EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
East Carolina University
1500 Greenville Centre, Greenville, NC 27858

Director  Kathryn Verbanac PhD
verbanack@ecu.edu
252-744-4812

Assistant VC/RGS Wanda Wynne
wynnew@ecu.edu
252-328-9478
http://blog.ecu.edu/sites/postdoctoralaffairs/
Postdoctoral Scholar Handbook
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Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) at East Carolina University was established in 2008 within the graduate school to ensure successful training and work experiences for postdoctoral scholars by providing a supportive working environment. In October 2013, the office was moved to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies and the position of Director was established. Postdoctoral scholars are a growing population at ECU, and we are committed to support the career development of these important members of our community.

Six core competencies have been defined by the National Postdoctoral Association. These serve to guide the postdoctoral scholar, mentor and institution of those skills that should be achieved for the scholar to ultimately achieve intellectual and professional independence and success:

- Discipline-specific conceptual knowledge
- Research skill development
- Communication skills
- Professionalism
- Leadership and management skills
- Responsible conduct of research

With these competencies as a guide, the OPA and officers of the ECU Postdoctoral Scholar Association seek to increase scholar engagement and participation in the association and in career development programs and opportunities.

Mission Statement

To advance the research and related missions of ECU through the enhancement, support, and promotion of Postdoctoral training at East Carolina University and to prepare Postdoctoral Scholars for successful careers.

Goals

- To serve as the central resource unit for Postdoctoral Scholar issues on campus
- To develop sense of community among ECU Postdoctoral Scholar and to integrate them into the larger university community
- To provide career and professional development programs and services
- To assist in the recruitment and retention of Postdoctoral at ECU
East Carolina University is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in the form of research and other scholarly activities in an environment that embraces collaboration and publication of scholarly results. Inventions, discoveries and other intellectual assets may also result from the conduct of these activities. These assets may contribute to development of new products and services that could benefit from intellectual property protection in the form of patents and copyrights. The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina has determined that patenting and commercialization of these assets is consistent with the mission of the University. The Patent and Copyright policies of East Carolina University provide valuable direction on such matters as how and when to disclose new inventions to the University, determining ownership of intellectual assets, defining responsibility for commercialization activities, and the process for distribution of any income earned as a result of these activities. Compliance with these policies is a condition of employment for University employees, enrollment of University students, and access to University facilities by visitors and volunteers.

The Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) is responsible for all issues related to University inventions, such as performing market and intellectual property assessments, securing intellectual property protections, identifying industry and commercialization partners, and negotiating license agreements. OTT also facilitates engagement of collaboration partners in the review and use of ECU intellectual property through Material Transfer Agreements and Confidential Disclosure Agreements.

**Invention Disclosure**

University personnel, who either alone or in association with others make an invention in which the University has or may have an interest, must disclose such inventions in a Report of Invention to OTT. OTT will work with inventors to manage the invention in the best interest of the University, the inventors, and the public. To obtain maximum intellectual property protection, a disclosure should be made prior to submitting data for publication or presenting to a group of non-ECU personnel.

**Invention Ownership**

Unless otherwise provided for in a written agreement signed by an authorized ECU official, the University owns all right, title and interest in inventions that are conceived or conceived and reduced to practice with the aid of University facilities, staff or students, or with funds administered by the University.


**Discussing Your Invention with Others**
Public disclosure of an invention in either written or oral form may create challenges to obtaining patent protection for new inventions. Examples of public disclosures include published articles, abstracts, posters, seminar descriptions, grant proposals, and theses and dissertations. While the United States allows a one-year grace period to file a patent application following public disclosure of an invention, most other countries do not make such an allowance. To maximize protection of University inventions, OTT should be notified immediately if a public disclosure of an invention is anticipated.

**Confidentiality Agreements**
Unpublished information and research data generated by ECU personnel may benefit from terms confidentiality found in a Confidential Disclosure Agreement (CDA) or Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) prior to disclosure to collaborators from other organizations or potential industry partners. CDAs and NDAs recognize the proprietary nature of unpublished information and restrict the manner in which the information can be used by the receiving party.

