Characteristics of the Rank of Postdoctoral Associate

- Continuation of training in a specialty area under the supervision of a more senior faculty mentor
- Duties are substantially research or scholarship but may include limited teaching responsibilities
- Expectation to submit for publication the results of his/her research findings
- Appointment is temporary in nature, limited to 4 years at VT within the 5 years following the awarding of the PhD or equivalent terminal degree
- Limited supervision of personnel
- May include opportunities to write and submit grant proposals, may serve as co-PI or PI by approved exception
- Appointment is “restricted” due to temporary nature – i.e. employment depends on availability of funding, the need for services, and

Tip

The University recognizes the occasional need for departments to extend a Terms of Faculty Offer to a candidate for the rank of Postdoctoral Associate whose degree has not yet been awarded but is expected by the time of appointment. Language is available to add to the TOFO to address these situations. Contact OVPR-HR for assistance at 1-9359 or ovpr-hr@vt.edu.

Guidelines for Hiring Postdoctoral Associates

With August approaching, many recruitment efforts are underway across the university, including those for “postdoc” positions. In response to a number of questions that have recently arisen regarding hiring postdoctoral associates, guidelines will be available on the OVPR-HR website soon. Highlights of the Guidelines include:

The term “postdoc” at Virginia Tech can refer to two different employment situations:

Those employees in the official university rank of “Postdoctoral Associate”. Eligibility for this rank requires an earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree in an appropriate academic field awarded in the previous five years. Appointment to this rank is a traineeship under the supervision of a more senior faculty scholar in preparation for a career in academia or research. The salaried appointment is temporary in nature and is limited to a minimum of one year and a maximum total of 4 years.

OR

Those employees who have earned a PhD or equivalent terminal degree in the previous five years who are in an official university rank other than “Postdoctoral Associate”. These positions are not considered traineeships and may fall under a number of official ranks such as “Research Associate”, “Research Scientist”, or “Research Assistant professor”, among others.

The intention of the Postdoctoral Associate rank is to provide a continued opportunity for training in a specialty area for a limited amount of time. The minimum initial salaried appointment period is one year and the maximum allowable time for an individual to be in the rank of Postdoctoral Associate is four years. In order for employment to be continuous beyond the maximum of four years it would be necessary for the Postdoctoral Associate to be considered for a promotion to a higher rank, such as Research Scientist or Research Assistant Professor. For detailed information about the available research faculty ranks please see the OVPR-HR website.

Hiring Procedures & Timing of Degree Award

Postdoctoral Associates may be hired through the competitive search process or via an approved search exemption. Departments may request approval of a search exemption to hire a Postdoctoral Associate prior to the anticipated award of the candidate’s PhD or equivalent terminal degree. Actual employment is contingent upon presentation of satisfactory documentation of credentials prior to the effective date of the appointment. Visit the OVPR-HR website for information on the search exemption and competitive recruitment processes for special research faculty, including Postdoctoral Associates.