

Hiring Process for Postdoctoral Research Associates

Drafted January 2021 by Robin Cresiski, Asst. Vice Provost of Graduate Student Development and Postdoctoral Affairs

1. Regardless of funding source, faculty or staff that are hiring a Postdoctoral Research Associate should inform their appropriate Dean, Vice President and/or the Provost of their intent to commence a search for a Postdoctoral Research Associate.
2. For the hire of Visiting Postdoctoral Research Associates, which are funded at least 51% by direct agreement between the fellow and an institution outside the University System of Maryland, please contact the office of research development (ord@umbc.edu) and copy Robin Cresiski, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. If the scholar is international and funded by a third-party, please also copy David Anguish (daveanguish@umbc.edu), International Student and Scholar Advisor in the Center for Global Engagement.
3. For the hire of a standard Postdoctoral Research Associate, contact the Hiring Liaison in your department or college (or through Academic Affairs Other Units Shared Services Center, if applicable) to determine whether you are using PageUp or submitting paperwork manually for hires. If you are uncertain of your department's Hiring Liaison, inquire with your supervisor/department chair.
4. Advertise the position and select the candidate to which you would like to make an offer. Please see Best Practice Recommendations on page 3 for suggested practices and example language. UMBC has subscriptions to [MA-HERC](#) and higherjobs.com. The hiring department may place the ad(s) on these websites at no cost to the hiring department. The approved ad copy should be emailed as a MS Word document to Georgine Bozi, Administrative Assistant, in the Provost's Office at gbozi@umbc.edu.
5. Once a candidate has been selected, paperwork must be completed and routed for signature before a formal offer letter is extended to the candidate (note: a verbal offer can be made by the hiring authority, typically a faculty member, at this time). This process is different depending on whether the department/research center uses PageUp so detailed instructions for processes with and without PageUp are below.

Process if using PageUp (typically completed by Hiring Liaison in department)

- Select "New Faculty Job"
- *Faculty Requisition Information.* Leave position number blank, select "Faculty – Using Interfolio for Search Ad Template" (this just means you are not using PageUp for advertising). Write in the Department Name under Position Information and select the appropriate VP and Division/Department. Select "Next" to get to Position Details
- *Position Details.* Under Type, select "Faculty." Choose Status (typically "Grant Funded") and subsequently fill out information for pay group (12 month, for example), location (UMBC campus, for example), and hours (full or part-time).
- *Preliminary Recruitment Information.* For the prompt, "Are you requesting a search waiver?" select "Yes". For the prompt, "Describe the ranking or selection techniques to be used," you may enter the text "Search Waiver."
- *Search Committee.* For the prompt, "Please list the diversity information for search committee makeup," enter the text "Search waiver."
- *Documents.* You do not need to attach any documents for advertising, however you must fill in the Description/Advertisement chart for "Department" and "About the Position."
- *Documents Tab (separate from the Documents section).* Please upload the Request to Hire Memo (describing the hire's ability to complete the job), the CV of the

finalist/candidate, the Search Waiver Memo (explaining why you are requesting a waiver) in this tab.

- *Routing.* The Hiring Liaison will fill in some information to help with the routing of the approval process, providing the names and emails of the appropriate chain of command for position approval (i.e. Department Head, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean, Dean, and Human Resources personnel). Please note that “supervisor” refers to the faculty overseeing the postdoctoral research associate. Approval requests will automatically be sent in order along the chain of command to get approval for the position. All of these signatures must be obtained before an offer letter is generated. As additional documents are created through this process (such as a Chair to Dean Memo requesting approval of the hire), these should be added to the Documents Tab. Note: research centers will have a VP to Provost Memo instead of a Dean to Provost Memo.
- The applicant will be contacted by Human Resources to respond to a blind/hidden ad through human resources to collect relevant data from the applicant.
- Through PageUp, the Hiring Liaison will be granted access to initiate an official offer letter by selecting the applicant and the option “Create Offer Card Status.” A payroll prepared must be selected and identified to complete this process, ensuring that the employee is entered in payroll prior to start.
- Once complete, another set of approvals will take place this time approving the candidate (not the position). These are all automated and go along a set chain of command.
- Etoy Hamlin will generate an appointment letter for the candidate (this occurs outside of the PageUp system) and copy Robin Cresiski in the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. A copy of this should be placed in the Documents Tab of PageUp, along with a selection as to whether the candidate accepted or declined the position.