**Material Transfer Agreements**
Similar protection is available in the form of a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) for tangible research materials such as cell lines, antibodies, vectors, animal models, computer chip design, and software.

For more information about the disclosure, assessment, and commercialization process for University inventions, contact OTT at (252) 328-9549 or visit https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/ott/. OTT is also a valuable resource for advice when sharing research information or materials is anticipated with non-ECU collaborators or potential industry partners.
ECU OFFICE OF POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS

RESEARCH SERVICES

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND COMMITMENT

ECU’s PRR Regulation on Conflicts of Interest and Commitment,” as stated in Part VIII of the Faculty Manual requires all Professional Staff to complete a Conflict of Interest form annually, whether or not they have any of the relationships that may be deemed to compete with their University responsibilities. A statement regarding conflicts of interest is located on the Division of Research and Graduate Studies website: https://ecu.myresearchonline.org/air

An electronic campus Conflict of Interest and Commitment disclosure site with links to additional conflict of interest material is available online at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/facultymanual/appendixi/appendixi.htm

If you have questions about this policy, contact: Dr. Hiromi Sanders, Assistant Director of Compliance in the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance. Telephone number: 252-328-9474.

RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

In addition to academic departments, ECU contains a number of Centers and Institutes in which research is fundamental to their mission. A listing of these can be found at: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/rgs/centers.cfm. This site contains links to each Center and Institute.

HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

All behavioral or biomedical research involving human subjects conducted at or sponsored by ECU must be reviewed an Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the involvement of those subjects. The institutional human subjects in research policy can be found at: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/facultymanual/part7/74.htm.

The primary function of the University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at ECU is to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects engaged in research at East Carolina University, The Brody School of Medicine, Pitt County Memorial Hospital and its affiliates, and in research conducted elsewhere by faculty, students, staff or other representatives of ECU in connection with their responsibilities. This mission is accomplished by an
institutional commitment to education and establishment of a collaborative relationship with the researchers and key support staff. The UMCIRB URL is: http://www.ecu.edu/irb/

Researchers are encouraged to contact the relevant IRB to obtain the necessary guidelines, forms, and schedule of meeting dates.

**ANIMAL SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH**

Every investigator must understand the laws and regulations that govern the use of animals for research and to incorporate them into their research efforts. Although there are many federal, state and local regulations governing the use of animals, there are two main sets of regulations with which the investigator should be familiar. These are the “Animal Welfare Act” enforced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Public Health Service (PHS) “Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals” administered by the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. Many of the USDA regulations are similar to those of the PHS policy.

Both of these policies require each research institution to establish an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) with defined responsibilities. These include the review of all proposed activities related to the care and use of animals, semi-annual review of the institution’s program for animal care, and semi-annual review of all animal facilities and animal research areas.

Federal policy directs IACUC to evaluate research proposals by investigators to ensure that the number of experimental animals is appropriate, non-animal alternatives are used if possible, any pain or distress is minimized, use of animals has been justified, activities do not unnecessarily duplicate previous efforts, personnel are appropriately qualified, and animal activities are in accord with the USDA regulations and PHS policy. ECU is an elective member of the Association for the Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (AAALAC).

Researchers should direct questions about the use of vertebrate animals to any of those listed at the end of this section.

ECU is committed to the human and ethical treatment of animal subjects in research. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) fosters compliance through facilitating the efforts employed by the institution’s scientists and instructors in the utilization of the animals in research, education and other scholarly pursuits.

For more information about the IACUC, please e-mail us (iacuc@ecu.edu). Additionally, feel free to contact the following individuals or offices for assistance.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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OFFICE OF CLINICAL TRIALS

The main focus of the Office of Clinical Trials (OCT) at ECU is to provide support for clinical research. By working closely with investigators, we strive to facilitate the approval process and to improve the overall quality of clinical research. Our goals include ensuring compliance with federal, state and institutional regulations, policies and procedures in order to protect the interests of patients and of the university.

