



OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Introduction	1
Program objectives	2
Intelligent Systems as Priority Area for 2025 to 2026	2
Eligibility	3
Benefits	3
Grant coverage	3
Supplemental funding	4
Grant-eligible postdoc activities	4
Research-Based Postdoctoral Appointment	4
Short-Term Training or Competency Improvement Program	5
Policy Development Appointment	5
Collaborative Placements	5
Responsibilities of Fellows	6
General obligations	6
Start-of-postdoc obligations	6
Reporting and Publication Requirements	6
End-of-postdoc obligations	6
Application Process	7
Documents to submit	7
Selection and adjudication of applications	8
Termination	8

Introduction

Postdoctoral training is a critical phase in a researcher's career, traditionally marking the transition from doctoral study to independent scholarship. However, the need for intensive research, skill refinement, and professional growth is not limited to recent PhD graduates. Established scholars, including senior faculty who completed their doctorates some time ago, may also benefit from dedicated research fellowships that allow them to deepen their expertise, explore new methodologies, and engage in collaborative projects that enhance both their individual scholarship and institutional research capacity. Moreover, as the National University, UP can build upon these fellowships as a catalyst for extending innovative research and teaching practices to state universities and colleges (SUCs), fostering broader academic and societal impact. By supporting both early-career researchers and experienced academics in pursuing cutting-edge research, expanding professional networks, and fostering interdisciplinary

collaborations, postdoctoral fellowships can play a key role in strengthening institutional research excellence and advancing national development.

Recognizing this, the University of the Philippines has established the *OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant* to provide funding for advanced research training for UP faculty and researchers. This initiative is designed to support postdoctoral placements in academic institutions, research centers, industry, government agencies, non-profits, and other relevant organizations. Fellows may pursue placements in both international and local institutions, with international placements prioritized for fields requiring advanced global expertise, while local placements focus on strengthening the Philippine research ecosystem, fostering policy innovation, and supporting technology transfer.

The OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant provides support for postdoctoral engagements lasting a minimum of 3 months and up to 12 months (1 year). While many postdoctoral fellowships are research-intensive, this program also recognizes the value of specialized training, policy engagement, and technology transfer.

Program objectives

- Equip UP researchers with the skills, knowledge, and global research experience needed to lead transformative projects and policy innovations;
- Contribute to the broader research and innovation ecosystem of UP and the Philippines.

Intelligent Systems as Priority Area for 2025 to 2026

For the inaugural launch of the program in 2025, the UP Intelligent Systems Center (ISC) will serve as the implementing arm of the program. As a UP System research center specializing in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Science, and Complex Systems, ISC will oversee the selection, implementation, and administration of this first phase of postdoctoral fellowships. Given this, the program's initial requirements, priority areas, and evaluation criteria will be aligned with ISC's vision, mission, and strategic thrusts. To ensure alignment with institutional and national priorities, a postdoctoral activity completed under this pilot phase must align with at least one of ISC's three research divisions:¹

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Data Science
- Complex Systems

The Center supports research on the application of intelligent systems on current and timely areas related to sustainable socioeconomic development, including (but not limited to):

- Agriculture
- Climate change
- Creative sector and cultural industries
- Cybersecurity
- Digital humanities
- Digital information ecosystems and misinformation dynamics

¹ See <https://isc.up.edu.ph/about-us/research> for details on the three ISC divisions.

- Diplomacy and foreign relations
- Disaster risk reduction and management
- Education
- Employment and services
- Finance and banking
- Health and medical sciences
- Personalized human-centered technologies
- Poverty
- Public policy
- Supply chain and logistics
- Transportation

Eligibility

The OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant is open to UP Faculty and REPS (Research, Extension, and Professional Staff) who seek to advance their expertise in Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, or Complex Systems through postdoctoral research, training, or policy development. Fellows may pursue placements at either international or local institutions, depending on their research objectives. International placements are encouraged for areas requiring global expertise and access to advanced research infrastructure, while local placements should focus on national research priorities, policy-driven initiatives, or collaborative industry-academe projects.

To qualify, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **ISC Affiliation:** Applicants must be registered Affiliates of UP ISC. All full-time UP Faculty and REPS are eligible to be Affiliates.²
- **PhD Requirement:** Applicants must hold a PhD degree or equivalent at the start of the fellowship.
- **Duration:** The postdoc activity must be at least 3 months and no longer than 1 year. Extensions may be considered pending funding availability.
- **Prior expertise or demonstrated commitment to intelligent systems:** The proponent must either (1) have a track record of research experience in Data Science, AI, or Complex Systems, or (2) demonstrate a strong potential and commitment to applying these fields in their work. Applicants without a direct research background in these areas should articulate how their postdoctoral plans will meaningfully integrate AI, Data Science, or Complex Systems into their expertise or professional practice.

Other requirements may be imposed based on the type of postdoctoral activity (see below).

