



The Postdoctoral Annual Review Process

The annual review process is designed to:

- Encourage constructive dialogue between postdocs and their mentors
- Clarify responsibilities and performance expectations
- Record information about performance and accomplishments
- Promote more effective performance
- Establish future goals for career growth and development

The specific goals of the review process are to:

- Provide postdocs with annual feedback on performance and accomplishments
- Help postdocs understand their specific responsibilities
- Help postdocs understand mentors' performance expectations
- Identify goals for upcoming year and specific steps to help meet goals

The proposed outline of the annual review is intended only as a model to assist PIs, faculty mentors, and postdocs in the postdoctoral annual review process. Depending on your specific needs, you can use any or all of the following portions, or simply use them as a template to create your own.

Part One – *Obligations of Postdoctoral Appointees and Mentors:* To be reviewed by both postdoc and mentor upon initial appointment and during each annual review.

Part Two – *Postdoctoral Review Form:* Used to record mentor's assessment of the postdoc's performance and accomplishments during the previous year. To be completed by mentor prior to discussion with postdoc.

Part Three – *Self-Review Form:* To be completed by postdoc and submitted to mentor prior to discussion with mentor. Gives postdoc the chance to provide his/her own perspective regarding performance during the review period. This worksheet also prepares postdoc for a participatory discussion about his/her performance and goals.

Part Four – *Goals and Career Development for Next Review Cycle:* To be mutually completed by postdoc and mentor during initial appointment and annual review periods. May also be used in conjunction with the *Individual Development Plan*.

Postdoc Annual Review

Part One

(to be reviewed individually by PI/faculty mentor and postdoc)

To be reviewed by postdoc and mentor prior to the annual review meeting in Part Four. The goal is to improve communication and strengthen the mentor-mentee partnership.

Obligations of Postdoctoral Appointees

Postdocs have certain obligations to their mentors, the group with whom they're working, the department with which they're associated, the sponsor whose funds support them, and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. These obligations include but are not limited to:

- The conscientious discharge of their research, scholarly, and teaching responsibilities, as applicable
- Conformity with ethical standards in research and scholarship
- Compliance with good scholarly practice including the maintenance of adequate research records
- Observation of appropriate guidelines regarding human or subjects and due observation of University standards regarding use of isotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, animals, and the like, if applicable
- Open and timely discussion with mentor regarding possession or distribution of tangible property such as materials, reagents, and the like
- Prior disclosure of appropriate scholarly information, findings or techniques proposed for dissemination privately, at scholarly meetings, or in publications
- Collegial conduct towards coworkers and members of the academic or research group
- Compliance with all University policies

Mentor Obligations

Mentors' responsibilities include the following:

- Developing in consultation with the postdoc appointee a mutually satisfactory research project or scholarly program
- Encouraging postdoc appointees to present their work, and to publish their results in a timely fashion
- Encouraging postdocs to acquire and enhance their knowledge and technical skills as dictated by their current and future needs
- Arrangement and oversight of teaching opportunities as appropriate to their discipline and program
- Encouraging postdocs to apply for training and research support as appropriate
- Meeting regularly with their postdocs to discuss progress of their research and career development needs
- Providing an annual review of performance
- Ensuring that postdocs are aware of University policies regarding postdoctoral training, and are instructed about research policies of the University

- Providing career counseling or the resources to help postdocs succeed in the next phase of their careers

Career Development Guidelines

Mentors should encourage postdocs to:

- Manage their own projects, which should lead to a first author publication
- Learn chosen scientific discipline/field
- Learn technical skills
- Learn ancillary skills, e.g., writing, public speaking, networking, etc.
- Present scientific work both inside and outside the University
- Write or assist in writing papers
- Apply for extramural support (e.g., NRSA postdoctoral fellowships, career development awards, private foundation fellowships, etc.)
- Participate in the review of journal articles and other publications

Supplemental Review Questions

Orientation

Did the mentor introduce the postdoc to the research team, department administrators, other colleagues, and available university resources and benefits?

Did the mentor familiarize the postdoc with the equipment, ordering supply process, lab procedures, and standing meetings of the lab or unit?

Have we developed a mutually-satisfactory research project or scholarly program?

Have policy and guidelines, funding and research expectations, and research milestones and deadlines been clearly communicated?

Has a collaborative Individual Development Plan (IDP) been completed?

Evaluation

Have we discussed postdoctoral core competencies: discipline-specific knowledge, research skill development, communication skills, professionalism, responsible conduct of research, and leadership and management skills?

Have we worked toward developing these skills during the postdoctoral training period?

Have we met regularly to discuss progress of research and career development needs?

Have we held annual reviews to assess performance and provide feedback?

Career Development

Have we discussed the postdoc's talents and skills, career options, and resources to help him/her succeed in the next phase of their career?

Has the postdoc been encouraged to engage in networking activities?

Has the postdoc had opportunities to develop supervisory skills? Teaching skills?

Has the postdoc been encouraged towards research independence?

If appropriate, was the postdoc encouraged to apply for grants providing bridge funding for independent research?

Has the postdoc encouraged to attend seminars and actively seek other opportunities for professional experience and advancement (e.g., volunteer on committees, organize meetings)?

Has strategic thinking/creativity been modeled and explained by the mentor (i.e., basis of decisions about what work is most important, how long a given project is pursued, and what resources can be allocated to any particular effort)?

Were the projects/goals that were set during the last review period or at the time of the initial appointment completed/met? If not, why not?

Were publication expectations met?

Is the project ready for public presentation? Are there opportunities for the postdoc to present?

Are there specific areas where the postdoc excels?

Are there specific areas where improvement is needed?

Do you perceive extrinsic limiting factors (e.g., research environment, policies) that might have been detrimental to the postdoc's performance over the past review period?

What are the critical goals/projects for the upcoming review period?

Were the projects/goals that were set during the last review period or at the time of the initial appointment completed/met? If not, why not?

What were your accomplishments (i.e., publications, presentations, progress on projects) during this review period?

Are there specific areas where you have excelled?

Are there specific areas you need or want to further develop?

What professional development activities/opportunities (e.g., training, conferences, special projects, etc.) would you like to pursue during the next review cycle?

Are there any extrinsic limiting factors (e.g., research environment, policies) detrimental to your performance that could be improved?

What are the critical goals and projects for the upcoming review period?

Postdoc Annual Review

Postdoc Name _____

Dept./Mentor _____

Hire Date _____

Review Date _____

Part Four
(completed jointly by
PI/Faculty Mentor and postdoc)

Goals, projects and responsibilities mutually discussed and selected for the next review period

Goal/Project/Responsibility	Expected Outcome and Timeframe

Professional and career development activities/opportunities (e.g., trainings, conferences, special projects) planned for the next review period

Training/Conference/Opportunity	Expected Outcome and Timeframe

Additional Notes: