



## Predoctoral Fellows and Trainees

### Academic Regulations

#### Purpose

Graduate education is central to the mission of the University of Vermont. Training Ph.D. students to become outstanding scholars and teachers is pivotal to that mission. The purpose of Predoctoral Fellowships and Traineeships is to provide a mechanism to support graduate students pursuing their education and professional development. Research will be part of the activities of many Fellows or Trainees, but a Trainee's or Fellow's research will typically be tied to the aims of the Fellowship they have been awarded or the training grant that supports them; their research may therefore differ in some respects than if they were supported as a GTA or GRA. Because they are often awarded via a competitive internal or external process, Predoctoral Fellowships and Traineeships are considered to be distinct honors while also providing financial support to defray the costs associated with graduate study.

#### Definitions

At the University of Vermont all **Predoctoral Fellows and Predoctoral trainees** are enrolled graduate students – typically students in research doctorate programs – who are receiving support while pursuing graduate training.

Students are appointed as **Predoctoral Fellows** when their stipend is paid predominantly via either:

- i) an individual fellowship awarded to the student by an external funder (such as NSF, NIH F30 or F31, American Heart Association, etc.); or
- ii) an internal fellowship typically awarded following a competition or other selection process.

The activities in which the Fellow engages during the period of support may include research and/or teaching. During the fellowship period, students may have requirements beyond those described in the guidelines for the student's graduate program. Typically, these requirements will be specified in the student's application for the fellowship and/or the fellowship award documentation.

Students are appointed as **Predoctoral Trainees** when their stipend is paid from a training grant awarded to the institution (such as an NIH T32, T15 or NSF NRT). Typically, these grants describe a specific training program that the appointed trainees will complete. Such training programs may be identical to specific degree programs at UVM or they may have additional requirements.

#### Appointment Guidelines

Students appointed as Predoctoral Fellows or Trainees cannot simultaneously be appointed to duty-bearing academic appointments (e.g., GRA, GTA).

Predoctoral Fellows and Trainees should receive financial support (stipend, tuition scholarship, health insurance) at least equivalent to those provided to GTAs and GRAs in the same program. If an internal or external fellowship or traineeship does not provide an equivalent level of support, the student's support must be supplemented to the equivalent level. Colleges and Schools should develop policies for determining the source of this support.

The department, program, college/school, or university unit is responsible for generating the appointment letters based on authorized templates provided by the Graduate College, and for ensuring that the terms are being followed. The appointment letter shall state, as a minimum, the conditions of the appointment and specify expectations, stipend level, benefits, and duration of the appointment. A link to this policy should be included in appointment letters.

## **Reappointment**

A typical appointment as a Predoctoral Fellow or Trainee will be made for no more than one year. However, provided the funding source allows, students may be reappointed. If external funding lapses, reappointment as a Predoctoral Fellow or Trainee will not be possible, although programs will seek to provide alternative mechanisms of support.

## **Appointment Requirements**

Although Predoctoral Fellows and Trainees are not considered university employees, each student nonetheless completes a form I-9 at the time of initial appointment to verify that they are either a US citizen or authorized to be employed in this country. This is because Fellows' and Trainees' stipend payments flow through the university and because very few Ph.D. students will be supported exclusively as Predoctoral Fellows and Trainees throughout their time to degree,

## **Responsibilities**

**Program, Department, College/School, University:** The appointment of a student as a Predoctoral Fellow or Trainee does not reduce the responsibility of the program for the education and support of the student.

**Student:** When appointed as a Predoctoral Fellow or Trainee the student must still make satisfactory academic progress as described in their graduate program guidelines. Students must still complete all program requirements.

This appointment type does not change a student's status as it relates to issues such as intellectual property, research misconduct, harassment etc.

## **Early Dismissal and Appeal**

Predoctoral Fellows or Trainees may complete the term of their appointment as long as they remain in good academic standing and adhere to any specific terms and requirements of the Fellowship or training grant. Any disputes over a Predoctoral Fellow's or Trainee's academic standing will be resolved under the university's academic regulations. Disputes regarding a failure to adhere to the terms and requirements of a Fellowship or training grant will be resolved under the Graduate College's dispute resolution procedures.