



MASSACHUSETTS  
GENERAL HOSPITAL

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# Guidelines for Research Fellows

**55 Fruit Street  
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HARVARD  
MEDICAL SCHOOL  
A Teaching Affiliate

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## **Preamble**

The Guidelines for Research Fellows at MGH were developed in 2006-2007 by the Office for Research Career Development (ORCD) at the Center for Faculty Development with the intent of enhancing the Research Fellowship experience for both the faculty mentor and the Research Fellow.

The contents of the Guidelines (“Postdoc Policy”) evolved from numerous discussions with faculty and research fellows and incorporate the initial recommendations presented to the General Executive Committee (GEC) by the Executive Committee on Research (ECOR)-appointed task force in 2005. In addition, the following MGH/Partners offices provided important feedback to ensure the integrity of the policy: ECOR, Human Resources, Office of the General Counsel, Partners Office for International Staff, Scholars and Students, Professional Staff Benefits Office, the Registrar/Credentialing Unit (now called the Medical Staff Office), and Research Management. Guidance for the policy was also obtained from analyzing existing postdoctoral policies at 50 leading medical schools, the National Postdoctoral Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges. At the time of the development of the MGH policy, there were no known postdoc policies at any other hospitals nationally.

## **Introduction**

Research Fellows consider scholarly research an essential component of their educational and professional career development and make significant contributions to the research enterprise at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH).

Throughout their tenure at the MGH, Research Fellows conduct scientific research and contribute to the development of medical knowledge and other health sciences. The MGH strives to provide a stimulating and productive research environment for Research Fellows by emphasizing the mutual responsibilities and commitments of the hospital, faculty, and Research Fellows.

A Research Fellow appointment at the MGH is intended to be a short-term training position to be followed by a move to an independent investigator or research career position elsewhere. The maximum term of service for a Research Fellow appointment is five (5) years, and appointment as a Research Fellow should not be deemed or understood as a pathway to a permanent position at the MGH or Harvard Medical School (HMS).

Each service, department, and/or unit is responsible for the implementation of these policies in the best interest of Research Fellows and their professional development during their tenure at the MGH.

## Definition of an MGH Research Fellow

A Research Fellow is a trainee in residence pursuing advanced study beyond a doctorate or medical degree in preparation for a full-time academic and/or research career. Persons appointed to the Research Fellow title must have recently earned a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent terminal or doctoral degree in their field of study. All degree requirements must be completed and the degree conferred prior to beginning a Research Fellow appointment. In the instance that a Research Fellow starts in the position prior to the conferring of the terminal degree, a formal letter from the Registrar's Office of the granting institution is required, stating that all degree requirements have been completed.

In addition to the academic degree requirement stated above, appointments to the Research Fellow title should:

- be for a period of no longer than *five years*
- involve *full-time* research and/or scholarship
- be viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic and/or research career
- not be part of a clinical training program
- be under the supervision of a faculty member or department at the MGH
- allow and encourage the appointee to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship in coordination with the faculty mentor

## Initial Appointment Process

Research Fellows are initially appointed to the Professional Staff for a period of one (1) year and must be reappointed by their department every year on their anniversary date if they continue their advanced training at the MGH. Each initial appointee to the Professional Staff shall be given a copy of the Bylaws of the Professional Staff of the MGH and shall agree to be bound by the Bylaws and all applicable rules and regulations of the Hospital and the Professional Staff.

All Research Fellow initial appointments are processed by the originating service, department, and/or unit and are sent to the Medical Staff Office for review and credentialing. In addition, for foreign nationals, MGH requires all immigration-related documents to be processed through the Partners Office for International Professionals and Students (PIPS). The steps towards initial appointment are as follows:

- Initial Employment Letter is sent from PI to Research Fellow (Appendix A)
- Service collects and Chief signs off on initial non-clinical credentialing application
- Credentialing Process – Medical Staff Office
- Medical Staff Office “Sign In”
  - Professional Staff Benefits Office (insurance if eligible, email activation)
  - Police & Security (MGH ID card)
  - Occupational Health

Partners Office for International Professionals & Students (for those entering the country on a visa)

## **Term of Service**

A Research Fellow appointment is a *short-term training position* intended to lead to an independent research career in academia, industry, or government. A time-limited appointment offers the Research Fellow the opportunity to pursue further training under the direction of a faculty mentor while at the same time protecting him/her from an indefinite tenure in a training position. The term of service should provide an adequate amount of time for a Research Fellow to transition into a full-time position with the appropriate salary and benefits commensurate with their education and research experience.

