



NESCent POLICY FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

We welcome you to the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent). NESCent represents a collaborative effort by three universities in North Carolina's Research Triangle: Duke University, North Carolina State University (NCSU), and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). Our goal is to facilitate a broad synthesis in evolutionary biology by fostering cross-disciplinary interactions. Each of you will have a primary project of your own design; but as a whole, the group will have a great deal of "free energy" to take advantage of new opportunities for synthesis and collaboration as they arise.

Below is information that will be useful to you during your two-year appointment with us. Please review these policies and let us know if you have any questions. Our web site (<http://www.nescent.org>) contains information about the Center: its mission, funded projects, calendar of events, information about the area, etc. Also, we hope you will feel free to make suggestions and recommendations based on your experience at the Center.

APPOINTMENT, REVIEW, AND THIRD YEAR TERM

NESCent typically hosts 15 postdoctoral associates a year. Postdoctoral fellows are appointed for two-year terms.

Two months before your anniversary date, you are required to submit a brief (3-4 pages) annual report on your activities, progress and plans at NESCent. Your mentor will prepare a written review for the Operations Committee. Kathleen Smith will prepare a response to you outlining the review by the Operations Committee. After approval of your report, funding for the second year of your fellowship will be released with a 3% salary increase effective on your anniversary date.

A third year of funding is appropriate when a convincing case can be made that a third year at NESCent will help postdocs complete or expand the aims of their projects and receive real benefits in their scientific training.

Therefore, a third year of funding will only be granted when a strong case is made for the third year, and the request must be justified on scientific grounds. We suggest that you talk over your plans with your mentor and/or one of the directors. It is also a good idea to get some help in writing your request (from your mentor, your peers and appropriate NESCent directors).

Postdocs who would like to request a third year of funding should:

- Request in writing that the postdoc be extended for a period up to a year. We would like to receive this letter by January 10 or July 10 in your second year of funding.
- In this request (which should be ~ 3-4 pages) summarize the progress on your project, and specify how the third year will allow you to either complete or expand the aims of your project. The request must be justified on scientific grounds.
- We will also ask you to give a brief (20 minute) presentation of your research and continuing plans to our Scientific Advisory Board during their February or August meeting. This Board will provide a recommendation to the Operations Committee on whether or not your request be approved. Decisions on the third year will be made after this meeting.
- This extension will not be available to a postdoc who has already secured a faculty position.

MENTORSHIP

Each Postdoctoral Fellow will have a mentor from the NESCent Operations Committee based on research interests and likely interactions. Your mentor is intended to be a resource for you to discuss research plans and progress, professional development, and whatever else may be useful in helping you succeed at NESCent and beyond. However, your NESCent mentor is not intended to substitute for more specialized scientific mentors. The NESCent postdoctoral program was designed with the intention that all postdocs establish ties with an evolutionary biologist at one of the Triangle Universities. NESCent directors, or your NESCent mentor, can help you identify and contact potential scientific mentors.

DISCRETIONARY FUNDS

You will have access to \$5,000/year in discretionary funds. These funds may not be carried over between years. This support can be used for travel, page charges, reprint costs, books, special furniture needs, computers, software, etc., associated with NESCent, but not for field research. All items purchased with these Federal (NSF) funds are considered property of Duke (for the benefit of the person's use on the project). At the end of your appointment, items purchased, such as laptops and computers, can be turned over to Duke's Surplus Office and purchased at a reduced price for your own use. Barbara Mitchell, our Financial Analyst, will provide you with assistance regarding use of these funds, your account balance, and your retention of any purchased items.

If you have money left from your research allowance when you leave NESCent, you may use this for costs associated with publishing the results of your NESCent project. We would expect that this would include primarily page charges. When you do leave NESCent, if you have any remaining funds, please make sure you drop a note to Karen and Barbara telling them that you'll be reserving these funds for this purpose. You will have one year after your departure to use these funds for publication costs. They cannot, however, be used for other kinds of costs, such as travel to meetings, further research, etc.

OTHER NESCENT SUPPORT

1. **Publication Costs:** For any publication cost of over \$1,000, NESCent will pay half, and ask you to pay half out of your research discretionary funds. This includes open access charges, and also high page charges for top journals. Should you have page charges of \$995, please address your needs with one of our directors.
2. **Student Research Assistants:** NESCent will support your hiring an undergraduate assistant. Our general expectation is that you will each be eligible for one student; however, NESCent is willing to provide a second on request (just a brief email outlining the projects). This program is designed to give you some help for routine research assistants, and also to provide a way to bring more undergraduates into the Center. This kind of assistance should not be more than about \$1000 a semester -- or 10 or so hours a week. An annual Duke Job Fair is held each August. Postdocs are encouraged to prepare position description flyers and attend this event.

If you require specialized help, in particular programming, informatics, or the like, you should first present a written request to us. If it is informatics, please send it to Todd Vision, who will work with Hilmar Lapp to see if it can be supported by our staff, or if we can help you identify and support such help. In any case, if you are attempting to hire assistance that will cost the Center more than \$1,000 a semester, your request must be pre-approved by the Director.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Your primary responsibility while at NESCent is to fulfill your goals regarding scholarly research as outlined in your proposal. In addition to your first year annual report, a final report should be completed within two weeks of your departure.

Although we recognize that research and professional development activities require travel, we expect that NESCent postdocs will largely be physically in residence at the Center. Any extended absence from the Center must be approved in advance by the NESCent directors.

We ask that you ensure that support from the Center is acknowledged in all publications that you produce, or to which you contribute, and copies of published articles should be provided electronically to the Center. Your address should be given as NESCent in publications resulting from work done while in residence at the Center, even if these publications appear after the end of your appointment. This is important for our annual reports to NSF and to other funding agencies.

