fellows in the group given appropriate detailed justification (e.g. the Fellow has rare, highly technical skills). The PI should document the Fellow's expertise/qualifications and equity across their research group by completing the **Postdoctoral Fellow Salary Documentation Form** (see below) and submitting to the Department's/Division's

Human Resources contact. As laid out on the form, the justification must be based on functional/technical qualifications. NOTE: Recruitment/retention is not an adequate justification to raise a single postdoc; the PI should be increasing their entire research group to ensure equity.

Individual Fellow Salary Increase Approvals

If increases do not apply to the entire research group, the justification for the higher salary(s) that apply to an individual(s) must be approved as follows:

- 0%-20% over NIH guidance: PI and Departmental approval required + submitting form to HR
- Above 20% over NIH guidance: VP of Research or designee approval required + submitting form to HR

Once salary flexibility has been approved and instituted, the Fellow's salary cannot revert from the new rate. PIs should plan and budget accordingly to ensure that a proposed salary increase will be sustained permanently. Any exceptions must be reviewed with HR.

All necessary approvals, as listed above, must be secured and documented prior to any offers being made and before any increases are discussed with current staff.

Future Salary Structure

While it is encouraged that all PIs move to market rates for their postdocs as soon as possible, in FY25 (October, 2024), MGB will require that postdocs be paid at market rate, which is assumed now to be 20% over the NIH/NRSA scale. **PIs should plan accordingly now to ensure existing and future grants are budgeted appropriately.**

Benefits

HR and research leadership are working to rollout some benefits enhancements for research fellows effective July 1st, 2023. We are working through the details and logistics now. Additional information will be provided soon.

