



SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION FELLOWS

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish the policies related to Fellowships at the Smithsonian Institution (SI), including those administered directly through the Office of Fellowships and Internships (OFI) and those administered by units through authority delegated by OFI. For information about other types of Academic Appointments, please consult [SD 205, *Smithsonian Institution Research Associates*](#), and [SD 709, *Smithsonian Institution Interns*](#).

2. DEFINITIONS

Academic Appointment: A Fellowship, Internship, or Research Associate appointment.

Academic Appointment Coordinator: An SI employee assigned by a unit director to coordinate Academic Appointments of that unit.

Academic Appointment Council: An advisory body composed of Academic Appointment Coordinators and other SI staff who support SI Academic Appointments.

Academic Appointment Letter: A letter that OFI sends each newly appointed Fellow setting forth the terms of the appointment between the SI and the Fellow.

Advisor: An SI employee who advises the Fellow in pursuit of the Fellow's independent research or study; and who serves as a liaison between the Fellow and the SI to ensure that the Fellow is carrying out the terms of the Fellowship, complying with the standards of conduct for Fellows, and otherwise adhering to applicable SI policies.

Appointee: The individual holding the Academic Appointment.

2. DEFINITIONS (continued)

Fellow: An Appointee who conducts independent research or study related to SI collections, facilities, or experts. The designation of Fellow is distinct from the other types of Academic Appointments such as Research Associates (see SD 205, *Smithsonian Institution Research Associates*) and Interns (see SD 709, *Smithsonian Institution Interns*).

Host Unit(s): The unit(s) to which the Fellow and their Advisor are assigned.

3. POLICY

General Principles

Fellowships are awarded to individuals seeking to conduct independent research or study related to SI collections, facilities, or experts. During their tenure, SI Fellows are expected to participate and engage in scholarly exchange with the SI intellectual community. SI appoints Fellows because they strengthen the SI scholarly community with new energy and ideas, build bridges to other people and organizations, and support the SI's mission to increase and diffuse knowledge.

The policies and procedures in this directive allow each SI Host Unit hosting Fellows to maintain additional written policies that do not conflict with this directive and are appropriate to its particular Fellowship program. Units shall consult with OFI and the Office of General Counsel (OGC) before issuing a policy that would be more restrictive than this directive.

Although a Fellow may be engaged in independent research or study in collaboration with SI employees and/or contractors, Fellows are not deemed to be employees or contractors, do not perform personal services for the SI, and are not permitted to hold another type of SI Academic Appointment during their Fellowship without prior approval from OFI.

Specific terms of each Fellowship appointment are governed by the Academic Appointment Letter, which sets forth terms and conditions of any Fellowship, including any stipend support being offered and the relationship between the SI and the Appointee.

Fellows may be hosted simultaneously by no more than two Host Units, one of which shall be designated as the primary Host Unit. The primary Host Unit is responsible for coordinating dates and other administrative details (e.g., access to research space, computers, and other SI-wide services) for the Fellow.

Fellows are expected to carry out the activities set forth in their proposal; outside commitments

3. POLICY (continued)

that conflict with the Fellow's appointment may not be undertaken during the period of the Fellowship.

Appointment Procedures

To appoint a new Fellow, a Host Unit Academic Appointment Coordinator submits an electronic academic appointment form to OFI (please see the OFI website for the current versions of this form). After the academic appointment form is approved by OFI, the Fellowship appointment is made official when OFI sends an Academic Appointment Letter to the new Fellow.

To extend a Fellow, a Host Unit Academic Appointment Coordinator follows this same process, indicating that the appointment is an extension rather than a new appointment.

If a new or extending Fellow is not a U.S. citizen, the Host Unit must notify OFI prior to the Fellow's original appointment tenure and, if extended, prior to the end date of the Fellowship, to confirm that the Fellow's immigration status is correct and the visa dates are coordinated with any Fellowship appointment or extension. For Fellows who are non U.S. citizens, additional time may be required to allow for the immigration process. More information may be found in the subsection below on "Citizenship Requirements."

OFI maintains a database of current and previously appointed Fellows. More detailed information about Academic Appointment procedures may be found in appointment guides and other resources maintained by OFI.

Titles

Units may, at their discretion, grant working titles to Fellows. These may include, for example, modifying-terms such as Undergraduate, Graduate, Pre-doc, Post-doc, Senior, Professional, Visiting, etc. (please see [Smithsonian Congress of Scholars Guidance on Fellow Titles](#)). Alternatively, for example, Fellows appointed to conduct independent research or study for less than 30 days may be called "short-term visitors." Regardless of the working title adopted by the unit, individuals meeting the criteria specified in this directive to conduct independent research or study are deemed to be Fellows for purposes of their official classification and processing.

