## SAMPLE POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW OFFER LETTER

<<Date>>

Dr. <<FirstName>><<LastName>>

<<Address>>

<<City>>, <<State>>

<<Postal Code>>

<<Country>>

Dear Dr. [NAME],

I am delighted to offer you an appointment as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of [DEPARTMENT NAME] at Harvard University, from [DATE] through [DATE], with the possibility of renewal depending on continued funding and satisfactory performance. As a Postdoctoral Fellow, you will be under my direct supervision and will be expected to adhere to all Harvard University rules and requirements.

This appointment is conditional on funding and institutional review. All appointments are contingent upon approval of an appropriate visa as required by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).  The Harvard International Office (HIO) helps individuals secure visas and other appropriate documentation allowing them to enter the United States and pursue their activities at Harvard.  If you need such assistance, and as federal regulations permit, HIO will assist you in the process of obtaining temporary visa status. The United States government, however, remains the final arbiter of all immigration-related cases. Furthermore, we note that as a result of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the United States Department of State visa services at all United States embassies and consulates may be delayed or otherwise impacted. It is ultimately the responsibility of the individual appointee to ensure they obtain an appropriate entry visa and any other required authorization prior to arrival at Harvard for their appointed term.  [INSERT ONLY IF THE APPOINTMENT IS PAID: In the event that you are unable to obtain a visa and any other required authorization within that time for any reason, Harvard shall have no obligation to pay the (CHOOSE ONE: salary/stipend) specified for the appointment.]

Harvard University continues to place the highest priority on the health, safety and wellbeing of its faculty, staff, and students, as well as the wider community – and as such, Harvard community members must comply with the University’s health and safety guidelines and protocols including but not limited to those related to COVID-19. Additionally, as detailed on our [COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement Webpage](https://huhs.harvard.edu/covid-19-vaccine-requirement-faqs), the University requires all new faculty and other employees to provide confirmation of primary series COVID-19 vaccination. You can do so via a [vaccine attestation form](https://facultyresources.fas.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/facultyresources/files/faculty_new_hire_vax_attestation_form.pdf?m=1678205650). You may also claim exemption from the vaccination requirement for medical or religious reasons, also prior to completing the hiring process, by requesting a form from mrecords@huhs.harvard.edu. Please note that completion of the exemption process can take two to three weeks. Unvaccinated individuals who are approved for an exemption may also be subject to additional public health measures. If approved for an exemption, you will be considered in compliance with the University’s requirement. If not approved, we may rescind your offer of employment or terminate your employment, if applicable. Additional information regarding this requirement, exemptions, verification of vaccination status, and other related policies and resources may be found on the University’s [COVID-19 Information Website](https://huhs.harvard.edu/covid-19-information#gsc.tab=0).

EITHER:

This will be a paid, [SPECIFY ONE: full-time/part-time], benefits-eligible position. You will receive an annual salary of $[SALARY] paid to you on the last business day of the month, and will be eligible for Harvard University’s subsidized comprehensive medical, dental, vision, and other benefits. Most of the benefit plans require a contribution from participants for coverage. More information on benefits and benefits costs is available on the FAS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs website: <https://postdoc.fas.harvard.edu/harvard-benefits-eligible-postdocs?admin_panel=1>. Please note that you must enroll in benefits within thirty days of the start date of your appointment. As you must first complete your I-9 form, please contact [CONTACT NAME at [PHONE] or [EMAIL] for instructions on how to complete the I-9. Once your completed I-9 has been processed, you will be able to enroll in benefits. More information on completing the I-9 form is also available at <https://oc.finance.harvard.edu/guidance-regarding-i9-collection-during-covid19?admin_panel=1>.

OR:

Your [SPECIFY ONE: full-time/part-time] position will be funded from your fellowship from [FUNDER NAME]. You will receive an annual stipend of $[SALARY] paid through [Harvard University/FUNDER NAME].

