

Guidance on Appointments, Assistance, and Advice for Non-Employee Affiliates, Such as NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows

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Office of Human Resources
Office of General Counsel
Office of Research and Economic Development
College of Graduate Studies

Summary:

Some integral members of the university research community are not employees of the University, including people who are supported by prestigious fellowships, such as National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowships. These fellowships pay postdocs a stipend and allowance directly, thus no employee relationship exists between the postdoc and either NSF or the U of I.

People who hold such fellowships, or who are otherwise affiliated with the university, contribute strongly to the university's mission and such appointments are encouraged. This document offers advice on possible solutions to challenges that these non-employees and their U of I advisors and units sometimes face.

Affiliate Status:

Nonemployees who work in U of I facilities or who require access to U of I systems should be put on **affiliate status** by their host department with university human resources (most likely A4 category – Doctoral Level with Significant Research -- when the nonemployee has a doctoral degree and is engaged in research. If the nonemployee does not have a doctoral degree, the appropriate category is most likely A2 - nonpaid non instructional staff).

Affiliates are able to have university email addresses, secure parking permits, and gain access to other university systems. Affiliate status is used for externally-funded fellows (like NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows), adjunct faculty, and other non-employees who need access to university systems, facilities or resources.

All affiliate appointments have a termination date. Both the affiliate and the department should be aware of this termination date and take action to extend affiliate status at least 1 month prior to the termination date for appointments that will continue. If the termination date is not changed for ongoing appointments, then there will be an interruption in access to university email and other systems.

NOTE: this document describes non-employee relationships at University of Idaho that are termed “affiliates”. This is distinct from the terms “Affiliate Faculty” and “Adjunct Faculty” which are also defined terms at University of Idaho. Affiliate Faculty are University of Idaho employees and thus are not non-employee “affiliates”. Adjunct faculty are not employees of the University of Idaho and therefore may be non-employee “affiliates”. In fact, the “affiliate status” described in this document should typically be made for Adjunct Faculty.

Accurate Characterization of Non-Employee Researchers – Use of A4 Affiliate Designation:

The University of Idaho seeks to identify all doctoral-level researchers (researchers who hold a research doctoral degree, such as a Ph.D.) and who are engaged in significant research activities that use University of Idaho resources, facilities, or personnel; this includes non-employee doctoral-level researchers such as externally-funded postdoctoral fellows (e.g. NSF Postdoctoral Research Fellows), many adjunct faculty, ARS or other federal researchers in U of I facilities, and CRITFC or other partner researchers in U of I facilities. These non-employee researchers must be affiliated with the university with an **A4 designation “Doctoral-Level with Significant Research”**.

The **A4** designation should be used for any affiliate that can meet these criteria:

- Holds a Ph.D. or other research doctoral degree
- Is significantly engaged in research at or with University of Idaho (presence in UI facilities, work with UI personnel and students, or use of UI equipment, facilities, or other resources)

*No affiliate who can meet these criteria may be placed in any other category; they **must be designated A4***. Further, any non-employee who meets these criteria **must be an affiliate** and appropriately appointed in the **A4** category (for avoidance of doubt – any doctoral non-employee with research involvement at or with University of Idaho must be an **A4** affiliate).

Health Insurance:

University health insurance is only available to university employees and there is no exception mechanism for non-employees.

If an employment relationship is allowed, the decision about whether to add some employment relationship is between the affiliate and the unit. However, in the case of some externally-funded fellowships, additional work or any kind of “topping-up” employment relationship is not allowed by terms of the fellowship. It is the responsibility of the fellow to ensure compliance with terms of their individual award.

Non-employees can seek health insurance on the Idaho Insurance Exchange at idahohix.yourhealthidaho.org. Please be aware that significant monthly subsidies are available, based on household income, with information on costs and subsidies available at that website. University human resources benefits is available to help navigate this external resource. They can be contacted at benefits@uidaho.edu & 208-855-3638.

Research Expenses and Equipment:

Units or PIs may expend university or external funds (as allowed by terms of the award) to pay research expenses for work undertaken by affiliates at their discretion and subject to normal university processes and policies.

For example, a unit may provide a university-owned computer to an NSF postdoctoral research fellow for research use, or may pay for research-related travel, rather than requiring the fellow to expend fellowship allowance funds for that equipment or travel.

Questions:

Questions related to appointment of non-employee researchers can be addressed to the Office of Research and Economic Development at avp-research@uidaho.edu.