



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA, HEALTH CAMPUS
Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost

TO: OU Health Campus Deans

FROM: Gary E. Raskob, PhD
Senior Vice President and Provost, Health Campus

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DATE: August 27, 2026

SUBJECT: Associate Research Scholars

As we continue our work toward meeting the *Lead On, University* Strategic Plan goals, including attaining AAU status, the Graduate College has been reviewing policies and procedures related to postdocs. This message pertains to the appointment of individuals who are actually postdocs into Associate Research Scholar positions instead. The Associate Research Scholar position is a generic, temporary research position, usually for a short period of time, while the Postdoctoral Research Fellow position is intended for individuals who have recently completed their doctoral studies and are receiving additional professional training in preparation for career advancement as scientists/researchers.

The [OU Health Campus Postdoc Handbook](#) states that the starting salary for all newly hired Postdoctoral Fellows must be at or above the current NIH NRSA minimum stipend level (year 0) without exception. The Graduate College circulates an annual reminder of this policy with an update that lists the new NRSA minimum stipend level and effective date. However, in recent years, several Health Campus units have appointed individuals who are actually postdocs into the position of Associate Research Scholar (ARS). This has often been done after explicit advertising of these opportunities as postdoc positions, but then putting the individuals in ARS positions with salaries typically below the NIH NRSA minimum stipends.

Consistent with the Strategic Plan, we are prioritizing efforts to increase the number of postdocs on the Health Campus. This includes appointing and counting postdocs accurately for external reporting.

To this end, effective immediately, any new requests to appoint individuals who are actually postdocs into the Associate Research Scholar title will be denied. In addition, units with current Associate Research Scholars holding a terminal degree and engaged in research must submit ePAFs to convert these individuals to Postdoctoral Fellows, no later than Sept. 20, 2026, attaching an approved [Postdoctoral Fellow Appointment Form](#) and a current CV. The minimum salary for postdoc appointments made prior to October 1, 2026, is \$62,232. The minimum salary for those appointed on or after October 1, 2026, will be \$63,480. Individuals who would otherwise be considered postdocs but who have primary responsibility for patient care and clinical service are to be classified as clinical fellows or residents and are excluded from this category.

We appreciate your assistance in ensuring all current and incoming postdocs are properly classified and receive the minimum established salary. Please share this with the individuals in your area who are involved in the hiring process for these positions. If you have any questions, please contact Dean Hewes at hewes@ou.edu.