The total duration of an individual's term of service as a Research Fellow at the MGH should not exceed five (5) years. This maximum tenure is inclusive of any previous time spent as a Research Fellow at the MGH, but is not prorated for any previous postdoctoral positions held elsewhere.

At the conclusion of the five (5) year maximum term of service at the MGH, Research Fellows are expected either; to find employment elsewhere, receive a change in status at the MGH to an established weekly payroll position (Research Scientist / Senior Research Scientist) with the appropriate benefits and retirement vesting, or secure a Professional Staff faculty appointment. The two latter outcomes must be approved by the faculty mentor, and additionally by the department for a faculty appointment.

### **Extension to Maximum Term of Service**

Under exceptional circumstances, a one (1) year extension to the maximum term of service for an MGH Research Fellow appointment may be requested. An Appointment Extension Request Form (Found online at [https://is.gd/extension\\_requests](https://is.gd/extension_requests)) should be submitted by the faculty mentor to the Exceptions Committee, indicating the circumstances supporting the extension (nature of research requires additional time, appointee took extended leave of absence, etc.), along with supporting materials as indicated on the Extension Request Form.

Research Fellows who become a parent of a child during their tenure at the MGH will be granted an extension of one (1) year to the maximum term of service for each child born or adopted upon receipt of extension request. The should be submitted indicating the intention to extend the maximum term of service for reasons related to the birth or adoption of a child.

Submissions to the Exceptions Committee should occur no later than 60 days prior to the expiration of the maximum term of service.

## **Appointment Status**

A Research Fellow appointment is a *full-time position* and is intended to provide advanced training while maintaining an active research program under the direct supervision of a faculty mentor. During a Research Fellow's term of employment, however, extenuating circumstances may arise that would require a reduction in the number of hours worked or a leave of absence.

### **Exceptions to Full-Time**

Only in rare cases should a Research Fellow's employment be part-time and these cases must be approved through the office of the Senior Vice President (SVP) for Research ([MGHPostdocException@partners.org](mailto:MGHPostdocException@partners.org)). After consultation and mutual agreement, a faculty mentor and Research Fellow may request that the fellow's position be changed to part-time for personal or professional reasons that must be justified in the interests of the fellow's training and career progress. All requests must be submitted to [MGHPostdocException@partners.org](mailto:MGHPostdocException@partners.org). Requests will be processed by MGH Human Resources, with final approval by the SVP for Research. For questions about the process, email [MGHPostdocException@partners.org](mailto:MGHPostdocException@partners.org).

Faculty mentors and Research Fellows should communicate in writing the terms of the exception to full-time status, including research expectations, salary, duration and working hours.

### **Leaves of Absence**

Any requests for a leave of absence should be discussed between the Research Fellow and faculty mentor and are subject to departmental approval. Leaves are intended for extenuating circumstances that require time away from work for more than five (5) workdays and include Active and Inactive leaves for the birth/adoption of a child, medical care, personal illness, and to care for a family member who is ill. Please refer to the Massachusetts General Hospital, Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual for a detailed description of policies regarding Leaves of Absence. The most current manual can be found via:

[http://mghresearch.partners.org/Policies\\_Procedures/PoliciesProcedures.aspx](http://mghresearch.partners.org/Policies_Procedures/PoliciesProcedures.aspx)

### **Active Leave**

Active Leaves are absences in which the supervisor or faculty mentor holds open the Research Fellow's position or an equivalent position for the duration of the leave. An active leave is defined as one which is covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or the Massachusetts Maternity Leave Act. All benefits are maintained as if the Research Fellow was actively working. During an Active Leave, MGH will continue the Research Fellow's insurance coverage. During any paid portion of a leave, the Research Fellow's share of the premium will be deducted from the regular pay. During any unpaid portion of leave, the

premium due in arrears will be recorded and deducted from the Research Fellow's regular pay immediately upon return.

