SOP - Post Docs – Educational and Professional Leave Requests

OVERVIEW

Postdoctoral Associates who are required to break from UGA employment by the terms of a fellowship or other external funding may apply for **Educational and Professional Leave without Pay** to preserve health benefits eligibility.

Administrative Roles & Responsibilities

- **Postdoc's Unit**
    - submits request for Educational and Professional Leave without Pay to Office for Postdoc Affairs (OPA) in the Office of Research
    - initiates UGAJobs actions for Postdoctoral Fellow (unpaid/non-employee) position
    - coordinates with OPA to assist postdoc with the request and associated paperwork
    - works with postdoc to submit request for an extension of leave for second year if needed
    - consults with grants specialist in Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) to confirm that the employer contribution to health benefits is an allowable expense for the fellowship (this is an allowable cost on NIH fellowships).
    - ensures position funding has appropriate combo code for employer's portion of benefit charges. Position funding is used by the benefits process to charge the employer portion of benefits for leave without pay positions.
- **Requesting Postdoc**
    - completes and signs the form requesting Educational and Professional Leave without Pay
    - establishes a new plan for making payments that were previously processed as payroll deductions, such as parking and health insurance
    - complete vendor registration to receive stipend through UGA's Financial Management System
    - works with unit to submit request for an extension of leave request for second year if needed
- **OPA**
    - coordinates with the requesting Postdoc's Unit
    - after all other signatures are obtained, presents the leave request to VP for Research for review and signature, then transmits to Central HR-Absence Management via hrweb@uga.edu
    - reviews and approves the UGAJobs actions for the Postdoctoral Fellow (unpaid/non-employee) position
    - for leave requests for over one year, forwards the request to faculty affairs for routing to USG
- **Onboarding, Employee Services, & Records (OESR) in HR**
    - adds USG Affiliate record (also referred to as a Contingent Worker Record (CWR)) to OneUSG Connect
- **Absence Management (AM) in HR**
    - updates OneUSG Connect with leave dates

- initiates change in status that triggers benefit billing via Alight (third party benefit vendor)
- **Alight –** bills Postdoc for the employee contribution to health benefits.
- **Faculty Affairs**
  - submits request for approval to USG if educational leave request extends for a period beyond one year (bundled with faculty leave requests)
- **Commitment Accounting –** assists units as needed with questions related to combo codes

Key Processes

1. **Educational and Professional Leave Request**.
   1.1. To initiate the leave request, the Postdoc's Unit and Postdoc should submit the following completed documents to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) in the Office of Research via email to opa@uga.edu for review and approval. (Please also cc shooks@uga.edu and jhawks.farmer@uga.edu.) The request should include:
      a. Completed Post Doc Educational Leave of Absence Request Forms with all signatures (Section A and B)
      https://research.uga.edu/docs/forms/opa/PostdocEducLeaveRequestForm.pdf
      b. Supporting documentation, such as grant information, should be attached to the leave form. The form cannot be processed without the award documentation.
   1.2. Once all other signatures are obtained and the leave request form is complete, OPA will coordinate to obtain the approval signature of the Vice President for Research for the leave request.
   1.3. Once OPA receives the final approval from the VP for Research, OPA will email the approved leave document to hrweb@uga.edu.
   1.4. Upon receipt of the approved leave request, the HR Absence Team will enter the leave status in OneUSG Connect. In addition, a leave checklist is provided to the Postdoc.
   1.5. The Postdoc will review the checklist and set up any payments including parking, Ramsey Center, etc.
   1.6. Once the non-paid, Postdoc fellow is placed in an extended educational leave status, they will be subject to benefits billing via Alight.
   1.7. With the assumption the grant can pay for the employer's contribution to health benefits, the Postdoc's unit/department will be billed based on the effective combo code(s) used to fund the postdoc's position. If a new combo code is needed, the Postdoc's unit/department should request a combo code via
   https://uga.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/2060/Portal/Requests/ServiceDet?ID=30906.
   1.8. Any billing questions or issues should be submitted to hrweb@uga.edu. Any change in duration of the approved leave should be communicated to UGA HR and OPA.

2. **Creation of Postdoctoral Fellow position via UGAJobs and seating the Postdoc in this position as an Affiliate.** Follow the standard position creation, direct hire posting and Hiring Proposal procedure outlined in this document: Processing Postdoctoral Appointments in UGAJobs: A Guide for Unit HR Administrators. For the Postdoc Fellow position:
   a. This is a non-benefits eligible, non-salaried position, so Critical Hire approval is NOT required.
   b. Use BCAT 671X00, Postdoctoral Fellow
   c. FTE is 0.001, Standard hours are 0.00
   d. Pay Type is 18N-Non Paid Affiliate

e. For the Hiring Proposal associated with seating the Postdoc as a Postdoc Fellow, OPA only needs the following documents – 1) [Postdoctoral Hiring Proposal Cover Form](#) 2) Offer letter for the Postdoc Fellow position under the fellowship. [Template offer letter for Postdoctoral Research Fellows](#)

f. When submitting the Hiring Proposal through the Postdoc Unit's approval routing, the unit should include a note in the History/Comment section that the Postdoc will be placed in Educational and Professional Leave in the current 471X00 position and then seated in as a Postdoc Fellow via the Affiliate process. When the Hiring Proposal is submitted to OPA, then OPA will include the same note when forwarding to Central HR for final review and approval of the HP.

3. **Set up stipend payments to the Postdoc from the fellowship via the policy and instructions for "Payment of Fellowship and Training Grant Stipends".**
https://policies.uga.edu/pdf/fellowships_training_grant_stipend_payment.pdf