WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN AFRICA

549 Arcturus Road,
Manresa Park, Greendale,
Harare, Zimbabwe

Quality Assurance Department

Addressing gender disparity and fostering equity in higher education

POLICY

1. POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP POLICY

2. INTERPRETATION (DEFINITION OF TERMS)

2.1 A Postdoctoral fellow is a person who has a doctoral degree who is involved in a impermanent period of mentored research and/or a academic training and expected to acquire professional skills required to follow a career path of their choice. Although in rare, cases some appointments are done to people of greater experience who wish to retrain themselves for careers in a new discipline or specialty. Postdocs work under the guidance of a Principal Investigator (PI) who may be a faculty member or an officer of research.

2.2 Code: Research Council of Zimbabwe code of conduct

The Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) is a governmental body which endorses the enrichment of scientific and technological competence through supportive activities amid the scientific and industrial community in Zimbabwe. The RCZ creates and preserves links with professional bodies and centres of excellence to augment its role as an implementor of national and international partnership in science and technology. The council oversee all research conducted in the country.

2.3 Breach of the Code - any indecorous action by a staff member in his official capacity or any conduct by a university staff member, which is unconnected with his official duties, inclined to bring the University into public disgrace; any inappropriate use or effort to take advantage of his/her position; any behaviour contrary to the terms of his pledge or declaration. Wrongdoing in research - deliberate, fraudulent or grossly negligent conduct such as falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, deliberate distortion of or other behaviours by a staff member or collaborator that completely deviate from the research code of conduct

A complaint of a potential breach of the Code will be dealt with in accordance with:

i. the processes specified in the Postdoctoral Fellowship Policy,

ii. the principles of procedural fairness, as stated in the Investigation Guide.

iii. A serious breach which is also intentional, reckless or negligent will be regarded as Research Misconduct.

2.4 The consequences of a proven breach, Research Misconduct,
by a staff member to whom the relevant disciplinary clauses of the Enterprise Agreement apply by a probationary or casual staff member or an academic status holder are as determined by the relevant decision-maker under the Breach of Postdoctoral Fellowship procedures, and may, in the case of proven Research Misconduct, include termination of employment or academic status of a postdoctoral research fellow as determined by the relevant decision-maker under the Breach of Post Doctoral Fellowship Policy, and may, in the case of proven Research Misconduct, include termination of the student's candidature and permanent expulsion from the University.

2.5 Confidentiality – All documentation relating to a complaint of potential breach of the Code is kept confidential and only disclosed to those persons who have a role in the breach assessment and investigation process, or as required by law, or where all parties provide express and informed consent to disclosure

2.6 Collaboration: A partnership happens when an institution or individual either within or external to the University work collectively and there is a obligation of resources by both parties.

2.7 Confidential data: Commercially treasured information or a trade secret, a sacred or secrete information (usually communicated by participants/ people) or any other information which is deemed as confidential by a person involved in research, research participant, or the University. It does not include information which:

a. is in or turn into part of the public domain (other than through a breach of confidence); or
b. the recipient already knew at the time of disclosure (unless if such knowledge emerged through a breach of confidence); or
c. the receiver can verify that it was independently acquired or developed without breaching any obligations of confidence.

2.8 **Conflicts of Interest**: A position in which an individual is in a capacity to derive personal benefits from arrangements or decisions made in their authority.

2.9 **Intellectual Property**: Imperceptible stuff that is developed as the result of one's creativity or grant, such as patents and copyrights.

2.10 **Moral Rights**: Individual legal rights belonging to originators of copyright works which cannot be transferred, allotted or sold.

2.11 Research participants: Individuals Involved in Research

2.12 Plagiarism: Includes the use of someone's intellectual output and giving it, in any formula, as one's own with no appropriate credit or acknowledgment.

2.13 Principal Investigator: It is the person who is responsible for the planning, carrying out and administering of a research grant, cooperatively agree, train or spearhead a, contract, public service project an or other sponsored projects.

2.14 **Records**: The substantial form of information, linked to or derived from research. Records may comprise of correspondence, grant or ethical clearance applications, technical reports, consent forms signed by participants, participants' information sheets for research or other similar documents. For the purposes of this Policy, records do not comprise of research data and materials.

2.15 Research: All ways ending up to, in planning for, during and after the end and reporting of:

a. an study carried out to produce original knowledge, authenticate preceding research, or use standing knowledge in a novel and creative way to produce new ideas, methodologies and understandings;
b. an innovative work carried out on a logical manner in order to increase the available base of knowledge;
c. Experimental advance into applications software, new programming dialects and new operating systems.