### **Inactive Leave**

Inactive Leaves are absences in which the supervisor or faculty mentor has the option of holding or not holding open the Research Fellow's position. An Inactive Leave is for an extended absence not covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act or the Massachusetts Maternity Leave Act.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) applies to Research Fellows with at least one year of service who have worked at least 1250 hours in the past year. Under the FMLA, a Research Fellow's position or an equivalent position is held without pay (except as noted below in the Maternity Disability Leave Program) for a maximum of twelve weeks from the date of the leave. All benefits are maintained as if the Research Fellow was actively working. The FMLA offers up to twelve (12) weeks of Active leave within a rolling 12-month period for the following:

FMLA – Birth/adoption/foster care of a child (applicable to both men and women)

FMLA – Personal illness

FMLA –Care of a family member who is ill

### **Parental Leave Program for MGH Professional Staff**

Appointed members of the MGH/MGPO Professional Staff (including Clinical and Research Fellows) are eligible for 8 weeks of centrally funded paid leave due to becoming a parent due to childbirth or adoption.

To facilitate the necessary administration of this program, and comply with all state and federal regulations that pertain to protected absences from work, the Research Fellow must apply for a leave of absence under the FMLA and/or the Massachusetts Maternity Leave Act (MMLA). Research Fellows with at least one year of service who have worked at least 1250 hours in the past year are entitled to apply for a leave of up to twelve (12) weeks under the FMLA. Research Fellows with at least three (3) months, but less than one year, of service, are entitled to an eight (8) week Active leave of absence under the MMLA. The sponsoring department must notify the MGH Professional Staff Benefits Office (PSBO) of the Fellow's absence so that the PSBO may assist in administration of the benefits programs.

On receipt of the request for leave under the FMLA or MMLA, the MGH leave coordinator will place the Research Fellow on an Active leave of absence for

eight or twelve weeks depending upon FMLA eligibility. At least eight weeks of the leave will be paid.

Sponsoring departments may recover salary continuance and employee benefits costs from the MGPO and from the Hospital by submitting a request to the Professional Staff Benefits Office.

Time taken for an approved Leave of Absence does not count toward the 5-year time limit of a Research Fellow's appointment.

## **Salary and Benefits**

### **Salary Minimum**

In 2014 the Postdoctoral Fellow Salary Policy took effect at MGH. This Policy states that all Postdoctoral Fellows at MGH will receive a minimum annual salary based on the NIH/NRSA PGY Salary Scale in effect at the time of appointment for years 0-4, commensurate with experience. Details, including information about exceptions, and the most current updates can be found at: <https://mghresearch.partners.org/postdoctoral-fellow-salary-policy-html/>

Research fellows who are hired with validated outside funding (not originating or paid through MGH), must be supplemented by the hiring PI/department to meet the above salary standard. Any exceptions to this must be submitted to [MGHPostdocException@partners.org](mailto:MGHPostdocException@partners.org) for review and approval by the Office of the MGH Senior Vice President for Research.

### **Exceptions**

In some cases, postdoctoral researchers may participate in a research *training* capacity under a pre-approved formal, unpaid status. This status is allowable for a maximum of one year. Research fellows participating under these circumstances must have a *training plan* that is completed by the PI. As with other exceptions, pre-approval must be submitted to [MGHPostdocException@partners.org](mailto:MGHPostdocException@partners.org) for review and final approval by the Office of the MGH Senior Vice President for Research. The training plan and offer letter to be used with postdocs who are participating in this capacity can be found here: <https://mghresearch.partners.org/postdoctoral-fellow-salary-policy-html/>

An additional exception to the above salary standard exists for any foreign Research Fellow holding an H-1B visa. Federal regulations require that H-1B workers be paid the prevailing or actual wage. The MGH relies on a state-determined prevailing wage as set by the Division of Career Services, Prevailing Wage Unit. For more information on H-1B wage requirements, please contact the Partners Office for International Professionals & Students at (617) 726-9211 or visit the U.S. Department of Labor site on Foreign Labor Certification at <http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/>. There are significant penalties

for employers seeking to employ H-1B workers who do not meet these salary minimums. All applications for MGH sponsorship for visa benefits must be signed by a designee of the MGH Office of the General Counsel.