[IF THE POSITION IS ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS: “This position will be eligible for Harvard University’s subsidized, comprehensive medical, dental, vision, and other benefits. Most of the benefit plans require a contribution from participants for coverage. More information on benefits and benefits costs is available on the FAS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs website: <https://postdoc.fas.harvard.edu/harvard-benefits-eligible-postdocs?admin_panel=1>. Please note that you must enroll in benefits within thirty days of the start date of your appointment. As you must first complete your I-9 form, please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [PHONE] or [EMAIL] for instructions on how to complete the I-9. Once your completed I-9 has been processed, you will be able to enroll in benefits. More information on completing the I-9 form is also available at <https://oc.finance.harvard.edu/guidance-regarding-i9-collection-during-covid19?admin_panel=1>.”]

[IF THE POSITION IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS: This position will not be eligible for Harvard University benefits. You are responsible for providing your own health insurance coverage, which is required of all Massachusetts residents. More information is available on the FAS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs website: <https://postdoc.fas.harvard.edu/non-harvard-benefits-eligible-postdocs>.”] As a member of the Harvard community, you will have access to library and computer facilities, and you can purchase a membership for the Harvard recreational facilities.

[ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION FOR THE POSITION, SUCH AS OFFICE/DESK SPACE, RESEARCH ALLOWANCE, TRAVEL ALLOWANCE, INSTITUTE OR CENTER AFFILIATIONS AND RESOURCES, ETC.]

I look forward to working with you on [TOPIC(S) OF RESEARCH. ADDITIONAL DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES. *Consider including some or all of the following and adapt to your group’s use:* In addition to your research, we expect you to participate in international conferences and publish conference and journal papers, to propose new directions and projects and assist in preparing research proposals, and to supervise and interact with graduate and undergraduate students. You may also have opportunities to assist with courses and to prep grant proposals.]

Ahead of your one-year renewal date, I look forward to discussing your achievements and progress during the first year and to setting objectives for the following year. If it is determined that your performance is not satisfactory, the appointment may be terminated or not renewed before the appointment end date.

All incoming faculty and researchers at Harvard University are expected to review and sign an electronic version of the Harvard University Participation Agreement [(https://vpr.harvard.edu/harvard-university-participation-agreement)](http://vpr.harvard.edu/harvard-university-participation-agreement) which is designed to help carry out the Harvard University Intellectual Property Policy and other research policies. Please review and electronically sign the Participation Agreement by the start of your appointment. [IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS WORKING IN A HARVARD LABORATORY AND IS NOT RECEIVING ANY FORM OF PAYMENT FROM HARVARD: “Please also submit an electronic PDF of a signed hard copy of the Acknowledgement of Risk and Release for Non-Harvard Personnel Using Harvard Research and Instructional Laboratory Facilities form (<http://files.vpr.harvard.edu/files/vpr-documents/files/acknowledgement_of_risk_and_release_form_12_2014.pdf>), by the start of your appointment.”] For information on other FAS and University policies pertaining to your appointment, please see the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook* (<https://academic-appointments.fas.harvard.edu/>).

If you received or will receive your doctoral degree within one year of your appointment start date, please note that the FAS Office for Faculty Affairs must receive official confirmation that you have completed all requirements for your doctoral degree prior to your appointment start date.

Full-time Postdoctoral Fellows are generally entitled to 20 days of vacation per year. This time may not roll over from year to year, and there can be no payout of unused vacation time when an appointment ends. Please discuss your vacation and holiday plans with me in advance.

The Office for Postdoctoral Affairs website is an excellent source of information for incoming Postdoctoral Fellows: <https://postdoc.fas.harvard.edu/>. Information about Harvard’s many cultural and intellectual resources can be found at [https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/harvard-events](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/harvard-events/).

Formalities aside, we are extremely excited about having you join the [DEPARTMENT NAME] as a Postdoctoral Fellow and look forward to working with you. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the terms of your appointment.

Sincerely,

[FACULTY MENTOR NAME]

[TITLE]

Department of [DEPARTMENT NAME]