In cases where an SI employee's title includes the word "Fellow," that person's employment is not guided by this directive but falls under the jurisdiction of the Office of Human Resources (OHR).

3. POLICY (continued)

Tenure

New Fellows may be appointed for a period of not more than three years, which may be extended for an additional two-year term for a total of not more than five years.

While SI Fellows always maintain independent status to direct their own research or study in accordance with the Fellow's Academic Appointment Letter, Fellows are expected to collaborate with SI staff and engage in the intellectual community of the SI. Host Units may specify expectations about how those supported by particular programs will engage in research or study during their Fellowship, including but not limited to expectations about the Fellow's presence on SI premises during the Fellowship.

Fellows do not accrue leave but are expected to independently manage their time to make progress on the research or study set forth in the Academic Appointment Letter. Generally, during a 12-month Fellowship, time off totaling up to three weeks may be taken if planned in consultation with the Fellow's Advisor(s). If time off beyond three weeks is needed (e.g., for family or medical reasons), the Fellow must consult with his or her Advisor and OFI. Requests for time off during which a Fellow intends to pause his or her research or study must be submitted in writing to OFI through the primary Advisor. In addition to time off, Fellows with tenures of three months or longer are eligible to enroll in the Smithsonian's trust fund group health insurance plan at their sole expense.

There are generally three circumstances under which a Fellowship appointment may end before the tenure end date listed in the Academic Appointment Letter:

1. The Fellow's primary Advisor requests in writing to OFI that a Fellowship appointment end because the Fellow has not met a commitment outlined in the Academic Appointment Letter.
2. The Host Unit's director requests in writing to OFI that a Fellowship appointment end because he or she has determined that an appointee has breached the Fellow Standards of Conduct (see Section 5, "Fellow Standards of Conduct") or other applicable SI policies.
3. The Fellow is either unable or unwilling to continue the appointment (including occasions when a Fellow ends the appointment in order to accept employment with SI).

3. POLICY (continued)

Stipends

Fellows may or may not receive stipends. If the Smithsonian is paying the stipend, the stipend must generally adhere to current stipend caps as established by OFI. Host Units may request a waiver from OFI on these caps if they can document higher stipend levels issued by comparable Fellowship programs.

Stipends issued to SI Fellows through the Smithsonian are not considered salary or wages by the Internal Revenue Service. Stipends are awarded to defray living costs incurred during the tenure of the Fellowship.

The SI generally does not withhold federal, state, or local income taxes or Social Security taxes from stipends. Fellows are fully responsible for paying all applicable income and other taxes and should consult their own tax advisors, as needed. Stipends may not be paid retroactively.

As part of a Fellow's SI stipend, Fellows may receive allowances designated to cover expenses associated with travel, research, and equipment. From time to time, Fellows may also receive support from non-SI sources to defray certain costs. Third-party support, including from income gained through part-time work outside of SI, may be permitted, provided that such support does not interfere with the Fellow's ability to fulfill the commitments specified in the Academic Appointment Letter or otherwise present a conflict of interest. Requests to receive additional (non-SI) stipend support must be submitted in writing to OFI through the primary Advisor. Limitations on receiving certain types of income may apply for non-resident alien Fellows based on the visa type.

Citizenship Requirements

Except where specific programs or regulations require otherwise, Fellows may hold any citizenship and residency.

Fellows who are non-resident aliens in the United States are required to have appropriate immigration status and remain in an active immigration status throughout their Fellowship and may be required to provide additional documentation to determine their residency status while present in the United States. Immigration procedures may require additional processing time for non-U.S. Fellows, depending on their immigration status. Based on the tax status of the non-resident alien, the SI may be required to withhold income taxes from a stipend provided to the Fellow.

3. POLICY (continued)

Grants and Sponsored Projects

As a general rule, Fellows should not apply for grants in the name of the SI and may not be identified or serve as the sole Principal Investigator (PI) for external grants and contracts. In exceptional circumstances where an external grant or contract is essential to the fulfillment of a Fellow's independent research (e.g., a grant for telescope time for a Fellow conducting research at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory), and with approvals as specified in the *OFI Academic Appointment Handbook*, a Fellow may apply as a PI for external grants and contracts using the SI as the home institution. Fellows also may act as a Co-PI for external grants and contracts. If serving as a PI or a Co-PI on an award granted to the SI, Fellows must complete an Annual Financial Disclosure statement (SI Form 1085) that is available on the OGC Financial Disclosure webpage.

Fellows may not be paid a stipend from a grant unless the grant includes funding for training and a formal training plan is developed. Stipends cannot be paid from grants that include funding for "salary and compensation"; however, if it is determined in consultation with OFI and OHR that a Fellow is performing services in the nature of employment to enable the SI to fulfill obligations under an SI grant, the Fellow may be converted to a salaried trust employee using grant funds. In the case of a non-resident alien Fellow, such conversion may occur only if the Fellow's visa permits employment.