² See <https://isc.up.edu.ph/opportunities/membership> for how to become an Affiliate.

Benefits

This program provides UP faculty and REPS funding to pursue a postdoctoral activity. Each postdoc fellow can apply for a maximum of 2.5 million PHP. The cost that is applied for should be commensurate with the nature and duration of the postdoc activity, as well as cost-of-living expenses.

Grant coverage

The grant can cover the following:

- Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA), which may be pegged against United Nations International Civil Service Commission (UN ICSC)³ rates for cost-of-living adjustments
- Pre-travel expenses
- Airfare
- Local transportation and housing (where applicable)
- For international postdocs
 - Health and travel insurance for the duration of the postdoc fellowship
 - Pre-travel expenses (e.g., visa, domestic travel)
- Training and registration fees (for training-focused postdocs)
- Institutional fees (if applicable)

Funds will be disbursed based on standard government accounting practices.

Supplemental funding

Postdoc fellows can receive additional funding and support from their host institution, subject to all applicable institutional, national, and international policies and laws. However, any additional support needs to be clearly declared in the application.

Grant-eligible postdoc activities

There are three types of postdoctoral activities that can be pursued as part of this program, which may be conducted at either international or local institutions, depending on the fellow's objectives. For 2025, all activities must align with the UP ISC's research priorities of data science, AI, and complex systems.

Research-Based Postdoctoral Appointment

A research-based Postdoctoral Appointment provides faculty members with the opportunity to conduct advanced research in collaboration with an external institution, such as a university, research center, or private-sector R&D laboratory. This type of postdoc is designed to support independent research or integration into a larger research initiative that aligns with the priorities of UP, ISC, and the national research agenda.

³ See <https://icsc.un.org/> for the per-area computation of UN ICSC rates

Key Features:

- The research direction can be set either by the fellow or the host institution, but it must be aligned with institutional (UP) and/or national research priorities.⁴
- Fellows must secure an official invitation from the host institution, which should outline the support they will provide (e.g., access to research facilities, mentorship, funding, or other resources).
- Expected outputs include research papers, conference proceedings, patents, or other significant contributions to the fellow's field of study.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and/or a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between UP and the host institution will be required before the fellowship can commence.

This type of postdoc is ideal for faculty members who seek to develop cutting-edge expertise, strengthen international research networks, and contribute to high-impact research outputs.

Short-Term Training or Competency Improvement Program

The primary goal of this type of postdoc is to enhance the fellow's ability to conduct research through intensive training and competency-building activities. Rather than focusing on producing independent research, these programs aim to equip faculty members with advanced methodologies, technical skills, and best practices in their field.

Key Features:

- The training must focus on developing research-related skills in areas such as data analysis, computational modeling, laboratory techniques, AI/ML frameworks, or specialized software tools.
- Can be conducted either online or in-person, depending on the structure of the program and the availability of host institutions.
- May involve structured coursework, hands-on workshops, internships, or collaborative research training sessions.
- Expected outputs may include certificates of completion, training reports, or the development of research proposals based on newly acquired skills.

This type of postdoc is ideal for faculty members who need upskilling in specific areas of research or wish to benchmark UP's research practices against global standards.

Policy Development Appointment

A Policy Development Appointment is designed for faculty members who wish to contribute to the formulation, evaluation, or implementation of policies in areas related to Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and/or Complex Systems. This type of postdoc is particularly relevant for those interested in bridging research and policy-making by working with government agencies, international organizations, or think tanks.

Key Features:

- Fellows may be placed in national or international government agencies, international nonprofits, multilateral organizations (e.g., UN, World Bank), or policy-focused research institutes.

⁴ See for example PAGTANAW 2050, Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, the Philippine Skills Frameworks, etc.

- The focus of the fellowship could include developing AI governance frameworks, data privacy regulations, ethical AI policies, open science initiatives, or digital transformation strategies.
- Expected outputs include policy briefs, white papers, regulatory guidelines, or strategic recommendations for host institutions or national policymakers.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and/or a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between UP and the host institution will be required before the fellowship can commence.

This type of postdoc is ideal for faculty members who wish to apply their expertise to real-world policy challenges and influence decision-making.

Collaborative Placements

In select cases, two faculty or REPS from the same UP constituent unit may undertake their postdoctoral activity at the same host institution or even participate in the same training program. This is encouraged when strategically aligned and capped at a maximum of two participants per CU per host/program. This approach balances two important goals: ensuring diversity in institutional partnerships, while also enabling shared learning, mutual support, and sustained post-training collaboration. Shared placements can deepen understanding, foster peer mentoring, and result in co-developed curricula, research outputs, or mentorship programs that align with unit-level and university-wide strategic goals.

By limiting duplicate placements to two per CU, the program avoids overconcentration while still leveraging the benefits of joint participation. This promotes both depth and breadth in UP's international research and training engagements.

Responsibilities of Fellows

The following are the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Fellows.