Services, departments, units or faculty mentors may establish their own salary guidelines provided they meet the yearly minimum salary as determined by the Professional Staff Benefits Office or prevailing wage minimum for H-1B visa holders. For more information, see the web site of the Partners Office for International Professionals and Students: [pips.partners.org](http://pips.partners.org).

### **Paid Time Off**

The MGH provides Research Fellows with a minimum of 15 working days of paid time off (in addition to the MGH-designated holidays) per year, such year to commence on the Research Fellow's first day of employment/appointment. Paid time off may be used for vacation, personal days or sick time. If a Research Fellow's employment ends before the end of the year for which they are appointed, the amount of paid time off they are eligible to take will be prorated according to the proportion of the appointment year that the Research Fellow is employed. All paid time off must be used in the appointment year during which it was earned, or it will be forfeited; Research Fellows may not carry over, from one year to the next, paid time off. Research Fellows are not eligible for vacation pay-out if they leave MGH before the end of an appointment year. It is within the discretion of the faculty mentor to approve vacation requests by a Research Fellow, taking into account such factors as length of service and the needs of the lab. The paid time off guidelines described here are in effect only for those Research Fellows on the MGH payroll.

If additional sick days are needed beyond the minimum described above, these must be arranged with the faculty mentor on an as needed basis with a maximum of 12 days per year per NRSA standards. Any additional paid time off beyond the established minimum for Research Fellows is determined at the discretion of individual services, departments, units, or faculty mentors. Any requested time off by a Research Fellow should be discussed and agreed upon in collaboration with their faculty mentor.

### **Benefits**

All employees paid by MGH, and with an MGH appointment of Research Fellow, or those on external funds who are paid a supplement by MGH of at least \$10,000 and work a minimum of 20 hours/week, are eligible for MGH Benefits. The MGH offers a comprehensive benefits program to choose from including a broad spectrum of medical insurance plans from traditional indemnity plans to HMOs, a prescription drug plan, two dental insurance plans, a vision care plan, a pre-tax flexible spending account, long-term disability insurance, life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance plans, a tax sheltered annuity program and long term care coverage. The MGH also offers a fitness benefit to employees to join the MGH/Charles River Park Fitness Center at a discounted membership rate.

### **Benefits Credits**

Benefits-eligible Research Fellow appointees paid by MGH are entitled to receive Benefits Credits under the FLEX program. FLEX is a comprehensive program that gives employees a choice about how to allocate the dollars MGH makes available as part of the total compensation package. FLEX is designed to reflect personal choice by allowing employees to select the options that best meet their needs and the needs of their family. Research Fellow appointees may receive two types of Benefit Credits under FLEX which are reflected on the payroll statement as credits to the monthly salary:

- Basic Credits – money to be used to help purchase benefits. Or, if no benefits are purchased, to be received as additional taxable income (credit increases after one year of service).
- Medical Credits – additional money provided if medical insurance is purchased. The Medical Credit when combined with the Basic Credit will significantly reduce medical insurance costs of the participant (credit increases after one year of service).

For additional information regarding enrollment and a detailed overview of benefits for Research Fellow appointees, please visit the Professional Staff Benefits Office online via the MGH Intranet at

<http://mgpo.partners.org/MGPOCentral/HR/ProfessionalStaffBenefits.html> or [www.AskMyHRPortal.com](http://www.AskMyHRPortal.com) .

