

Postdoctoral Scholar and Postdoctoral Fellow Handbook

Office of Postdoctoral Programs

The primary function of the Office of Postdoctoral Programs (OPP) is to monitor the status and needs of the postdoctoral community and serve as an advocate for postdoctoral issues to OSU's central administration.

The primary contacts for OPP are the following:

Steph Bernell, PhD

Associate Dean and Director of Postdoctoral Programs



541-737-9162



Steph.Bernell@oregonstate.edu

Mo Childers

Executive Assistant to the Associate Dean



541-737-2033



Mo.Childers@oreogstate.edu

Position Types

At Oregon State University there are two types of postdoctoral positions: postdoctoral scholar and postdoctoral fellow.

Postdoctoral Scholar

A Postdoctoral scholar is a mentored position restricted to individuals who were awarded a Ph.D. within the past five years. The postdoc scholar position has a three-year maximum term at OSU. Postdoctoral scholars are mentored by professorial faculty. At least 15% of the postdoc scholar's time must be dedicated to professional development activities outside of their research training activities. An [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#), co-developed by the mentor and the Postdoctoral Scholar, defines the scope, goals, and expectations of the postdoc experience.

Postdoctoral/Clinical Fellow

Postdoctoral fellows have been independently awarded a fellowship by a federal or private agency. This generally means that the fellow has applied to (on their own) and secured funding from an external funding agency. These are short-term research appointments (typically two to three years) under the supervision of an OSU faculty member; however, postdoctoral fellows are not considered OSU employees as they are not paid by the university. The [Office for Sponsored Research and Award Administration](#) manages the financial aspects of these positions and the Office of Postdoctoral Programs provides professional guidance and training opportunities.

National Postdoctoral Association

The [National Postdoctoral Association](#) (NPA) provides useful information on a wide variety of topics relevant to postdocs, mentors and administrators. Because OSU is a member of the NPA, OSU faculty, staff, and postdocs at Oregon State University may apply for free affiliate membership.

The NPA has a diversity officer who develops special programs to address diversity issues. An explanation and a link to the diversity officer can be found by choosing the [diversity](#) tab on the bottom of the NPA web page. The NPA also has international officers. Learn more about them by choosing the [international issues](#) tab. International postdocs may be especially interested in the [International Postdoc Survival Guide](#).

Individual Development Plans

An individual development plans (IDP) is a useful tool for assisting in the career development of postdocs. The IDP serves as a communication tool between the postdoc and their mentor(s) and provides a plan that identifies both mentor and mentee responsibilities and expectations, professional development needs, and career goals.

At Oregon State University, mentors are expected to collaborate with all new postdoctoral scholars to develop an IDP. As part of the development of the IDP, postdocs and their mentors are asked to consider the six [core competencies](#) identified by the National Postdoc Association.

The variety of career options available today demands a diverse array of skills, such as facilitation, leadership, and resource management that are often not the focus during doctoral study and postdoctoral research. The NPA competencies offer guidance to postdocs as they seek to identify experiences and skills that align with career aspirations.

The six NPA core competencies are the following:

- #1. Discipline-specific conceptual knowledge
- #2. Research skill development
- #3. Communication skills
- #4. Professionalism
- #5. Leadership and management skills
- #6. Responsible conduct of research

A good IDP is not a one size fits all document; it needs to be tailored to the specific goals of the postdoc as well as the project that is funding the postdoctoral opportunity. Mentors and postdocs should plan to devote significant time to the development of the IDP. The OPP recommends following steps:

1. The mentor(s) and the postdoctoral scholar should become familiar with the NPA's postdoctoral [core competencies](#).

2. The postdoc should download the [IDP template](#) and dedicate time to thoughtfully consider the questions contained within it.
3. Only after careful consideration, the post doc should write a first draft of career goals (Section A) and research activities (Section B) and make an initial attempt to fill out the goals and expectations of the postdoc and the postdoc responsibility of the Development Plan (Section E).
4. The mentor(s) and postdoc should meet to discuss the postdoc's initial contributions to the IDP. The mentor **is required to detail** the responsibility of the postdoc (Section C) and mentor responsibilities (Section E).
5. The mentor and mentee should also discuss and complete the section on authorship and data (Section D).
6. After the mentor and mentee have drafted their respective sections, both parties should thoroughly review the entire document to ensure that the Individual Development Plan (IDP) accurately and comprehensively reflects the responsibilities and expectations of both the mentor and the mentee.
7. The IDP should be signed and dated by the mentor(s) and the postdoc and sent as an email attachment to postdoctoral.programs@oregonstate.edu The OPP will review and approve the IDP.

An interactive, web-based tool ([myIDP](#)) may help to set long-term and short-term career goals.

The IDP must be submitted to the Office of Postdoctoral Programs for approval before the end of the third month of hire.

The Annual Report

Before the end of the first and second years of the postdoctoral appointment, the mentor(s) and postdoc should meet in person to discuss the mentor's performance and develop the annual report to submit to the Office of Postdoctoral Programs. Postdocs are required to use the [Annual Progress Report Template](#).

The postdoc should write **Section A**, and the faculty mentor should write **Section B**. Make sure to document accomplishments, areas that need attention, and responsibilities by both parties to address the needs.

The annual report must be signed and dated by the mentor(s) and postdoc and sent to postdoctoral.programs@oregonstate.edu.

If appropriate, the IDP should also be revised at this time, and updates should be included in the report.

The annual report must be approved by OPP prior to reappointment.

Stipend and Benefits

Current stipend rates for postdoctoral scholars may be found [here](#). Additional information regarding salary and benefits can be found on the [human resources website](#).

Oregon State Postdoctoral Association

The Oregon State Postdoctoral Association (OPA) was formed to create a community of postdocs at OSU. OPA brings postdocs together for events throughout the year including networking opportunities, annual picnics, professional development events, mentoring opportunities and more. OPA also provides awards and funding opportunities for OSU's postdocs. Please visit the [OPA](#) website to learn more.

United Academics of Oregon State University

United Academics of Oregon State University (UAOSU) is the faculty union at OSU. Postdocs are part of this organization. You may connect with UAOSU on their [website](#).

Oregon State University's Resources

Your mentor can help you identify research resources that support your work. In addition, there are resources at OSU available to support you during your time at OSU.

- The [Valley Library](#) provides a wide variety of resources. Visit its web site, stop by the library, and ask your mentor which of the resources best support your training activities. For example, you may find some of the [workshops offered to enrich your research activities](#).
- Since 2012, the OSU [Graduate Writing Center](#) has provided support for graduate students, staff, and faculty with any writing they do, including theses and dissertations, seminar papers, manuscripts, poster presentations, IRB applications, funding and research proposals, conference and defense presentations, and much more. We provide both written and one-on-one remote sessions with highly trained Graduate Writing Consultants.
- The [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) supports Oregon State University faculty, graduate teaching assistants, departments and colleges achieve excellence in teaching and learning. Although most postdoctoral training focuses on research activity, some postdocs may participate in limited instruction.
- OSU offers professional development opportunities for all employees through a central [training site](#). You will find a variety of courses provided by human resources, faculty affairs, business affairs, equal opportunity and access, administrative computing, risk management, central web services and more.
- Depending upon type of work you perform, you may also need to complete training

for OSU data systems. You may find more information on these trainings [here](#).

- The [Graduate Certificate in College and University Teaching \(GCCUT\)](#) is designed to provide advanced course work and experiential learning opportunities to students who plan to pursue careers that require teaching and facilitation skills. Our graduates have leveraged their GCCUT certificate to successfully obtain positions in higher education, research settings, private industry, as well as government and nonprofit agencies.
- The Graduate School offers [mentorship training](#) to all faculty who serve as mentors to graduate students, honors college students and postdoctoral scholars. The mentorship training is based on the work done by the [Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research \(CIMER\)](#) at the University of Wisconsin.