

**From:** Research Administration Network  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 13, 2016 3:15 PM  
**To:** 'RESEARCH\_ADMINISTRATION\_NETWORK@LISTS.MCGILL.CA'  
<RESEARCH\_ADMINISTRATION\_NETWORK@LISTS.MCGILL.CA>  
**Subject:** Message from Vice-Principal Goldstein -- Changes to the employment status of some Postdoctoral fellows  
**Importance:** High

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*This message is sent out on behalf of Rosie Goldstein, Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation), Office of the Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)*

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Dear colleagues,

We are sharing with the RAN a memo that was sent today to all faculty members regarding the recently announced changes to postdoctoral fellows employment status.

Thank you,

The RAN Committee

**Website:** [www.mcgill.ca/research/ran](http://www.mcgill.ca/research/ran)

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**From:** Acadlists Ap  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 13, 2016 11:39 AM  
**To:** [superacadnote@lists.mcgill.ca](mailto:superacadnote@lists.mcgill.ca); [cas-acadnote-all@lists.mcgill.ca](mailto:cas-acadnote-all@lists.mcgill.ca)  
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**Subject:** Message from Vice-Principal Goldstein -- Changes to the employment status of some Postdoctoral fellows  
**Importance:** High

Dear Colleagues,

The status of postdoctoral fellows has been subject to some changes in the last few years, starting with the federal government's decision in 2010 to classify postdoctoral fellows as employees. The Quebec government, for its part, continued to classify postdoctoral fellows as trainees up until 2011, when it too started classifying postdoctoral fellows at some Quebec universities – and eventually McGill – as employees.

As you may have heard, being classified as an employee means that postdoctoral fellows must now pay provincial taxes, in addition to federal taxes. **McGill therefore has no choice but to start deducting provincial taxes for postdoctoral fellows deemed McGill University employees and will start doing so as of January 1, 2017.**

Given that postdoctoral fellows receive funding from a variety of sources, not all of them will be affected by this measure. However, if you employ postdoctoral fellows who are affected by this change in status, this measure will affect *your* overall research costs as well.

First, here are more details on how these changes will affect the different categories of postdoctoral fellows:

- **Postdoctoral fellows who are not paid by McGill University (Group A):**  
Postdoctoral fellows who work at and are paid by affiliated hospitals are not considered McGill employees, as they do not get paid by McGill University. Faculty members who hold research funds at

affiliated research institutes should consult directly with those institutes if they have questions regarding this matter.

- **Postdoctoral fellows who are paid from their own research fellowships (Group B):**  
Postdoctoral fellows whose salaries are paid from fellowship grants they applied for themselves (i.e. personal awards) and are paid 100 per cent out of those awards are not considered employees, as they do not get paid by McGill University research funds (even if their pay is *processed* by McGill University). Postdoctoral fellows in this category will not be affected by the changes at McGill. They will be classified as **postdoctoral scholars**.
- **Postdoctoral fellows who receive part or all of their remuneration from McGill research funds (Group C):**  
Postdoctoral fellows who are paid – partially or completely – through McGill University research funds will see their status change to that of an *employee* as of January 1, 2017. McGill will start deducting provincial income tax and other provincial payroll deductions from the pay of these postdoctoral fellows. At the same time, this group will become eligible for Quebec government benefits (e.g. maternity leave through the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan). These changes will start appearing on the pay of these postdoctoral fellows on January 26, 2017. This group will be classified as **postdoctoral researchers**.

### **Additional costs for researchers**

The fact that postdoctoral fellows will now be recognized as employees unfortunately means an additional financial burden on the already-constrained funds of the researchers who employ them. If you employ postdoctoral fellows, you will have to pay the employer portion of employment taxes and benefits contributions, which amount to approximately 18 per cent of a postdoctoral fellow's earnings. This cost will need to be covered by the research grants through which the postdoctoral fellow is paid.

### **Q&A on changes now online**

Some of you have rightly shared concerns about the impact of the Quebec government's ruling on postdoctoral fellows being classified as employees and, specifically, the payroll deductions and employer fees that this classification entails as well as the short notice before the changes must be implemented. Members of McGill's senior administration share many of your concerns and, while we must abide by provincial law and apply these changes as soon as possible, we hope to at least clarify the situation as best we can.

To that end, McGill Human Resources has [created a Q&A](#) that addresses many of the questions received so far. I invite you to consult this document frequently; it will be updated as more inquiries are submitted. Should you have questions that are not addressed in the [Q&A](#), please reach out to the HR Shared Services team at 514-398-HRHR (4747) or [hr.hr@mcgill.ca](mailto:hr.hr@mcgill.ca).

### **Expertise in the Office of Sponsored Research**

Again, we understand that these changes will constitute a hardship for many McGillians, especially researchers who already accomplish extraordinary science and scholarship on constrained grant budgets. I would therefore like to note that the Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) is always available to help you.

If you have questions regarding how the change of employment status could affect your grants, please contact [Olga Naiberguer](#), OSR Director, Grants and Agreements, for new applications or [Marlene Boutet](#), OSR Director, Administration and Awards Management, for existing grants. The OSR teams are pleased and ready to answer any questions you have about how these changes could impact your research.

Sincerely,  
Rosie Goldstein  
Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)