### **Mentorship and Career Development**

Through an environment that promotes an open dialogue between faculty mentors and Research Fellows and that has high expectations for effective mentoring, the MGH is committed to further strengthening the career development and mentoring of Research Fellow appointees. The MGH recognizes that it is within the faculty mentor-Research Fellow relationship that most mentoring will take place and honors the latitude and discretion required to forge such relationships.

#### **Mentoring During Postdoctoral Training**

In addition to the faculty mentor-Research Fellow relationship, it is beneficial for Research Fellows to seek career advice and mentoring from other members of the research community at the MGH and HMS not directly involved in their research endeavors. It is in this spirit that Research Fellows, in collaboration with their faculty mentor, are strongly encouraged to establish a mentoring network to provide guidance for career development and to discuss future professional goals. The Office for Research Career Development (ORCD) provides individual career advice meetings for postdoctoral fellows to discuss strategies for developing a mentoring network. To request a career advice meeting, email [pdd@partners.org](mailto:pdd@partners.org).

### **Annual Career Planning Meeting**

The Annual Career Planning Meeting is a necessary component of the annual reappointment process for MGH Research Fellows and should be completed at least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the current appointment. The Annual Career Planning Form (Appendix B) provides the Research Fellow and Mentor with a written record of accomplishments and plans/goals for the upcoming year. Reappointment to the Professional Staff is contingent upon the administration of the Annual Career Planning Meeting and the successful completion of the Research Fellow Progress and Career Planning Form (Appendix B), which must be submitted annually to the research fellow's department. Departments are required to track the Annual Career Planning Form in PeopleSoft, where compliance will be monitored. Parts I and II of the form are to be filled out in their entirety by the Research Fellow prior to the Annual Career Planning Meeting with his/her primary faculty mentor. Faculty mentors and Research Fellows may add any additional information or materials to the form they may deem helpful.

The meeting should be viewed as an opportunity for the Research Fellow to discuss recent accomplishments, current career goals and future plans for professional development with his/her faculty mentor and obtain feedback regarding progress and training. The outcome of the Annual Career Planning Meeting should be a clear and mutually agreed upon plan for the upcoming year of appointment to the Professional Staff.

### **Career Development Resources**

As an institutional commitment to the career development of research scientists at the MGH, the Office for Research Career Development (ORCD) was formed in 2005. As a branch of the Center for Faculty Development, the ORCD makes available a wide array of career resources including a *Professional Development for Researchers* curriculum that addresses the professional needs of both faculty and Research Fellows. In December 2016, the Post Doctoral Division (PDD) was opened as a division of the ORCD, to strengthen the commitment to and resources for research fellows. Additionally, the ORCD offers one-on-one counseling sessions to Research Fellows for career advice, CV preparation and feedback, promotion preparedness, and general research issues. Research Fellows are encouraged to utilize the resources of the ORCD and PDD. For more information on the Office for Research Career Development, please visit <https://facultydevelopment.massgeneral.org/orcd/>.

The Ombuds Office at Harvard Medical School is a resource available to MGH Research Fellow appointees and offers itself as an independent and safe forum to voice concerns about work related issues and to discuss career management. The Office offers individualized appointments to discuss specific concerns Research Fellows may have regarding performance, promotion, looking for work, concerns with recommendation letters, current working conditions, etc. The Ombuds Office should be viewed as an

impartial and confidential sounding board to address career issues in an effort to more effectively deal with problems as they arise and promote future career successes. For more information on the Ombuds Office or to schedule an appointment, please visit <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/ombuds/>.

## **Research Fellow Responsibilities and Obligations**

The primary responsibility of a Research Fellow is to actively participate in the research enterprise of the MGH under the supervision of a faculty mentor. While it is recognized that individual faculty mentors have their own style of conducting research, specific research expectations and training should be established in collaboration with the faculty mentor and should be outlined as early as the initial Employment Letter. Research Fellows have the additional responsibility of taking proactive ownership of their career development and research training during their tenure at the MGH. Through active participation in professional seminars, career training, use of career development resources (see Office for Research Career Development link above), and meeting regularly with mentors and colleagues, Research Fellows gain a sense of responsibility for their career development and are better able to communicate their training needs.

