

Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar appointments at Trent University

2026



- Postdoctoral Fellows (PDF) and Visiting Scholars (VS) are temporary research personnel hosted at the University by faculty members.
- PDF contracts are generally longer, paid appointments, available for candidates with PhD degrees (obtained within the last 7 years).
- VS appointments are usually shorter, unpaid or externally-funded visits; VS are often students (i.e., MITACS GRI recipients), but also faculty from collaborating institutions.
- There is no requirement to advertise the job offer publicly, but it is recommended that faculty use their professional social media channels (lab/department website, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) to post the offered positions.

Application package

- 1) Completed and signed Application form - appointments can be for Canadian (**domestic**) or international (**foreign**) candidates (**PDFs** or **VSs**). All fields in the application form should be completed;
- 2) Support Letter from the Department Chair or Director – lists candidate and supervisor names and university affiliation, dates of the appointment, short description of the research project, and the forms of support offered by the Department (if any);
- 3) Applicant's CV;
- 4) Informed Consent Waiver of Liability – unpaid Visiting Scholars only.

- Emergency Contact Information: it is strongly recommended that all Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar candidates provide their emergency contact information. This information should be available for health and safety purposes, i.e., in case of an unexpected absence or a medical emergency.
- Applications should be submitted to the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) early in advance prior to the planned start date of the appointment. Processing time from submitting the package to ORI to receiving the Offer of Employment number is 21 days.

Application processing by the ORI

- All PDF and VS applications must be submitted to ORI (attn.: Coordinator, Research Conduct and Reporting (CRCR) at annakisiala@trentu.ca).
- After the application is received:
 - 1) CRCR reviews the submission and follows up with the supervisor if any updates to the forms are required;
 - 2) CRCR completes Risk Assessment based on the provided information;
 - 3) VPRI (or delegate) reviews and approves the complete application package;
 - 4) ORI issues an Appointment Letter that lists the offered job conditions;
 - 5) Applicant reviews and returns the signed Letter to CRCR.

Next steps depend on the type of appointment:

1) Domestic PDF candidates:

- Once a new PDF appointment is approved, supervisor submits Research Personnel Employment Record Form and all required attachments to Research Finance (researchfinance@trentu.ca).
- Research Finance forwards the approved package to Human Resources (HR)/Payroll.

2) Domestic VS candidates (unpaid):

- Once a new VS appointment is approved, supervisor and candidate can proceed to the next steps of onboarding research personnel described on the following slides (10 and onward).

Next steps depend on the type of appointment (cont.):

- 3) Foreign PDF candidates - must present worker visa (work permit) issued by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):**
- ORI applies for the Offer of Employment number required for the work permit application (Post-Graduate Work Permit holders are exempted).
 - Candidate includes the signed Appointment Letter and the Offer of Employment number in their work permit application (post-doctoral Ph.D. fellows are exempt from Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA)).
 - After the candidate arrives at Trent, supervisor can submit the Research Personnel Employment Record Form and all required attachments to Research Finance (researchfinance@trentu.ca).
 - Research Finance forwards the approved package to Human Resources (HR)/Payroll.

Next steps depend on the type of appointment (cont.):

4) Foreign VS candidates (paid and unpaid):

All foreign visiting scholars, including unpaid appointments (i.e., self-funded, externally funded by foreign government or by home institution), who come to Canada with the intention to engage in work-like activity (i.e., collaborative research, research internships) must obtain legal immigration status:

- **Visits for up to 120 days** - Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers may grant a foreign national a work permit exemption for 120 consecutive calendar days (Visitor Record Form) if they have an offer letter for a research position at the university – depending on their nationality, applicants should apply for electronic travel authorization (eTA) or temporary resident visa (TRV) prior to travelling to Canada and request a Visitor Record Form at the port of entry (POE).

Next steps depend on the type of appointment (cont.):

- 4) **Foreign VS candidates (paid and unpaid):**
- **Visits longer than 120 days: VS must apply for worker visa (work permit) to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)**
 - Once a new foreign VS appointment is approved, ORI applies to the IRCC for the Offer of Employment Number.
 - Candidate includes the signed Appointment Letter and the Offer of Employment Number in their work permit application (visiting professors and post-secondary international co-op students are exempt from Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA)).

Next steps depend on the type of appointment (cont.):

Foreign VS candidates (unpaid):

- Once the immigration status of a new foreign VS is confirmed, supervisor and candidate can proceed to the next steps of onboarding research personnel described on the following slides (10 and onward).

