How long have you been in your position? 15 years! I started working in academic hiring when I took a position with the Department of Psychiatry Office of Grants and Contracts in 2007.

What do you like about postdoctoral affairs? I really enjoy meeting and working with people from all over the world who are in the beginning stages of their research careers. I like the feeling that I am a part
of their launch as new investigators and enjoy moving them toward achieving their goals in research. 

**What advice would you give to a new postdoc admin?** My advice is to find the best way to keep yourself organized. I started by recording all my postdoc appointments in one worksheet on an excel table, which then grew into several worksheets, and then with assistance from our data team was eventually adapted into an access database where my team can run reports, monitor upcoming end dates, and check postdoc appointment information without clumsily looking through files. Being organized in your own way is such a valuable, time-saving process. Surrounding yourself with people you really enjoy working with is also a great benefit and provides motivation and satisfaction in coming to work every day!

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**Sponsored Accounts for Postdocs**

Historically, some departments have requested sponsored accounts or “jumpstart” accounts for incoming postdocs to provide a secure platform for email communications prior to starting their appointment. These accounts were typically granted by the RC upon request.

Since the implementation of Talent Center and the automation of on-boarding, there is no longer a need for a secure email address in advance of the postdoc’s start date, consequently the use of sponsored accounts for incoming postdoctoral associates and postdoctoral scholars will be discontinued immediately. The early sponsored accounts became duplicate accounts when the Pitt system triggered the Postdoc’s primary Pitt account.

Duplicate accounts and the lack of knowledge of the new primary account has led to Postdocs missing deadlines for benefits selection, payroll delays and other financial system disconnects as well as fragmented training records and program access complications.

It is the consensus of Pitt Human Resources and the Center for Postdoctoral Affairs in the Health Sciences that the need for an early account is unnecessary and can create multiple issues for the Postdoc and their respective departments. **Any correspondence necessary for the on-boarding of a new Postdoc can be accomplished through the Talent Center application and Human Resources workflow.**

To proactively answer the primary question -- accounts can technically be “swapped” so that the early sponsored account becomes the primary, it is not always in alignment with required deadlines such as the benefits selection. There are many instances where historical data and program access is split and causes multiple entities to make ad hoc program changes that can be avoided by allowing the natural workflow process through the appropriate systems.

Please feel free to direct any questions to me, Tammy L. Dennis, COM, OACD Associate Director for Postdoctoral Affairs, [tad9@pitt.edu](mailto:tad9@pitt.edu).
Use of DocuSign for Offer Letter Signature

We have had a few departments asked about using DocuSign to obtain the signatures on the offer letters. We highly recommend the use of DocuSign to obtain the signatures. Find more information about DocuSign.

Office of Research, Health Sciences

The Office of Research, Health Sciences (OORHS) offers services for faculty members in the six schools of the health sciences to support the biomedical research enterprise at the University of Pittsburgh.

OORHS provides one-on-one informational meetings for new faculty about services and resources available to them. OORHS’ PhD scientists provide FREE personalized grantsmanship advice and editorial and scientific review for individual and multi-investigator/multi-project grant applications.

OORHS provides searchable resources for governmental and foundation funding opportunities, and information on institutional health sciences funding opportunities including the UPMC Competitive Medical Research Fund (CMRF), administered annually by OORHS.

OORHS maintains a database, the Application Repository to Help University Researchers (ARTHUR), with up-to-date examples of successfully funded grant applications submitted to numerous agencies written by University of Pittsburgh faculty members.

OORHS curates links and tutorials on grantsmanship, policy guidance, institutional data for boilerplate language, and a variety of research support services to assist investigators in advancing their research programs.

For more information or to request a meeting or assistance with a grant application, visit our website at www.oorhs.pitt.edu or contact us at oorhs@pitt.edu.

Please send any comments or suggestions for future newsletters to postdoc@hs.pitt.edu.

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