2.16 Researcher: A researcher is someone who does research or a expert who dedicates himself or herself to doing research

2.17 Research Mentor: Mentors offer direction into the research process, give feedback on progress, suggest ways to mitigate challenges, and use their proficiency to assist one to develop as a researcher. Research mentors also give helpful advice and insight into next steps one may want to take in their academic or career path

2.18 Research Misconduct: Research misconduct is defined as to include plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, in recommending, execution, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. IMPORTANT: Research misconduct does NOT embrace honest error or differences of opinion

3 PURPOSE

The PDRF programme at WUA aims to:

- This policy aims to provide guidelines for the management of relationships between PDRFs, their hosts, and the University Provide PDRFs the opportunity to strengthen their research skills and postgraduate supervision.
- Enable WUA the opportunity to expand its research capability through increased research outputs (publications, books, patents).
- Provide WUA the opportunity to expand on existing research and ideas and to pursue new lines of research.
- Develop knowledge for stakeholders, such as the government, business, industry, and social communities.
- Develop and maintain national and international research networks and collaborations.
- Develop leadership skills among PDRFs by involving them in administrative and decision-making processes related to research.

4 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Professors at women's University in Africa:

- All Postgraduate Hosts, Full and Associate Professors
- All postdoctoral fellowship status holders,

The policy works together with research integrity, intellectual property and grant management policies**.**

5 PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE POLICY

The Postdoctoral Fellowship policy is a living document reflective of the Women's University in Africa's goal to cultivate the research culture, support and promote a culture of any patentable invention, any copyrightable subject matter or trade secret as items of postdoctoral fellowship research. Postdoctoral fellowship mentorship is within the research signature for WUA across the university and enshrined in gender inclusivity and responsiveness. Driven by the New Normal (2022-2025) Transformational Strategy and values based on the **Values, Destiny, Cause and Calling** concepts in line with the procedure set out in the Women`s University in

Africa Charter SI 30 of 2004 and New Normal (2022-2025) Transformational Strategy influenced by Education 5.0 and the National Development Strategy 1. This policy is informed by the faculties of Agricultural, Environmental and Health Sciences, Management and Entrepreneurial Sciences, Social and Gender Transformative Sciences, Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Centre, Gender and Diversity Centre, and Students Affairs Departmental strategies, government policies, Non-Governmental Organizations' and collaborative partners' visionary directions. This document supports a full spectrum of postdoctoral fellowship research and also identifies research and consultancy thematic areas fostered by gender inclusivity and responsiveness through contextualizing gender mainstreaming aligned to the vision of the founders of this university vision. The mandate of the university is to foster gender equity in university education, ensuring that gender is systematically integrated into all university research a, creation/ invention and consultancy activities as core to this policy. This is to acknowledge that unequal gender power relations may be characterized by professors who have busy schedules to carryout research and creation of evidence-based inventions and creation of items of intellectual property and consultancy practice in this university. Hence, to address these inequalities, the implementation of this postdoctoral fellowship policy will be guided by the WUA Gender Policy and gender mainstreaming strategy to be developed through the Gender and Diversity Centre.

6 POLICY PROVISIONS

The policy provides for the postdoctoral fellows the opportunity to carry out postdoctoral studies within a research environment at women's University in Africa (WUA) can significantly enhance research culture as well as the research fellow's education and provide a career furthering opportunity while making significant contributions to the research and mission of the University. Postdoctoral Research Fellowships provide postdoctoral research fellow (PDRF) candidates with a platform through which they can develop their careers as academic researchers. This policy aims to provide guidelines for the management of relationships between PDRFs, their hosts, and the University.

Funding for the programme is provided by the University and external funders, such as national organisations, international funding organisations and corporate companies.

Each source of funding will have specific conditions; however, the WUA PDRF Agreement will bind the PDRF in terms of WUA conditions for the duration of the fellowship. The onus is on the host academic to ascertain sufficient funding from a bona fide bursary source for the PDRF.

An agreed-upon amount for the fellowship will be paid as a monthly stipend to the PDRF. After receipt of the fellowship, any expenses on the PDRF account will be the sole responsibility of the PDRF. The University will not take responsibility for offsetting any outstanding balance at the end of the tenure.

The PDRF and/or hosts are required to inform the RIPGC Director when a PDRF terminates their tenure at the University prior to the contract ending.

6.1 Top-ups

Where an application for funds is made from a contract research account for a postdoctoral research fellowship or top-up thereof, the contract must clearly identify funding as that of a "Postdoctoral research fellowship". Such funds may not be earmarked for "services rendered", and where such a case does present, the RIPGC Director and must be furnished with the relevant WUA cost centre number for verification and auditing purposes.