Intellectual Property

Fellows own the results of their original research, including copyright in text, photographs, illustrations, audio, video, research, graphs, recordings, databases, etc. that they generate during their SI Fellowship, except to the extent that the research is based on and/or derived from the SI's collections, resources, equipment, facilities, and staff expertise ("SI Content").

Fellows are required to enter into an intellectual property agreement with SI in which, among other things, they are granted a non-exclusive license to use SI Content, to the extent incorporated into their original research, so long as the Fellow has confirmed that such SI Content is not subject to SI and/or third-party rights or restrictions before they use, produce, or publish such SI Content. In addition, Fellows agree that when their research is published, they will provide appropriate credit to the Smithsonian and those with whom they have collaborated.

Fellows acknowledge that their access to SI Content is not exclusive and that such SI Content may be publicly accessible for use by others, including but not limited to other researchers.

3. POLICY (continued)

Fellows who receive funding through an external grant or contract must protect against conflicts between the funder's intellectual property terms and SI's policy; specifically, Fellows cannot convey exclusive rights in their research to funders that would prevent the SI from exercising its right to publish SI Content in accordance with this policy.

Related Activities

At the discretion of the Advisor(s), a Fellow may co-mentor an SI Intern, provided that an SI employee serves as the Intern's mentor. Also at the discretion of the Advisor(s), a Fellow may simultaneously register and serve as an SI Volunteer during the period of his or her Fellowship appointment so long as the Volunteer position is hosted by a different department or unit than the one(s) hosting the Fellowship appointment ([see SD 208, Standards of Conduct Regarding Smithsonian Volunteers](#)).

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Appointment Coordinators are responsible for:

- sending Fellowship appointments (and supplementary documentation) to OFI for registration;
- completing all required procedures to provide Fellows with appropriate access to SI facilities and systems;
- working with OFI to coordinate the extension of Fellows in the Host Unit;
- developing and disseminating information about Fellowship programs at the Host Unit;
- ensuring that Fellows complete any required training (e.g., computer security, protection of minors, prevention of workplace harassment, safeguarding equal employment opportunity [EEO], etc.);
- authorizing the issuance of SI identification credentials in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Office of Protection Services (OPS) (see [SD 224, Identity Management Program](#), for details);

4. RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

- collecting and maintaining current emergency contact information for every Fellow at the Host Unit; and
- forwarding Fellow requests for business cards to appropriate Host Unit representatives, following the guidance provided in the [SD 323, Use of Funds Handbook](#).

The **Academic Appointment Council** is responsible for:

- offering advice and facilitating communication about SI Academic Appointment programs;
- facilitating enrichment events for Appointees; and
- helping to publicize information about SI Academic Appointment opportunities.

Advisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that Fellows can be accommodated within the SI unit space, equipment, and other limitations;
- providing scholarly guidance and practical support for Fellows;
- ensuring that the Fellow is acting consistently with the Academic Appointment Letter, complying with the standards of conduct for Fellows (see page 10), and otherwise adhering to applicable SI policies;
- being aware of the statutory prohibitions against appointing, employing, promoting, or advancing a relative or advocating such actions for a relative (5 *United States Code* [U.S.C.] § 3110; see SD 103, *Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct*, [Appendix 2](#)); and
- developing, where feasible and desirable, SI unit-supported enrichment activities for Fellows.

The **Office of Fellowships and Internships** (OFI) is responsible for:

- issuing and updating this directive;

4. RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

- developing, administering, publicizing, and tracking Academic Appointments across the SI;
- determining the propriety, approval, and awarding of Academic Appointments;
- maintaining a database of all SI Fellows to support and evaluate Academic Appointment programs;
- confirming new and extending Fellowship appointments with Host Unit staff;
- sending Academic Appointment Letters and information packets to Appointees;
- collecting and retaining all agreements associated with Fellowship appointments and/or extensions;
- working with the Office of Finance and Accounting (OF&A) to ensure that stipends are paid accurately and on time;
- working with units to develop new Fellowship opportunities that comply with SI policy and procedures;
- ensuring that all Fellows are made aware of their obligation to comply with SI policies applicable to Fellows, such as, but not limited to, the Fellow Standards of Conduct and policies prohibiting discrimination and workplace harassment;
- advising senior leadership, directors, and the SI community on matters of SI policy related to Fellowships; and
- convening regular meetings of the SI Academic Appointment Council.

The **Office of Finance and Accounting (OF&A)** is responsible for:

- working with OFI to ensure that stipends are paid accurately and on time.