The OCT provides certified, experienced study coordinators to assist principal investigators with all clinical requirements related to their studies. The OCT website is: http://www.ecu.edu/clinicaltrials/.

OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) assists faculty, staff, and students in obtaining external grants and contracts to support research, instruction, and service activities. OSP coordinates with the Office of Research Development in identifying funding opportunities and preparing and submitting proposals on behalf of the University, with a focus on assuring that proposals comply with University and sponsor requirements. Additionally, OSP negotiates and accepts awards from sponsors, issues sub-awards under funded projects, and oversees other award actions such as incremental funding actions, award modifications, and no-cost extensions. OSP’s RAMSeS electronic proposal routing and approval system tracks proposal submissions and awards, providing valuable information to faculty for annual evaluation purposes and to ECU and UNC administration for assessment and strategic planning purposes. The OSP website is http://www.ecu.edu/osp. OSP staff may be contacted via email at osp@ecu.edu.

TRAINING COURSES FOR POSTDOCTORAL

Several departments on campus offer training to Postdoctoral scholars in a variety of areas. Please see individual departments for training courses that apply to your research.

Training for Research Involving Human Subjects

All persons engaged in research involving human subjects must complete training in ethical conduct of research and protection of subjects. This includes faculty, staff and students, regardless of funding. All submissions to IRB must include documentation that all members of the research team have completed required education.

This educational requirement can be met by completing a web-based training module. Information regarding this training can be obtained from the ECU IACUC office. Upon completion, you will be able to print out a certificate. Each
individual involved in the conduct of the research will need to complete the module on their own and print out a separate certificate.

**ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

ECU offers a variety of professional and personal service for its faculty, staff, and students. Please visit the ECU website at: [www.ecu.edu](http://www.ecu.edu) for more information.

For the answers to any questions regarding your professional development experience at ECU, please feel free to call the Director of the Office of Postgraduate Affairs at (252)328-6013.
APPENDIX
1. Years of Postdoctoral training:

2. What were your major goals for last year?

3. Which goals did you meet? For ones you did not meet, why not?

4. Provide a rough estimate of your time -- what % of your time was spent on each of the following activities during the past year, what changes will you in these time commitments next year:

   Research
   Attending seminars
   Teaching (classroom)
   Teaching (in lab)
   Reading
   Writing
   Classes
   Career development activities
   Job search activities
   Other

5. What oral presentations (lab meetings, journal clubs, in-house scientific meetings (including poster sessions) did you make in the past year? Do you feel your presentation skills have improved? Are there specific areas of verbal communication you would like to work on in the coming year? How will you work to develop better communication skills?

6. Did you do any teaching in the past year (classes, laboratories, small groups)? Would you like additional opportunities to teach in the coming year? How will you find these teaching opportunities?

7. What papers did you write in the past year? Do you feel your writing skills have improved? Are there specific areas of written communication you would like to work on in the coming year? How will you improve your writing skills?
8. What research-related skills have you acquired in the past year? What further skills do you need to acquire to be successful as a Postdoctoral and in your future career? How will you gain exposure to these skills and evaluate your competency?

9. How much time did you spend on experiments or projects that did not work? Did you ever figure out why they didn't work? Are you continuing to work on them? How long are you willing to keep trying before you drop those experiments? Are there more important experiments that you could or should be doing?

10. In what areas have you done background reading? In what areas do you need to do more reading? How much time do you think you will need to set aside for this reading?

11. What collaborations have you established? Are they successful and beneficial to you? Do you need to establish others or modify your current collaborations?

12. What fellowships or grants did you write? Were they funded? If yes, how will you assure that you make progress on these projects in the coming year? If you were not successful, what can you do to improve the application?

13. What goal(s) received your top priority for the past year? Did you succeed?

14. What goal(s) will receive your top priority for the coming year? Do you foresee any major obstacles and what do you need to do to minimize their impact?

15. What is your long-term career goal? What did you do this year to help develop contacts relevant to your job search? What career development programs do you need to participate in? What can you do to improve your chances of moving quickly into the job of your choice?