All materials and data collected during a Research Fellow's training at the MGH belong to the Institution, and not to the individual Fellow. Data should not be removed from the lab or shared outside the lab in any form (including but not limited to data/graphs in electronic or hardcopy form, grants, manuscripts, or conference presentations) without prior discussion and consent from the PI/Faculty Mentor.

At the time of departure from the MGH, each Fellow is responsible for the written notification to the faculty mentor and/or other departmental staff of the disposition of Research Records, including the location of all materials and data, medical records, consent forms and any other recorded information related to the research conducted at the hospital. Each Fellow must also complete an Intellectual Property Certification when leaving MGH. The appropriate forms for this notification may be obtained from Research Management, as part of the policy on Transferring Research Activities from MGH. These forms are also available from the ORCD, by calling 617-643-1606.

All Research Fellows at the MGH agree to read and abide by the Bylaws, rules, regulations and policies of the Professional Staff and of the Hospital.

Additional responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Conscientious discharge of assigned duties
- Adherence to strict research integrity as defined by the Partners Research Integrity Policy
- Compliance with established laboratory practices and hospital standards
- Observation of established regulations for research involving biohazards, human subjects or animals, radiation

- Collegial conduct towards co-workers and laboratory staff
- Participation in and completion of the Annual Career Planning Meeting

## **Faculty Responsibilities for Mentoring and Career Development**

Faculty mentors serve as the primary agent at the MGH for guiding and supervising the advanced training and scholarly pursuits of Research Fellows. In that capacity, faculty mentors should make clear the goals, objectives, and expectations of the research training and the responsibilities of Research Fellows working in their laboratory. Faculty mentors are expected to meet regularly with the Research Fellows under their direction to communicate expectations and provide timely feedback of the Research Fellow's progress and performance.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Detailing Research Fellow's responsibilities, expectations, and conditions of employment in the Initial Employment Letter
- Mentoring Research Fellows in fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations
- Fostering the professional development of Research Fellows towards achieving independence
- Providing career advice and job placement assistance to Research Fellows
- Administration of Annual Career Planning Meeting, and completing mentor sections of the Annual Career Planning form.

## **Reappointment**

All Research Fellow reappointments are administered by the service, department or unit that hired the research fellow. Research Fellow reappointments to the Professional Staff are for a tenure of one (1) year and are contingent upon the Annual Career Planning Meeting being completed between the Research Fellow and primary faculty mentor. Faculty mentors should provide a summary of expectations, goals and areas for further development along with a career plan trajectory for Research Fellows in their letters recommending reappointment. A signed copy of the Research Fellow Progress and Annual Career Planning form must be kept on file by the department or unit in which the postdoc works.

## **Termination**

Research Fellows are at will employees of the MGH and their employment may therefore be terminated at any time with or without cause. Research Fellows also may terminate their employment at any time.

At the time of departure from the MGH, each Research Fellow is responsible for the written notification to the faculty mentor and/or other departmental staff of the disposition of Research Records, including the location of all materials and data, medical records, consent forms and any other recorded information related to the research conducted at the hospital. Each Research Fellow must also complete an Intellectual Property Certification when leaving MGH. The appropriate forms for this notification may be obtained from Partners Research Management, as part of the policy on Transferring Research Activities from MGH: <https://mghresearch.partners.org/wp-content/uploads/MGH-PI-Transfer-Out-Packet-6.7.17.pdf>.

This section describes standards relating to the termination of a Research Fellow's employment. Appendix C contains a template for a Research Fellow termination letter, which may be customized for different discontinuation reasons.

**Discontinuation with notice (90 day notice)**

In the event of termination of a Research Fellow's employment, it is generally expected that the Research Fellow should be given a minimum of ninety (90) days notice of termination in writing so that the Research Fellow has sufficient time to arrange for departure from the MGH and/or transition to other opportunities within the MGH. Certain cases may justify a shorter notice period.