The following citation may be used in this regard: *Supported by the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent), NSF #EF-0423641.*

POSTDOCS SUBMITTING GRANT PROPOSALS

There are three levels of regulation/concern we have to deal with regarding a NESCent postdoc submitting grant proposals. The first level is Duke regulations. Duke will in some cases allow postdocs to be PIs. The department must certify why the postdoc should be a PI, and then it must be approved by the Vice Provost for Research. We believe that if NESCent elects to permit a postdoc to serve as a PI, NESCent can make the argument to obtain approval. The issue revolves around the fact that the grant actually goes to Duke and not to you – they have to take responsibility for many aspects of a grant, such as scientific ethics, various spending rules, etc. They also are guaranteeing that you have a stable job for the duration of the grant and that you have the facilities to do the work supported.

The second level is NSF rules and percent effort requirements. Your NESCent postdoc is considered 100% effort, which basically means you can't get additional salary from another source, or commit time to work on a project that is significantly different from the one NESCent is funding you to work on while funded by NESCent. This is a federal regulation, and if we violate it we both could be in big trouble (you don't want to start your career with a federal fraud charge!!).

The third level is NESCent policy. We assume you'll work basically at NESCent on the project you proposed for the time we are supporting you. Because of space limitations, we can't guarantee you space indefinitely, even if you have your own funding. Below are some scenarios that illustrate the issues.

One, is the possibility that you might want to apply, perhaps as a co-PI with someone, for a grant that is closely related to your NESCent project. Say your co-PI will be gathering data and you'll be analyzing it, using techniques that are in your NESCent project. You'll be doing the work at NESCent, with perhaps a trip or two a year to the other lab; maybe you'll switch to a full time postdocs (funded by that grant) at that institution when your NESCent postdoc is finished. As long as you aren't getting any salary on the grant while you are getting paid by NESCent ("double dipping") and are basically working on the general project we funded you for the grant wouldn't essentially change your

NESCent status for the duration of your postdoc. In that case, the grant would be processed entirely from that other institution – no funds would be coming to NESCent/Duke, and we wouldn't even have to sign off on it. Whether or not you could be listed as a co-PI would be up to that institution. It would probably be good to have a letter in the grant from our Director, Kathleen Smith, saying it was OK with NESCent, but we probably would have no objections.

Another possibility is that you see an exciting extension to your work at NESCent, and would want to apply for a grant to extend it, perhaps to work with our informatics program to hire a dedicated programmer, and pay your salary for a year or so after your NESCent funding was over. This would be a grant that is run through NESCent. We would consider this and if we all approve, we would try to get Duke to give you PI status. Whether it would work would depend on the details.

A grant where you would be undertaking a major new project while at NESCent that would involve a lot of data collection, a lot of time away, either by yourself or in collaboration with someone else, or would pay you salary while a postdocs here wouldn't be permissible – in part because of the effort regulations from NSF, and in part because it violates our basic understanding in funding you.

Finally, if you are writing a grant for work to be done after leaving NESCent (i.e., if you have a job or another postdoc arrangement), that isn't our concern. It would be administered through the institution you'll be going to, and we don't need to be involved.

The bottom line is that if you are considering a grant, it would be best to talk to Kathleen Smith and/or Joel Kingsolver, preferably the two of them together, to see what we can do. Because of the complexities of regulations, we cannot have a blanket policy. Within the regulations, we'll do all we can to aid your professional development and your science.

DUKE UNIVERSITY BENEFITS, VACATION SICK LEAVE, ABSENCES

You will be a Duke University employee and, therefore, it is your responsibility to sign up for Duke University benefits and to attend the New Employee Orientation on campus within thirty days of your initial appointment date. The Duke University Human Resources web site (<http://www.hr.duke.edu/benefits/main.html>) has comprehensive information on available benefits.

Duke developed a Postdoctoral Policy document effective April 1, 2008. See this document for further information on leave policy for Postdoctoral Fellows. Please inform Karen in advance if you intend to be absent for any length of time for personal or professional reasons.

Vacation/Personal Leave and Holidays

- accrue 1.25 days/month equaling 3 weeks/yr
- receive 10 designated campus holidays + 3 discretionary holidays
- may not accrue more than 20 days
- no payout of unused vacation days at end of your appointment

Sick Leave

- accrue 8 hrs/mo or 12 days/yr
- no payout of unused sick leave at end of your appointment

Parental Leave

- may use any or all accrued sick leave or vacation, or take time without pay during the 3-week waiting period; then eligible for 3 weeks paid parental leave
- must be taken within 3 months of the birth or adoption
- must be employed 1 year before eligible for parental leave

NON-U.S. RESIDENTS/CITIZENS AND VISA INFORMATION

Typically, Postdoctoral Fellows and Sabbatical Fellows who are non-U.S. residents will obtain a J-1 visa. We understand that in some cases, Postdocs and Sabbatical Fellows will be subject to the Two-Year Home Country Physical Presence Requirement. In these cases, we will encourage you to apply for a waiver of the requirement. This waiver cannot be processed until after receipt of the J-1 visa. In some cases, where it is likely that certain countries will not approve a waiver request, we will consider applying for an H-1B visa for a Postdoctoral Fellow. Generally speaking, applications for H-1B visas will be supported only for permanent employment.

Also, in some circumstances, we may request a Postdoctoral Fellow to investigate an extension of an F-1 (student) visa which is an OPT (Optional Practical Training). This would be effective for one year, while an application for a J-1 or H-1B is processed.

You are responsible for maintaining and updating your visa status during your stay at the Center; be aware of this status before you plan any trip. You may wish to check with the International Office (<http://www.internationaloffice.duke.edu>). If you are issued a visa through Duke University, it is your responsibility to inform the International Office each time you exit and enter the U.S.