The **Office of International Relations** is responsible for

- providing assistance to foreign visitors and OFI regarding the types of visas required for Academic Appointees who are non-resident aliens.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES (continued)

Unit Directors that offer Fellowships in their units are responsible for:

- designating an Academic Appointment Coordinator for their respective unit; and
- consulting with OFI if they wish to develop new Fellowship programs that comply with SI policy and procedures.

5. FELLOW STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Fellows must comply with these standards of conduct. If there is any doubt that an activity or planned activity is in compliance, Fellows should immediately seek the advice of their Advisor(s).

Failure to comply with the following standards is cause for revoking the Fellowship appointment.

A Fellow must:

- follow legal requirements and other applicable standards for conducting research in the discipline, such as those for collecting, obtaining import permits and using live animals or human subjects (see [SD 604](#), *Misconduct in Research*; [SD 605](#), *Animal Care and Use*; [SD 606](#), *Research Involving Human Subjects*; [SD 607](#), *Responsible Conduct of Research Training*; [SD 608](#), *Financial Conflict of Interest for National Science Foundation [NSF]- and Public Health Service [PHS]-Sponsored Projects*; and [SD 611](#), *Export Compliance and Trade Sanctions Related to Research, Export and Museum Activities*);
- adhere to the funding source disclosure requirements in [SD 806](#), *Smithsonian Policies on Publishing by the Institution and Individual Staff Members*, and the funding source disclosure requirements otherwise applicable to SI staff in [SD 103](#), *Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct*, Section 9(b), when the Fellow is publishing research findings under the SI affiliation;
- adhere to [SD 103](#), *Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct*, Section 13(c), and provide an annual and any ongoing disclosures required by the [SI Form 1085](#) if the Fellow is a PI or co-PI on an SI grant;

5. FELLOW STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (continued)

- adhere to applicable SI policy and/or written agreements between the Fellow and the SI regarding ownership and use of intellectual property generated as a result of the Fellowship, and be familiar with the provisions and processes set forth in all applicable directives, such as [SD 102](#), *Disclosing, Protecting, and Commercializing Inventions*, and [SD 609](#), *Digital Asset Access and Use*;
- adhere to [SD 118](#), *Privacy Policy*, to ensure the protection of personally identifiable information (PII) and [SD 119](#), *Privacy Breach Notification Policy*, when reporting any suspected or confirmed breaches of PII;
- adhere to the rules set by the Smithsonian Institution Libraries (SIL) and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics library when using their resources and facilities;
- be aware of and guided by the generally accepted professional standards and codes of ethics applicable in his or her professional field(s);
- exhibit appropriate professional conduct and behavior, respect others, and cooperate in the enforcement of the prevention of workplace harassment as set forth in [SD 214](#), *Equal Employment Opportunity Program*; and
- adhere to SD 120, *Scientific Diving Policy*, when applicable.

In addition to complying with the above standards, a Fellow must not:

- misrepresent the relationship with the SI, particularly in any way representing him- or herself as an employee of the SI;
- directly or indirectly profit from, or permit others to profit from, information obtained through the Academic Appointment, which is or would be unavailable to external scholars or the general public;
- solicit or accept any gift that is or appears to be offered because the Fellow holds an Academic Appointment or may have influence within the SI;
- use official SI letterhead and similar materials, mailing privileges, or equipment, or supplies for anything not related to official SI business;

5. FELLOW STANDARDS OF CONDUCT (continued)

- solicit or promote the sale of any goods or services on SI premises through the use of SI resources or facilities, including email;
- operate SI motor vehicles or off-road equipment unless the Host Unit determines that such use qualifies as official SI business as described in [SD 421](#), *Mobile Asset Fleet Management*, which provides that authorized operators may drive a motor vehicle or off-road equipment on SI official business only;
- reproduce copyrighted material (owned by the SI or a third party) in the absence of specific approval to do so from the rights-holder(s), unless permitted by fair use; and
- receive, spend, or commit funds, such as grants or contracts to the SI or grants from within the SI, without the approval and active fund management of the Host Unit's administrative staff.

A Fellow with access to collections, whether in the Host Unit or elsewhere, must be aware of and adhere to his or her respective unit's collections management policy and [SD 600](#), *Collections Management*. Access to and use of collections must be approved in advance by the appropriate unit staff employee in accordance with established policy and procedures. A Fellow working directly with SI collections must disclose to his or her Advisor any personal activity that may create or seem to create conflicts of interest, such as collecting or dealing in similar objects, materials, or specimens.

A Fellow who becomes aware of any facts or circumstances giving rise to conflicts with the above-stated principles must immediately disclose such facts and circumstances to the Fellow's Advisor(s).

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please visit the OFI [website](#) for more information and answers to questions about Fellowships.

SUPERSEDES:	SD 701, October 6, 2016
INQUIRIES:	Office of Fellowships and Internships (OFI)
RETENTION:	Indefinite. Subject to review for currency 36 months from date of issue.
