

Postdoc Guide

Benefits, Salary, Professional Development, Social Media, Renewals, Policies, and the PDA

What is a postdoc?

An individual holding a doctoral degree, engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring professional skills needed to pursue a career path of their choosing.

Scholars are funded by CWRU or grants received by the PI. **Fellows** are funded by grants or fellowships they obtain on their own or are classified as external training grants.

Support & Resources for Postdocs

- [National Postdoc Association](#) (free membership)
- [Free campus shuttles](#), [Safe Ride](#), and [Rave alerts](#)
- [Public Safety](#) (fingerprinting, bike locks, walking escorts)
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Engagement](#)
- [Career Center](#)
- [Office of Equity](#)
- [Flora Stone Mather Center for Women](#)
- [LGBT Center](#)
- [Office of Compliance](#)
- [Interreligious Council](#)
- [Office of Environmental Health & Safety](#)
- [Office of Multicultural Affairs](#)
- [Physical Resource Center Food Pantry](#)
- [Office of Research & Technology Management](#)
- [Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#)
- [School of Medicine Graduate Education Office](#)



226 Postdocs
(158 Medicine, 30 Arts & Sciences, 22 Engineering, 10 Law, 1 Nursing, 5 Other)



77% International from 40+ countries



52% males, 47% females, 1% other



60% Asian, 31% White, 5% Black,
4% Hispanic
(2.6% Underrepresented Minority)

As of January 2024

International Postdocs:



- [Spoken English Language Program](#) (tutoring, courses, and workshops)
- [VISA Office](#)
- [Office of International Student Resources and Engagement](#)
- International Spouse Support Group / [International Student Fellowship](#)


Visas

Most international postdocs are on J1 visas, but we also have some on H1Bs and F1 OPTs. J1 visas are typically issued for 5 years and H1B visas for 3 years. The [VISA Office](#) processes all visas on campus.

* Postdocs are expected to follow all University-wide policies and expectations, in addition to any policies set forth by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

Orientation and Onboarding

PIs, Department Administrators, and the Postdoc Office are here to help make the hiring transition smooth. The [Postdoc Association members](#) are also available to answer questions or give advice.

 In-person, half day Orientation held on the 1st Thursday of every month. Network with other postdocs, learn the policies and resources available, and hear from campus partners.

 1 hour Zoom Benefits Reviews conducted every Wednesday. Overview of the postdoc website, learn the costs of coverage, benefits package components, how to find care, and how to enroll.

IDP / Annual Review / Renewal

Postdoc appointments are only administered for one year at a time. This is to ensure they receive their annual salary increase and that their annual review is completed.

- In order to get renewed, postdocs must complete the [Annual Review Form](#) with their PI. The Annual Review allows the postdoc to highlight what they've accomplished, as well as facilitate a conversation between the postdoc and PI about growth and development.
- Postdocs are encouraged to work with their PIs during the first 3 months of their training to develop an [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#). This helps identify strengths, areas for improvement, goals, and specific strategies to achieve those goals.

Salary / Stipend

- Postdocs are salary, exempt, special-class employees.
- Paid once monthly on the last working day of the month via direct deposit.

 CWRU uses the [NIH NRSA scale](#) for the minimum salary guidelines and annual increases



Why work at CWRU?

Find a comprehensive list of benefits on our [Why Work at CWRU](#) page on the Postdoc website.

Highlighting Our Postdocs

We have placed an emphasis on ensuring our postdocs and all the work they do are spotlighted at the university and to the public.

Monthly [Spotlight](#) in the Daily 

Submit the [Kudos Form](#) to recognize a postdoc for their achievements 

Certificates from Prof. Dev. events and PDA participation 

PDA [Alumni](#) page 

Social Media

Like and Follow the postdocs on social media to connect and keep up with events, announcements, and our postdoc spotlights and media mentions.

 LinkedIn – [Postdoctoral Affairs at CWRU](#)

 Facebook - [Postdocs Group - CWRU](#)

 Twitter - [@CWRUPostdocs](#)

 Discord – Postdocs only, ask for an invite

Benefits



As of January 1, 2025, [100% of the monthly benefits premiums are covered for postdocs and their dependents!](#)



Vision: EyeMed

\$10 annual exam, annual allowance towards glasses OR contacts



Dental: MetLife

\$1,250 annual allowance, 1 x free oral exam and x-rays



Life Insurance: The Standard

\$20k Basic Life Insurance, up to \$20k Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Medical Evacuation / Repatriation of Remains for visa holders



Employee Assistance Program: Impact Solutions

24/7 assistance - mental health counseling, financial/legal consultation, life coaching, referrals, medical advocacy (*free, confidential, and available to the postdoc, dependents, parents, and in-laws)



