

Regulations on Duties and Employment of Postdoctoral Researchers (Postdoc Regulations)

The Executive Board of the University of Bern,

based on Article 83a Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Ordinance of September 12, 2012 on the University (UniV)¹,

has decided as follows:

This document sets out the regulations of the University of Bern that apply to postdoctoral researchers in connection with their duties and their employment.

Tasks, types and processes of postdoctoral studies

The aim of a postdoctorate is primarily the postgraduate's own academic qualification with regard to qualification for a professorship. In addition, postdoctoral researchers can take on further duties in teaching, research and, as required, in the service of their institute.

1. Own academic qualification

The duties within the scope of the researcher's academic qualification include work on a separate research project, participation in the research project of another principal investigator, leading a group in the researcher's own field of research, supervision of doctoral and master's theses in the researcher's own field of research and also academic exchange, such as participation on an academic committee.

2. Further tasks

Other duties include teaching, in particular. Postdoctoral researchers are expected to become involved in teaching in their field of research. In addition, postdoctoral researchers may also be assigned certain tasks from other research areas or, where appropriate, service offerings from their particular institute.

¹ BSG 436.111.1

3. Types of postdoctoral studies

Postdoctoral researchers can and should be employed based on the level of their academic qualifications. Assessment of qualifications is the responsibility of researchers' supervisors.

3.1. Early Postdoc

The postdoctoral researchers employed will generally be those with little or no prior experience at postdoctoral level. This type of employment is aimed, in particular, at providing work on a given project, helping the acquisition of personal funds as well as the promotion of research mobility.

3.2. Advanced Postdoc

Postdoctoral researchers with a proven advanced qualification can be hired as Advanced Postdocs. This type of employment is aimed at consolidating a position as a scientist/academic with regard to qualification for a professorship.

3.3. Senior Research Assistant

Employment as a Senior Research Assistant is aimed at the assumption of extended duties in teaching and research as well as management responsibility and service. Employment as a Senior Research Assistant is especially desirable for postdoctoral researchers who have attracted significant personal funding, in particular, Ambizione grants.

4. Course of postdoctoral studies

4.1. Phases of postdoctoral studies

Postdoctoral studies are usually divided into two multiple-year phases, regardless of the type of postdoctoral research.

4.2. Phase 1

Employment is initially limited to Phase 1 and generally lasts a maximum of three years.

4.3. Phase 2

If the candidate's evaluation is positive, Phase 2 can be started. As a rule, this is associated with an extension of his or her employment and a change in the nature of the postdoctorate. There is no entitlement to any extension of employment or change in the nature of the postdoctorate.

4.4. Change of postdoctoral type

In the case of a corresponding development of the researcher's academic qualification, as evidenced by an evaluation, the type of postdoctorate may be changed by the researcher's supervisors. This must be affected within four years, at the latest.

Terms and conditions of employment

5. Start of employment

A postdoctorate should begin shortly after completion of the doctorate.

5.1. Start of Early Postdoc

In principle, a maximum academic age of three years since a doctorate applies to the start of employment as an Early Postdoc.

5.2. *Start of Advanced Postdoc*

In principle, a maximum academic age of six years since a doctorate applies to the start of employment as an Advanced Postdoc.

5.3. *Extension of time window*

In the event of delays for personal reasons, the time windows defined in 5.1 and 5.2 may be extended by the Executive Board of the University of Bern by the actual duration of the delay incurred. In particular, the following may be recognized as reasons for delay: maternity, caring duties, illness, etc.

6. **Expiry**

6.1. *Period*

In Phase 1, the period of employment as a postdoctoral researcher is always limited to three years. In cases where the researcher has been evaluated positively by his or her supervisor, it can be extended. The maximum duration of employment is six years (Art. 83b UniV).

6.2. *Justified extension of employment period*

6.2.1. *In the event of justified extensions, the time windows may be extended by the Executive Board of the University of Bern by the actual duration of the delay incurred. In particular, the following may be recognized as justified extensions: maternity, caring duties, illness, etc.*

6.2.2. *As regards submission of an application for funding, a position as a postdoctoral researcher can be guaranteed by the institute for the entire planned duration of the funding period, even if this were to continue beyond the duration of the employment limit.*

6.3. *Interruptions involving employment*

Interruptions in employment as a postdoctoral researcher by employment in other positions at the university will count toward the maximum length of employment of the postdoctoral studies. On request, the Executive Board of the University of Bern may make an exception and allow a candidate to take up the post of a substitute for a professorship or lectureship, provided that this interruption can be proven to promote the candidate's career.

6.4. *Interruptions not involving employment*

Interruptions in employment as a postdoctoral researcher not involving employment in other positions at the university will not count toward the maximum length of employment of the postdoctoral studies. Specifically, this regulation is intended to enable academic mobility.

