University of Missouri

Postdoctoral Scholar Handbook
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Greetings!

Welcome to the University of Missouri. On behalf of the Office of Postdoctoral Education, we are thrilled that you have joined the University of Missouri (MU) as a postdoctoral scholar. The university employs over 200 postdoctoral fellows in departments across campus. The majority of postdocs are in research positions; however, we have a number of postdocs whose primary responsibility is teaching.

We know much of your time will be dedicated to working closely with your mentors, but we hope that you will carve out time to engage with other postdocs on campus, take advantage of professional development opportunities sponsored by the MU Postdoctoral Association (MUPA) and the Office of Graduate Studies, and enjoy living in Columbia. We want your training experience at MU to be as rewarding as possible.

We hope that this handbook will give you a glimpse into postdoc life on our campus. Don't hesitate to contact the Office of Postdoctoral Education if you have any questions about resources available to you.

Best wishes,
Lissa Behm-Morawitz, PhD
Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
The Office of Postdoctoral Education is housed within the Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Postdoctoral Education is responsible for the establishment of policies, benefits, and services available to postdoctoral scholars. We are invested in a productive postdoctoral experience.

The Office of Postdoctoral Education addresses the following:

- Policy Coordination and Oversight
- Approval of Postdoctoral Appointment Letters
- Centralized Resources
- MU Postdoctoral Association (MUPA)
- Postdoctoral Awards
- Preparing Future Faculty Postdoctoral Programs
- Postdoctoral Education Advisory Committee (PEAC)
Postdoctoral Arrival Checklist

Getting Started

After arrival:

- Find housing. Visit the City of Columbia website for helpful information.
- Meet with your unit’s or school’s human resources contact who can guide you through new employee paperwork and training.
- Enroll in benefits through Human Resources.
- Apply for a parking permit for campus parking.
- Visit DoIT to set up email and explore MU technology offerings.
- Familiarize yourself with MU postdoctoral policies.
- Complete or update your compliance/IRB training and any other required training for your position.
- Visit the Columbia Welcome webpage to set up a visit with a greeter and receive a complementary Columbia Welcome Basket.
- Sign-up for Emergency Alerts

International scholars

- View the Pre-Arrival and After Arrival Checklists for J-1 Scholars. Upon arrival in Columbia, you must check in at the MU International Center. If you have an alternate/equivalent Visa, use this site as a guide and contact the International Center pertaining to what documents you will need to (1) apply for a social security card and (2) apply for a driver’s license.
Postdoctoral Arrival Checklist

Getting Started

✓ Apply for a social security card. International students and scholars must wait two full weeks from their date of entry into the United States before applying for a Social Security card. You will need a Social Security Number (SSN) for various purposes including insurance, rental applications, utilities, driver’s license, bank accounts etc.

✓ Set up a bank account. Check if your bank at home has an affiliation with any in Columbia.

✓ If applicable, apply for a driver’s license. Take all your relevant Visa documents with you to one of the Driver License & Vehicle Registrations Offices. You will need to complete a written, visual and road test to obtain a Missouri license.

✓ Meet with the nonresident alien taxation specialist to set up a tax assessment appointment.

First three months:

✓ Explore MU Postdoctoral Association social, professional development, leadership, and travel funding opportunities.

✓ Sign up for your free NPA affiliate membership.

✓ Complete self-assessment and Individual Development Plan (IDP) based on your career goals.

✓ Review IDP with your faculty mentor(s).

✓ Establish a meeting schedule with your faculty mentor(s).
Postdoctoral Arrival Checklist

Getting Started

✓ Explore professional development opportunities with the Office of Graduate Studies and the Center for Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL). CIRTL provides primarily online professional development within a network of over 40 universities across the United States and Canada. The University of Missouri is part of the CIRTL network, which provides postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, and faculty with free access to CIRTL resources.