Medical: Aetna

Choice between the HNO or POS plans

\$500 annual deductible

1 free Wellness Visit and Women's Wellness visit per year

No requirement to get a referral from the primary care physician to see a specialist

90 day supply of prescriptions by mail option



[Postdoc Benefits FAQ website](#)

- **Postdocs MUST sign up for benefits within 31 days of their start date**
- **Benefits start as of day 1 of employment. At the end of the appointment, benefits are good through the end of the month, COBRA available.**

Time Off

Vacation

- 16 days annually
- Accrued at 1.33 days/month
- Max of 16 days can be carried over to next fiscal year (July 1 – June 30)
- Remaining vacation leave is paid out when postdoc leaves CWRU (Scholars only, not Fellows)

Sick

- 10 sick days given on each anniversary
- Carried over year to year

Floating Holiday

- 1 floating holiday per year
- Does not carry over year to year

Holidays

- New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2), Christmas (2)

Appreciative Time Off

- 'Take Two' in June and July.
- The University closes the week between Christmas and New Year's.
- If a holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, the university closes that Monday or Friday.

10%

Postgrad Audit Program - auditors pay only 10% of tuition



8 weeks paid parental leave, and childcare discounts and support during travel



Discounts on cell phones, ride share, airport parking, rental cars, movies, Cavaliers tickets, Playhouse Square



Physical Resource Center Food Pantry



Benefits Review and Orientation



Access to Sears think[box]



Eligible to contribute to an IRA and apply for the Health Emergency Fund



Kelvin Smith Library resources



UTech 24/7 support, CARE Center, and Software Center



Free access to the Veale and Wyant gyms and intramural sports

Professional Development & Social

Postdocs are temporary, mentored positions typically lasting no more than 5 years. Postdocs should be utilizing that time to focus on professional development, skills growth, networking, self-improvement, and social activities. The Postdoc Office, Grad Studies Professional Development Center, and the CWRU PDA work together to develop these events and opportunities. All events and recordings can be found on the [Events website](#).

The [Professional Development page](#) on the Postdoc website contains a huge list of potential professional development opportunities for postdocs to take advantage of!

Consistently running events open to all postdocs: [Monthly PDA meeting](#), monthly PDA committee meetings, [Postdoc Career Series](#), [Spoken English Language \(SELP\)](#) seminars and workshops, [UCITE](#) First Fridays and Future Faculty Fridays, [NPA Smart Skills seminars](#), annual holiday party / summer picnic / vendor fair

Previous events hosted: National Postdoc Appreciation Week, CV/Resume Workshop, Resume Roundtable, Mentoring and Teaching Workshops, Grant Writing, Visa webinars, campus tours, think[box] tours, Diversity360, Biophysics Day, volleyball, elevator pitch sessions, trivia night, self defense, yoga, faculty and work-life balance panels, pumpkin carving, individual development plan workshops, orchestra night

University Programs & Resources:

- [Beyond the Professoriate](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [Academic Impressions](#)
- [EnRICH](#) - Enhancing Research and Industry Career Horizons
- [Venture Mentor Program](#)
- [Translational Fellows Program](#)
- [Diversity 360](#), [SafeZone](#), [THINK Suicide Prevention](#), [Sustained Dialogue](#), [Train the Champion](#), [Three Minute Thesis](#), [Innovation Week](#)



Grad Studies Professional Development Center
gradprofdev@case.edu

Teaching Resources:

- CWRU University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education ([UCITE](#))
- UNIV401 - Advanced Professional Development for University Teaching
- [Dean's Scholars Program](#)
- [ExTEnd](#) - Expanding Teaching Experiences for Doctoral Students and Postdocs
- [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#)

Postdoc

* We encourage joining the [National Postdoc Association \(NPA\)](#) or [National Black Postdoc Association](#) for free!

CWRU Postdoctoral Association (PDA)

The [PDA](#) strives to support and enhance the experience of postdocs at CWRU. The PDA has representatives in various committees around campus representing the voice of the postdocs. All postdocs on campus are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings (they are open to everyone), read over the monthly minutes, and get involved. This is a great professional development and networking opportunity, and it looks great on a resume.

Committees: Benefits, Fundraising, Immigration & Visa, Professional Development, Public Relations, Social Activities, Women's Affairs

Faculty Senate Committee Reps: Campus Planning, Graduate Studies, Information Technology, Main Faculty Senate, Minority Affairs, Research, University Libraries, Women Faculty, University Media Safety

Other Representatives: Social Media Ambassadors, Cleveland Biomedical Trainee Alliance (CBTA)