Foreign VS candidates (paid):

- Once the immigration status of a new foreign VS is confirmed, supervisor submits the Research Personnel Employment Record Form and all required attachments to Research Finance (researchfinance@trentu.ca).
- Research Finance forwards the approved package to Human Resources (HR)/Payroll.

Onboarding new research employee

- Supervisor should contact the Dean's Office (Science Facilities for science departments) if the new research personnel need office space, a desk, or restricted building access. Contacting appropriate departments early in advance will help secure the requested resources; however, office space is not guaranteed for the initial appointment nor for the duration of the appointment.
- PDFs - new accounts and account extensions are completed automatically once HR/Payroll processes the paperwork.
- Unpaid visitors (applications not processed by HR/Payroll) should complete Unpaid Appointment Form on Trent HR website to request Trent email address and other university privileges (i.e., library access).
- All new employees must complete 8 mandatory training courses in VIP (myTraining tab) on the first day(s) of their appointment.

Onboarding new research employee - Benefits

- Legislative benefits (10.46%) and vacation pay (4% for new employees) are mandatory and should be accounted for in the salary budget offered to the contract research personnel.
- Extended benefits (extended health and dental care, semi-private hospital care) are available at extra costs and can be additionally covered by the supervisor funds.
- Extended benefits enrollment must be completed within 30 days of commencing employment; failure to enroll within this period will impact the ability to obtain benefits.

Onboarding new research employee – Insurance

1. Health Insurance

- Health insurance is required in Ontario to access medical services. Work permit holders who work full-time for an Ontario employer for at least six months might be eligible for the government-sponsored Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP). All other visiting researchers must enroll in the University Health Insurance Program (UHIP).
- For detailed information on the research benefits plan and UHIP enrollment, [contact](#) the Pension and Benefits Advisor in HR.

Onboarding new research employee – Insurance

2. General Liability Insurance

- The Canadian University Reciprocal Insurance Exchange (CURIE) property insurance policy insures Trent property anywhere in the world against all risks. The CURIE policy covers Trent's post-doctoral trainees and visiting scholars for the legal liability and defence costs arising from bodily injury and property damage to third parties.

3. University's Workers Compensation Insurance and other Personal Insurance

- Unpaid Visiting Scholars are not covered by the University's Workers Compensation Insurance (WSIB). The University does not insure personal vehicles or property for visiting scholars.

Onboarding new research employee – Intellectual Property

Research Personnel are encouraged to discuss approaches to the IP created during the appointment with their faculty supervisors and to make the appropriate arrangements concerning ownership of IP and commercial exploitation prior to the beginning of the work.

Extension of the PDF/VS research appointments

- All research appointment extensions require submitting a new application package to ORI to ensure compliance with Trent Policy on Postdoctoral Fellows and Visiting Scholars, and immigration law.
- Extensions of foreign research employee contracts are contingent on their immigration status and usually require extension of their work permit.
- Foreign candidates should initiate the process of amending their research contracts early to secure enough time for legal authorization of their temporary worker status in Canada.
- Extensions of paid positions should be followed by submitting the Research Personnel Amendment Form to Research Finance.

Additional Resources

- Additional resources for onboarding new employees can be found on the Trent [Human Resources](#) website (mandatory courses, Trent ID Card, parking permit/bus pass)
- [Handbook for Hiring Research Project Personnel](#) (pay rates, other types of research personnel positions)
- [Policy on Postdoctoral Fellows and Visiting Scholars](#) (currently under review by the RPC)

Office of Research & Innovation – [Research Services/Hiring Personnel](#) – to download all application and hiring forms.

- Work in Canada
 - [IRCC – Work in Canada](#)
 - [National Occupation Classification \(NOC\)](#)
 - [IRCC – Find out if you need a visa](#)
 - [IRCC – 120-day work permit exemption for researchers](#)
 - [IRCC – LMIA exemption codes](#)
 - [IRCC - PGWP](#)
- Human Resources
 - [Trent HR – New Employees](#)
 - [Trent HR – Unpaid Appointments](#)
 - [Trent HR - Benefits](#)
- Insurance
 - [Health care in Ontario - OHIP](#)
 - [University Health Insurance Plan \(UHIP\)](#)
 - [Trent Risk Management – insurance program](#)
- Settling in Ontario
 - [Welcome to Peterborough](#)

Thank you!

Questions: annakisiala@trentu.ca
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The information in this document is subject to change at any time based on changes in internal and external process requirements. Please refer to the provided links for updates.

CHALLENGE THE WAY YOU THINK