7. **Workload**

7.1. *Full-time job*

Postdoctoral research is essentially a full-time job. As a rule, the level of employment is between 80 and 100 percent of a full-time workload. Employment as a postdoctoral researcher cannot be combined with any other university employment (Art. 83a (5) UniV). This also applies for employment as a teacher. *[Version from December 12, 2023]*

7.2. *Time reserved for improving academic qualifications*

Postdoctoral researchers must use at least half of a full-time workload to pursue their own academic qualifications (Art. 83a (3) UniV). Postdoctoral researchers with duties in the supply of services in the fields of medicine and veterinary medicine must dedicate at least 20 percent of a full-time workload to improving their own academic qualifications.

7.3. *Minimum level of employment*

For personal reasons, the Executive Board of the University of Bern may permit a level of employment lower than 80 percent. The minimum level of employment is 50 percent of a full-time workload. At an employment level of 50 percent, the entire workload must be used for one's own academic qualifications. At an employment level of 50 percent, postdoctoral researchers with duties in the supply of services in the fields of medicine and veterinary medicine must dedicate at least 20 percent of a full-time workload to improving their own academic qualifications.

8. **Postdoctoral agreement**

Every employment position to which a postdoctoral researcher is appointed must be the subject of a postdoctoral agreement. The postdoctoral agreement serves, inter alia, as a job description and regulates on an individual basis those aspects of the position relevant to the current phase of the postdoctoral thesis.

8.1. *Statement of duties*

The postdoctoral agreement describes the duties that the postdoctoral candidate is intended to take on. In particular, the research project that forms the subject of the postdoctorate must be stated. If any further duties are assigned, it must be indicated whether these belong to the workload set aside for the candidate's own academic qualifications. Participation in teaching duties must also be recorded in the postdoctoral agreement.

8.2. *Objectives*

The postdoctoral agreement is intended to provide information about the objectives to be achieved by the postdoctorate. The objectives are divided into annual sub-objectives, as well as the overall objective to be achieved at the end of the Phase. The objectives and their achievement will be reviewed and adjusted as part of the annual evaluation.

8.3. *Support*

The postdoctoral agreement must mention at least two persons responsible for supervising the postdoctoral researcher. One of these persons must be the supervisor of the postdoctoral researcher.

9. **Evaluation**

The current development status of the qualification will be determined by the evaluation.

9.1. *Employee appraisal interview (EAI)*

As part of the annual employee appraisal interview, the status and development of the academic qualification of the postdoctoral researcher will be evaluated and recorded.

9.2. *Review of the achievement of objectives*

Actual achievement of the objectives set out in the postdoctoral agreement will be reviewed and the objectives will be adjusted, as appropriate.

9.3. *Inclusion of persons providing support*

In order to ensure fairness and transparency, all of the persons mentioned in the postdoctoral agreement must be involved in an appropriate way in the evaluation.

10. **Salary**

10.1. *Salary packages*

Postdoctoral researchers are paid a salary package.

10.2. Rates

The rates for a workload of 100 percent for the gross annual salary and personnel point tariffs are stipulated in the appendix.

10.3. Definition of function

The researcher's function is determined based on the type of postdoctorate.

10.4. Determination of starting salary

The starting salary of a postdoctoral researcher is determined in accordance with his or her workload, based on the rate for the first year.

10.5. Increases in salary

Salaries rise automatically from one year to the next on the date marking the start of employment. From the third year of employment in the same function, the flat rate remains unchanged.

11. Final provisions

11.1. Entry into force

These regulations enter into force on August 1, 2019.

Bern, April 16, 2019 /
December 12, 2023

On behalf of the Executive Board of the University of Bern
The Rector:

Prof. Dr. Christian Leumann

Modifications

Modifications / changes from December 12, 2023, enter into force on January 1, 2024

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Appendix¹ on the Regulations on Duties and Employment of Postdoctoral Researchers

For a workload of 100 percent, the following rates apply from 01.01.2024 for the gross annual salary and the personnel point tariffs:

Salaries in Swiss francs, incl. 13th monthly salary, without social welfare supplements

| Function / type | 1st year | 2nd year | From 3rd year | PP tariff |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Early Postdoc | 90'132.25 | 92'135.55 | 94'137.55 | 84 PP |
| Advanced Postdoc | 102'150.10 | 104'486.85 | 106'824.25 | 96 PP |
| Senior Research Assistant | 120'176.55 | 122'513.30 | 124'850.70 | 108 PP |

Table 1 Gross annual salary and personnel point tariffs for a full-time job in postdoc functions

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¹ Appendix in force from 01.01.2024