General obligations

1. Fellows are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct, reflecting positively on UP ISC, their host and home institutions, and the country.
2. Fellows must not have any other grant program that interferes with their contractual obligation or any other provisions in the OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant Agreement.

Start-of-postdoc obligations

3. Fellows must accomplish the OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant Agreement and Supplemental Agreement.
4. Fellows must comply with all the scholarship policies stipulated in the OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant Agreement and other relevant UP policies.
5. Fellows must file and secure a Travel Authority from their home unit.
6. Fellows must execute a special power of attorney and open an international bank account to ensure that the released allowances will be accessible while studying abroad.

Reporting and Publication Requirements

1. All published outputs (e.g., journal articles, conference papers, reports) resulting from the fellowship must acknowledge the support of UP and the UP ISC.
2. The fellow must be listed as a UP ISC-affiliated author in all publications and formal research outputs produced during the fellowship.
3. Fellows must submit a mid-project progress report to the UP ISC.

Boilerplate texts and templates will be provided by the UP ISC.

End-of-postdoc obligations

1. Fellows must settle all obligations at the end of the grant in accordance with university and other applicable policies.
2. Fellows must, within 3 months of finishing the grant, submit a Final Report Form indicating the Final Output of the Postdoc Research Grant Depending on the type of postdoc as follows.

Type of Postdoc	Output
Research-Based Postdoctoral Appointment	Research Output (Paper, Conference Proceeding, etc)
Short Term Training and Competency-based Improvement Programs	Certificate of Completion
Policy Development Appointments	Policy Paper (policy brief, policy whitepaper)

3. The return service guidelines that apply for international study will apply to postdoctoral activities conducted under this program. This means that each month spent working on a postdoc activity corresponds to two months of return service by the Fellow. For local postdocs, return service obligations may be modified to include structured collaborations, research dissemination efforts, or knowledge-sharing programs with UP or other Philippine institutions.
 - a. If the grant is terminated or the Fellow fails to render the return service obligation, the Fellow is subject to UP's return service guidelines and policies.
4. Upon successful completion of the grant, Fellows who took postdoc appointments abroad must return immediately to the Philippines;
5. Upon return to the Philippines, Fellows must submit liquidation reports to the UP ISC within fifteen (15) days.

Application Process

Documents to submit

The applicant must submit the following documents electronically via the OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Grant 2025 Application Online Submission System:

1. Letter of application addressed to ISC Executive Director and endorsed by CU
2. Curriculum Vitae

3. Proposed Line-Item Budget (LIB) (refer to section on grant coverage above for description of items covered by this grant). A template will be provided on the application form. Items and costs in the LIB must be supported by documentary proof.
4. Additional documents based on the type of postdoctoral activity applied for:

a. For research-based postdocs:

- i. Acceptance/invitation letter from the host university/institution and host professor or research supervisor
- ii. Details of additional support provided by the host institution, if any (e.g., research equipment, office space, housing, etc). These can be declared in the acceptance/invitation letter.
- iii. Description of research project

b. For training-based postdocs:

- i. Details of the training program, including location, schedule, curriculum or program/course outlines
- ii. Proof of program training costs
 1. If a Fellow is already registered, proof of registration (optional; proof of registration is not yet required at this application stage).

c. For policy-based postdocs:

- i. Acceptance/invitation letter from the host institution and immediate supervisor
- ii. Details of additional support provided by the host institution, if any (e.g., research equipment, office space, housing, etc). These can be declared in the acceptance/invitation letter.

Selection and adjudication of applications

Within the announced deadline, duly endorsed applications shall be accepted by the UP ISC and evaluated according to merit.

1. The UP ISC shall approve proposals based on the recommendation of the Proposal Review Committee and on the availability of funds. Proposals for international placements will be assessed based on their potential for global impact and expertise acquisition, while local placements will be evaluated for their contributions to national research priorities, policy initiatives, or industry-academe partnerships.
2. The UP ISC shall inform applicants whose applications for funding could not be granted during the round of proposals. The comments, suggestions, and other relevant points raised by the Proposal Review Committee shall be relayed to the proponents. They shall be given a chance to revise their applications.
3. Final assessment will be done by the OVPAA and the Office of the President.
4. The UP ISC shall notify successful applicants and advise them regarding arrangements with the UP ISC for the Memorandum of Agreement and the release of funds.

Each proponent shall keep a complete copy of his/her proposal and other documents submitted to the UP ISC in connection with his/her application for grant.

Termination

UP reserves the right to terminate the grant agreement with the Fellow based on any of the following reasons:

1. Willful abandonment of the post-doctoral program;
2. Failure or unwillingness to render service obligation;
3. Non-completion of the program within the approved duration;
4. Gross misconduct;
5. Conviction of any crime by a court or proper administrative body; and,
6. Other reasons as determined by the host university, home university, and the OVPAA-ISC Postdoctoral Fellowship Program.