Within first year:

✓ Filing your tax. There are three forms of tax to be aware of: (1) Property tax (2) State tax and (3) Federal tax. Mizzou provides free taxation services for domestic and international (Nonresident Alien) scholars that will help file Federal tax on campus. The others can be completed online.
Getting to Columbia

Fly into Columbia

You can fly directly into the Columbia Regional Airport, just a short 15-minute drive south of the MU campus. Please see the airport website for current flight options. Taxi service is available from the Columbia Airport to the MU campus. A one-way trip to campus from the Columbia airport will cost approximately $20. Lyft and Uber services are also available in Columbia.

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Please Note: Starting October 10, 2018, if you have a driver’s license or ID issued by the state of Missouri prior to the new ID policy change, you will need an alternate ID to fly. For more information visit https://www.tsa.gov/

Fly into St. Louis or Kansas City

Most people fly into either the Kansas City airport or the St. Louis airport. Each of these airports is located approximately 120 miles, or a two-hour drive, from Columbia. After getting off your plane, you should follow the signs to baggage claim to pick up your checked luggage. Most ground transportation services at both airports leave from just outside the baggage claim areas; look for signs to the appropriate transportation.

Ground transportation to Columbia

Here are some options for getting from the St. Louis or Kansas City airports to MU:

- **Airport shuttle:** You can use an airport shuttle (van service) to get to Columbia from St. Louis or Kansas City. There are two airport shuttle services based in Columbia: MO-X, which serves the St. Louis and Kansas City airports, and EZCOBus, which serves the St. Louis airport. Check their websites for schedules and prices.

- **Bus service:** Bus service to Columbia from both St. Louis and Kansas City is available on Greyhound. You will have to take a taxi or public transportation from the airport to the Greyhound bus station in both cities.

- **Rental car:** If you want to rent a car, you may be able to make arrangements in advance online. Remember to ask the rental companies about what documents you will be required to show in order to rent and drive the car.
Living in Columbia

Columbia, MO., is known as an ideal college town, combining small-town comforts, community spirit and cost of living with big-city culture, activities and resources. Our city of about 120,612 people is located midway between Missouri’s largest cities, St. Louis and Kansas City. Columbia is home to an excellent public school system, and other colleges and educational centers. It’s packed with restaurants and entertainment, and hosts more than a dozen annual cultural festivals. The city boasts multiple city parks as well as Rock Bridge State Park and the MKT Trail for hiking and bicycling.

Columbia attracts residents from all over the world, and Columbians value and celebrate the diverse population. The city is home to more than 100 places of worship, including a synagogue and an Islamic center, and counts many international grocery stores and restaurants among the diverse local businesses.

Resources

City of Columbia New Resident Guide  
Columbia Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Mizzou Visitors Guide  
Daniel Boone Regional Library  
USPS  
FEDEX  
UPS  
Hospitals and health care centers  
Safety and Emergency Contacts  
CoMo Transportation
Policies and Procedures

All postdoctoral scholars should familiarize themselves with the University of Missouri postdoctoral policies.

Policies and procedures are put in place to ensure postdocs have a good experience at the University of Missouri.

Policies

- Grievance Process for Postdoctoral Scholars
- Intellectual Property & Research Guidelines for Postdoctoral Scholars
- International Postdoctoral Scholar Policies
- Postdoctoral Appointment Process
- Postdoctoral Scholar Benefits & Funding

Procedures

- Assessment of Postdoctoral Work
- Postdoctoral Completion Process
- Postdoctoral Reappointment/Renewal and Transfer Processes
MU Office for Civil Rights and Title IX

The Office for Civil Rights and Title IX coordinates non-discrimination and equity efforts across campus. MU policies prohibit discrimination and harassment based on:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Age
- Genetic information
- Disability
- Protected veteran status
- Sex (including sexual assault, stalking, dating/intimate partner violence and pregnancy)

This office is responsible for enforcing the university’s nondiscrimination policies, educating the community about MU policies and practices, and connecting people to resources that can support them if they experience discrimination or retaliation.