Amounts that exceed the amount stipulated in the Letter of Award should not be in contravention of any specific grant award conditions as stipulated in the University's policies). Amendments to the bursary amount which increase payments must be accompanied by a formal letter from the host specifying the amendment.

Any ad hoc ("top-up") amounts that are not specified in the Letter of Award or similar updated document are taxable and must be paid via the pay roll payment system.

6.2 Remuneration for Additional Work

As bursary recipients, PDRFs may not do any additional work related to their research in return for payment, e.g. contract research. Where extra work is permitted in terms of the bursary scheme, the following criteria must be adhered to:

Up to 12 hours per week of additional paid work (including all time spent on preparatory work) may be undertaken at WUA only.

6.3 Rate:

At the discretion of the host and in accordance with the WUA tariff list as provided by Human Resources (HR).

The applicable rate must be paid via the WUA salary system (temporary appointment) and not utilising the PDRF bursary system. These payments are taxable in accordance with the

prevailing tax legislation. PDRFs are not obliged to give lectures to students. Should they wish to lecture briefly to gain experience, this should be on a voluntary basis up to a maximum of 12 hours per week (e.g., as part of the additional work for which they may be remunerated), but this should in no way constitute part of the basic teaching provisioning of a department.

If the PDRF is regarded as an employee by virtue of performing additional duties as, the PDRF will be required to sign a declaration which provides that they will have to repay any award amount received should they fail to complete that fellowship for any reason other than death, ill-health or injury.

6.4 Fellowship Agreement

A PDRF must complete and sign a PDRF Agreement.

The PDRF together with the host must also complete a workplan, which outlines the general conditions of the award and a framework of how the research will be undertaken. The workplan will act as an annexure to the PDRF agreement.

The agreement is legally binding and must be signed by the PDRF, host, and by the relevant individuals of authority (e.g., HOD/Dean/RIPGC Director).

The agreement does not constitute an offer of employment nor imply that an employment offer shall be made in the future.

The agreement will protect and provide recourse to both parties in the event of a dispute, complaint, or conflict of interest.

6.5 Fellowship Tenure

Fellowship tenure can vary depending on the type of grant (internal vs external) that funds the fellowship.

PDRFs are typically awarded for a period of one year and up to two (2) years commencing from the first date of appointment by WUA, which is always subject to the availability of funds.

6.6 Fellowship Renewal

Renewal of fellowships beyond the 1 year is based on satisfactory research productivity as measured against the signed agreement pertaining to the research and availability of funds.

The PDRF agreement may be renewed if the host and other relevant individuals of authority

(e.g, HOD/Dean/ RIPGC Director) at their sole and absolute discretion, are satisfied with the PDRF's performance.

The PDRF must complete the renewal documents relating to research outputs and proposed plans three months before the expiration of the first year for renewal consideration for the second year.

A review meeting, involving relevant individuals of authority and the PDRF may be convened to consider the renewal of the fellowship if and when required, especially in the cases of underperformance.

The renewal of the PDRF's fellowship will be dependent on, but is not limited to, the following

conditions:

Satisfactory progress with the PDRF's research project(s) and research output(s) as determined by the host and the relevant individuals of authority.

Availability of funds

Beyond three years (fourth and fifth year), a renewal may only be considered under exceptional circumstances – the host is required to submit a letter of motivation to the PVC academic and Research

Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation through the RIPGC before the end of the third year of the PDRF for approval.

A PDRF may not hold a position funded from internal sources successively fellowship for another three years).

6.7 Fellowship Termination

A PDRF's tenure ends at the specified period unless renewal has been approved by the University.

The registration of a PDRF may be canceled at any time due to a material breach of contract (full-time employment concurrent with the PDRF contract, poor performance at the discretion of the host) and/or following a hearing, or on disciplinary grounds.

In cases where the PDRF chooses to terminate the fellowship prior to the end of the tenure, he/she is required to complete the termination form for one calendar month prior (30 days' notice).

7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Quality Assurance Department	Develop and disseminate a University-wide Policy Format Template to ensure that the policy is in alignment with the University Policy
Registrar	To be the custodian and to enforce compliance
Grant Management Office	To Ensure that grants with postdoctoral support are sourced by individual experts and research board
Research Innovation and Postgraduate Centre	To ensure that the policy meet the scope of its purpose and revise it as the need arises
Research Board	To ensure that the University Provides for the funds for three Faculties every year Insert responsibility

8 DOCUMENT VERSION MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Document Name	**Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Policy**	 **WUA**
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Document Owner	RIPGC	
Approved by		
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