**Discontinuation due to lack of funding**

It may be the case that financial support for a Research Fellow may be reduced or terminated by an action of an extramural granting agency beyond the faculty mentor's control. In the event that funding cannot be secured to continue the appointment, a minimum of ninety (90) days written notice generally should be provided whenever possible, so that the Research Fellow has sufficient time to arrange for departure from the MGH and/or transition to other opportunities within the MGH.

**Discontinuation due to expiration of term of service**

As a Research Fellow approaches the end of the current appointment year or the five (5) year maximum term of employment, the faculty mentor should provide in writing a reminder notice to the Research Fellow no later than ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of the term of employment. This should also be discussed at the Annual Career Planning Meeting that occurs prior to the final year of MGH training.

Any requests to extend the maximum term of employment for a Research Fellow should be submitted to the Exceptions Committee by the faculty mentor no later than 60 days prior to the expiration of the maximum term of employment.

**Resignation by Research Fellow**

A Research Fellow seeking to resign from his/her position prior to the expiration of the current appointment should observe the professional standard of offering at least thirty (30) days notice in writing to his/her faculty mentor. As appropriate for research projects, a Research Fellow is obligated to leave all research materials, data, and the like in a state that the project may be continued without interruption by the faculty mentor or other

members of the laboratory. Per Hospital policy, all materials, property (physical and intellectual) and/or findings obtained or generated as a result of research conducted at the MGH is property of the Hospital and shall not be removed from the premises of the Hospital upon a Research Fellow's resignation or termination.

### **Cause for Termination**

Cause for termination of a Research Fellow's employment includes, but is not limited to, poor attendance, poor productivity, failure to collaborate with or work effectively with colleagues and staff, failure to fulfill the duties of the position, research misconduct, violation of Hospital or Partners policies, procedures and standards, and conduct that is detrimental or disruptive to Hospital operations. In cases of termination for cause, it is recommended that the faculty mentor consult with the Employee/Labor Relations department (617-643-0964).

### **Misconduct – Harassment**

The MGH Policy on Harassment seeks to protect the rights of all employees, professional staff, and volunteers by ensuring an MGH community that is free of harassment based on race, color, ethnicity or national origin, culture, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age, genetic information, ancestry, children, marital status, veteran status or membership in the armed services, or the receiving of public assistance. It is expected that all employees and professional staff will act in a responsible manner and not engage in any form of harassment or behavior that negatively reflects upon an individual in the aforementioned classes. In an atmosphere of equitable treatment, trust and respect, any harassing behavior or actions based on intolerance and bigotry is in conflict with the Hospital's goal of an inclusive workplace where individual differences are accepted and affirmed.

In addition, the MGH Policy on Sexual Harassment states that the sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the MGH. Allegations of sexual harassment are taken seriously and are responded to promptly to determine if inappropriate behavior has occurred. In instances of inappropriate behavior, MGH management will take any and all actions necessary to eliminate the conduct up to and including termination of employment.

Any employee or agent of the MGH who has been found to have retaliated against an employee who filed a complaint, is suspected of filing a complaint, or assisted in an investigation of a complaint, will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

Please refer to the Massachusetts General Hospital, Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual for a detailed description of policies regarding Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Misconduct. The most current manual can be viewed online at [http://mghresearch.partners.org/Policies\\_Procedures/PoliciesProcedures.aspx](http://mghresearch.partners.org/Policies_Procedures/PoliciesProcedures.aspx).

### **Misconduct – Research Integrity**

The MGH is committed to conducting research in accordance with the highest professional, ethical and legal standards. In order to assist in maintaining these standards, to foster a research environment that encourages appropriate behavior, to maintain the confidence of our employees, patients, and peers, and to comply with regulatory requirements, the MGH is committed to addressing alleged incidents of scientific misconduct. To this end, the Partners Policy on Research Integrity (<https://partnershealthcare.sharepoint.com/sites/phrmResources/c/pg/Documents/ResearchMisconductPolicy.pdf>) has been established to guide the process of assessment, inquiry and investigation of such incidents.