Manual Process for hiring without using PageUp

- Complete the [UMBC Personnel Requisition Form](#), using “Postdoctoral Research Associate” as the Requested Job Title and “POST DOC RES ASSO” as the Job Code. Fill out the entire form to the best of your ability. Demographic information is obtained by asking the candidate directly.
 - Collect memos/documentation into a “package” (a single pdf or folder of pdfs) including the Request to Hire Memo (describing the hire’s ability to complete the job), the CV of the selected candidate, and the Search Waiver Memo (explaining why you are requesting a waiver).
 - Obtain signatures for approval (of both the position and the candidate simultaneously) as required. As new documents are generated, such as the Chair to Dean Memo or Dean to Provost Memo, add this into the package/folder. Note: research centers will have a VP to Provost Memo instead of a Dean to Provost Memo.
 - Once all signatures have been collected, provide the entire package to Human Resources. Human Resources will send the package to Etoy Hamlin to generate an appointment letter.
6. Please see the attached Recommended Onboarding Checklist for Postdoctoral Research Associates to ensure a smooth transition of your hire to UMBC.

Best Practice Recommendations for Hiring Postdoctoral Research Associates

While we recognize that hiring of Postdoctoral Research Associates is historically a process completed individually by a faculty member seeking a scholar with a narrow skill set, we would be remiss if we didn't point out that this system is highly problematic and prone to unintentional bias that perpetuates underrepresentation in academia (some of this literature is summarized in Terry McGlynn 2019 Chronicle of Higher Education [article](#), *How the Opaque Way We Hire Postdocs Contributes to Science's Diversity Problem*). To counter the undue influence of implicit bias in hiring of postdocs, we strongly recommend you embed best practices shown to reduce bias in searches, including:

- Advertisement and active recruitment outside of your existing network. Posting a public advertisement and sending that advertisement to *different* networks ensures a broad applicant pool. UMBC has subscriptions to [MA-HERC](#) and [higherjobs.com](#). The hiring department may place the ad(s) on these websites at no cost to the hiring department. The approved ad copy should be emailed as a MS Word document to Georgine Bozi, Administrative Assistant, in the Provost's Office at gbozi@umbc.edu. A sample postdoctoral advertisement is provided in Appendix A.
- Request a short diversity statement as part of the application or cover letter. Now a norm in faculty searches, a diversity statement that asks candidates to speak to their experience with, commitment to, and advocacy of diversity, equity and inclusion is a useful tool for ensuring that scholars share our institutional (and hopefully personal) values of equity. This also ensures that scholars we bring to our institution can contribute to a safe and inclusive space for our undergraduates, graduates, and faculty of color. The sample request for a cover letter that includes experience with and a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is provided in Appendix A.
- Use of a rubric. We are all subject to implicit bias that nudges us to favor white and Asian sounding names, for example, or facilitates our shifting of priorities to allow a male candidate to out-rank a female candidate (this has been shown in faculty and postdoctoral searches repeatedly). Creation of a rubric in advance helps to minimize the influences of this bias and rank candidates more fairly. A very simple sample rubric is provided in Appendix B.

Appendix A: Sample Postdoctoral Job Advertisement

The University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) Department of [fill in department] has a postdoctoral research associate position available in the laboratory of [fill in faculty, hyperlinked to website]. The postdoctoral research associate will participate in research in [fill in research description/field]. Candidates should have a strong background in [fill in content/methodology]. Prior experience with [fill in with methodology] is desirable but not required. While mentorship is a key part of the postdoctoral research associate experience, candidates should also have strong communication skills and the ability to conduct research and draft manuscripts and presentations independently.

UMBC is a dynamic research institution nationally recognized as a model for its commitment to diversity, equity, and innovation in teaching, research and service. Our community is highly diverse and an alignment to these values is important for all faculty and staff. In addition, a willingness to mentor graduate and undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds in the laboratory is expected. UMBC has membership to the [National Postdoctoral Association](#) and the [National Center](#)

[for Faculty Development and Diversity](#). A broad offering of professional development opportunities are available through UMBC's Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

Interested applicants should send 1) a cover letter describing their research interests, motivation for joining the lab, as well as their commitment to/experience with diversity, equity and inclusion, 2) CV, and 3) contact information of three referees to [fill in contact information]. Review of application materials will begin [fill in date] and will continue until the position is filled.

UMBC is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Applications from women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and other traditionally under-represented groups in the sciences are especially encouraged. As an institution that receives federal financial assistance, UMBC adheres to Title IX and does not discriminate on the basis of sex. More information about Title IX and contact information for Title IX Coordinator are available at the link (<https://oei.umbc.edu/gender-discrimination-sexual-misconduct/>).

Appendix B. Sample Postdoctoral Research Associate Hiring Rubric

0 – Not addressed

1- Fair

2- Good

3- Excellent

	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C	Candidate D
Publishing (existing/potential)				
Skills alignment with lab needs				
Knowledge alignment with lab needs				
Funding (existing/potential)				
Experience/ commitment to diversity and inclusion				
Writing quality				
TOTAL				