If you experience any form of discrimination or harassment, you can make a report to the Office for Civil Rights and Title IX. An investigator will then contact you to discuss your options and rights, and can investigate whether university policies were violated. Your report is confidential, and it is up to you whether you wish to contact the police.

For additional information about how to make a report, see the Office for Civil Rights and Title IX website.

*Postdocs are academic appointments (except in a few rare cases) and should refer to the CRR (collected rules) for additional information about academic rights and responsibilities.
All postdoctoral scholars are eligible to receive benefits, but the type of benefits package received is dictated by the nature of the relationship between the postdoctoral scholar and the university. Postdoctoral scholars can be considered as having either an employer–employee relationship with Mizzou or in rare cases, one that is educational.

Postdoctoral scholars who are paid salaries from Mizzou funds, including grants and contracts, and are classified as university employees and receive the same health, leave, educational assistance and retirement benefits as faculty and staff.

Postdoctoral scholars who cannot be considered salaried university employees because they receive stipend or salary support directly from a granting agency or a funding source that does not allow university employee status as a condition of the award, are eligible to receive benefits, but the benefits package differs in some respects from that of individuals who are salaried employees of the university. As applicable, it is the responsibility of the faculty mentor and/or department chair to ensure that resources are available from grants, departmental funds or other university sources to cover the university’s share of the costs for medical insurance before a postdoctoral trainee is accepted.

The University of Missouri System Faculty and Staff Benefits Handbook provides a comprehensive list of benefits available to postdoctoral trainees who are classified as employees. Details regarding benefits for stipend-funded and other non-employee postdocs are available from the Office of Postdoctoral Education in the Office of Graduate Studies.

Check out HR website for info:
http://hrs.missouri.edu/benefits-and-pay/

More information about funding of benefits for postdoctoral fellows:
http://postdoc.missouri.edu/policies/supporting-benefits.php
Additional Benefits

University of Missouri students and employees receive **discounts** at many local venues, including restaurants, cellular companies, and entertainment. For more information about University of Missouri discounts please visit the Human Resources Services [Other Benefits](#) page.

Questions about the Total Rewards benefits package may be directed to:
Donna Kasper: 573-884-2350 (kasperd@umsystem.edu)
Sherry Campbell: 573-882-2146 (campbellsk@umsystem.edu)
1095 Virginia Avenue
Parking Structure #7

If you have questions about retirement packages contact:
Woodrail Centre 1000 W.
Nifong Building 7, Ste. 210
573-882-2146
benefits@umsystem.edu
The Mizzou Office for Financial Success (OFS) is a Money Management Center whose primary mission is to improve the financial well-being of the campus community.

Services are free and cover a wide range of various financial topics such as these:

- Student Loans
- Budgeting Financial Goal Setting
- Saving Plans
- Credit Reports & Scores
- Investing
- Credit Building
- Debt Management
- Tax Planning
- Employment Benefits
- Insurance
- Retirement
MUPA's mission is to foster professional development and social interaction to provide community and a collective voice; and to liaison between postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and administration.

Resources and professional development for postdoctoral fellows:

- [Professional Development for Postdoctoral Fellows and Graduate Students](#)
- [Free Affiliate Membership in the National Postdoctoral Association](#)
- [Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) Program](#)
- [Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) Postdoctoral Fellowship](#)
- [MU Postdoctoral Association (MUPA)](#)
- Postdoc Listserve (to join send email to MUPDA-L@po.missouri.edu)
- [Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL)](#)

Like our Facebook page and stay current on our events.

Get Involved!
National Postdoctoral Association (NPA)

NPA provides a national united voice and advocates for positive work environments for postdoctoral fellows, researchers, instructors, and scholars.