Scientific misconduct or misconduct in science means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

All employees or individuals associated with the MGH should report observed, or apparent misconduct in science, or situations where there are reasonable grounds to suspect misconduct in science, to the MGH Research Integrity Officer.

The Research Integrity Officer will appoint inquiry and investigation committees and ensure that necessary and appropriate expertise is secured to carry out a thorough and authoritative evaluation of the relevant evidence in an inquiry or investigation.

The MGH will take appropriate corrective action against individuals when an allegation of misconduct has been substantiated. Corrective actions may include, without limitation:

- withdrawal or correction of all impending or published abstracts and papers emanating from the research where scientific misconduct was found;
- removal of the responsible person from the particular project, letter of reprimand, special monitoring of future work, probation, suspension, salary reduction, or initiation of steps leading to possible rank reduction or termination of employment; and
- restitution of funds as appropriate.

For a complete description of the policies regarding the reporting, inquiry, and investigation of scientific misconduct, please refer to the Partners Research Integrity Policy, which can be viewed at the ORCD web site:

<https://partnershealthcare.sharepoint.com/sites/phrmResources/c/pg/Documents/ResearchMisconductPolicy.pdf>

### **Termination of Staff Appointment**

A Research Fellow's appointment to the MGH Professional Staff may be terminated, and such termination reviewed, consistent with the terms and process set forth in the Partners HealthCare System Graduate Trainee Adverse Action Process.

## **Grievances**

Research Fellows are strongly encouraged to make all reasonable attempts to resolve any conflict or grievance through open discussions with their faculty mentor. The collaborative nature of scientific research and the close working relationship between faculty mentor and Research Fellow necessitates a clear understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of each party and should be discussed openly. While informal problem solving often proves to be the only necessary action, issues can arise that may require outside expertise or counseling to resolve. Despite the many existing policies governing scientific conduct and research integrity, grievances may occur with subtleties that elude strict definition and mechanisms for resolution in areas such as evaluation of performance, authorship disagreements, disputes over intellectual property, working conditions and termination.

Recognizing the specific needs and issues facing scientific researchers, the MGH and Partners Human Resources have appointed an Employee and Labor Relations specialist to serve the research community. The Employee and Labor Relations specialist has the necessary expertise to deal with many employment issues and may draw in additional expertise as needed from the Office of the General Counsel, Human Resources, Professional Staff Benefits Office, Partners Office for International Staff, Scholars & Students, and the Office for Research Career Development. Research Fellows in need of assistance with a grievance issue should contact the Office for Research Career Development at (617) 643-1606 to be confidentially placed in contact with the appropriate HR Employee and Labor Relations specialist.

## **Resources**

- HMS Faculty Policies on Integrity (Attribution of Credit, Authorship Guidelines): <http://ari.hms.harvard.edu/Integrity-science-policies>
- Office of the General Counsel: <http://pulse.partners.org/gc/index.htm>
- Office for Research Career Development (ORCD): <http://facultydevelopment.massgeneral.org/orcd/>
- Ombuds Office - Research Issues: <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/ombuds/>
- MGH Human Resources: <http://hr.partners.org/mgh/>
- Partners Office for International Professionals & Students (PIPS): <http://pips.partners.org/>

## **Exceptions Committee**

The Exceptions Committee evaluates requests for extensions to the maximum term of service for MGH Research Fellow appointees and handles any other “grandfathering” issues that arise as a result of policy implementation for Research Fellow appointments. The Office for Research Career Development’s (ORCD) Advisory Board serves as the

standing Exceptions Committee and is comprised of senior members of the MGH research community and Human Resources. The PDD faculty director serves as the chair of the Exceptions Committee and recruits the expertise of members of the MGH community including senior research faculty, members of the Executive Committee on Research (ECOR), Human Resources, Office of the General Counsel, Office for Research Career Development, and the Partners Office for International Professionals & Students (PIPS) as needed to evaluate extension requests.

Any requests for an extension to the maximum term of service for an MGH Research Fellow appointment should be submitted by the faculty mentor to [orcd@partners.org](mailto:orcd@partners.org) no later than 60 days prior to the expiration of the current appointment.