

Postdoctoral Training

Postdoctoral appointments at WashU are full-time academic positions focused on mentored research and professional development under the guidance of faculty mentors. They are supported through research grants, individual fellowships, or institutional training programs. Their primary purpose is to help highly trained individuals acquire the professional skills needed for their chosen career path.

Because of this focus, postdoctoral appointments are inherently time-limited; they are capped at five years including any experience at other institutions following the doctoral degree. All postdoctoral appointees are eligible for university-sponsored benefits, and the postdoctoral experience is regulated by postdoc-specific policies and institutional normative.

WashU is proud to be an institutional member of the National Postdoctoral Association, which reflects our commitment to excellence in postdoctoral education.

Postdoc Categories

At WashU, there are two categories of postdocs:

1. *Postdoctoral Research Scholars* receive external funding in the form of a stipend and are considered non-employees.
2. *Postdoctoral Research Associates* receive a salary from the university and are considered employees.

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA), under the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, serves postdoctoral research associates and scholars across both the Danforth and Medical campuses. The OPA provides comprehensive resources to help postdocs achieve their career and professional development goals, advocates for postdoctoral issues, and offers guidance on recruitment and postdoctoral life. It also fosters a vibrant and inclusive postdoctoral community through networking, social events, and peer support.

The OPA postdoc curriculum includes signature programs in the following areas:

- *A career development series* to equip postdocs with essential skills for navigating diverse career pathways and achieving success in both academic and industry settings;
- *Leadership and communication training* to advance leadership capabilities while strengthening grant writing, publishing, and science communication skills;
- *Wellness and community engagement* that promotes holistic development, well-being, and meaningful integration into the WashU community;

- *Fellowships and awards* that recognize excellence and provide competitive opportunities for research and professional growth; and
- *An annual postdoc symposium and research seminars* that showcase innovative research and foster interdisciplinary collaboration across campuses.

Postdoc Organizations

The OPA supports recognized postdoc-led groups, including three major organizations:

1. WashU Postdoc Society (WUPS)
2. WashU Black Postdoctoral Association
3. Postdoc Peer Mentoring Program

Additional Information

For more information about programs, resources, and upcoming events, visit the OPA website.