The MU Office of Graduate Studies has paid for institutional membership with the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). This means all of MU’s postdocs are entitled to free affiliate (individual-level) membership to NPA. In doing this, we join a long list of other prestigious universities who are also members of NPA.

Here’s a list of their individual member benefits:

- Subscription to NPA e-alerts, a periodic news announcement, and The POSTDOCket, the NPA’s official quarterly newsletter

- Reduced registration fees to the NPA Annual Meeting & eligibility for the NPA travel award program

- Access to members-only NPA Webcontent

- Access to NPA Member Groups to connect & network with fellow NPA members

- Discounts to services and products

- Opportunities to serve and contribute your expertise on a variety of NPA committees

- Voting rights in all NPA elections and on NPA ballot issues

- National representation on postdoctoral issues

To obtain your free membership, contact the postdoc@missouri.edu
National Postdoc Association (NPA)  
International Postdoc Survival Guide

Topics covered:
• Postdocing in the U.S.
• Going in With Your Eyes Open
• Signposts to Living in the U.S.
• So, Nobody Will Give You a Credit Card?
• A Quick Guide to Visa
• Beginner’s Guide to Income Taxes for International Postdocs
• Been There, Done That! Advice from Experienced Postdocs


Important Documents for International Postdocs

In addition to your passport, visa and other immigration-related documents, you may need to obtain a Social Security card or driver’s license:

Social Security card: Required for all international students and scholars who will be employed during their time at MU.

Driver’s license: Required for anyone who plans to operate a motor vehicle or motor-driven cycle on public roadways.

Nondriver ID card: A government-issued photo identification card that can be used as a primary form of identification in many situations (e.g., opening a bank account).

If you are unsure whether you should obtain any of these documents, please contact an International Center adviser.

For more information visit: http://postdoc.missouri.edu/policies/international.php
**MU Postdoctoral Association Events**—check the MU Postdoctoral Association page, join the postdoc listserv, and follow on [Facebook group](#) receive information about career, professional development and social events.

**Professional Development Seminars**—organized through the Office of Graduate Studies for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

Contact the Office of Postdoctoral Education for additional information.
Professional Development Courses

• **College Teaching Online Certificate (ELPA)**
  
  4 16-week classes (can be taken online or face-to-face; there are enough courses within the certificate offered online that they can all be taken in that format)
  

• **The Professoriate (ELPA 9456)**
  
  Offered online in fall semester and face-to-face in spring semester

• **College Teaching (ELPA 9448) and/or College Science Teaching (LTC8724)**
  
  College Teaching is offered face-to-face in fall semester and online in spring semester
  
  College Science Teaching is offered face-to-face in fall semester

• **Grant writing Graduate Certificate (Truman School of Public Affairs)**
  
  4 classes, can be completed online

• **Grant Writing I & II (PUB_AF 8830/PUB_AF 8831)**
  
  3 credit courses

• **Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL)**
  
  As a CIRTL campus, postdocs can participate in to participate and develop workshops, webinars, and programming on teaching, learning and the scholarship of teaching and learning through the national CIRTL network
  
  Certification is possible
  
  [http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/cirtl/](http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/cirtl/)

****Please note limited space is available. Contact the Office of Postdoctoral Education for more information****
**The Office of Research** is a great resource for helping postdoctoral scholars conduct responsible research. The Office of Research focuses on University research, instruction, and public service activities. It oversees [compliance and export controls](#), facilities security, and resources related to human subjects and animal research.

The Office of Research is also responsible for the [Office of Sponsored Program Administration](#) (OSPA). This office assists with the preparation and submission of grants.

**Office of Technology Management & Industry Relations**

The Office of Technology Management & Industry Relations ([OTMIR](#)) manages technology transfer functions at MU under the direction of the division of Research, Graduate Studies and Economic Development.

**Libraries**

The [MU libraries](#) consist of the Ellis Library (the main library) and eight branch libraries. The library provides [support for researchers](#) including subject librarians, online resources, and workshops.