

# **Postdoctoral Scholar Handbook**



**University of Missouri**

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## Office of Postdoctoral Education

Greetings!

Welcome to the University of Missouri. On behalf of the Offices of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Education and MU Postdoctoral Association (MUPA), we are thrilled that you have joined Mizzou as a postdoctoral scholar. Mizzou employs over 300 postdoctoral scholars in departments throughout 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 MUPA and the MU Graduate School, and enjoy living in Columbia. We want your training experience at Mizzou to be as rewarding as possible.

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

Best wishes,

Enid Schatz, PhD

Associate Dean, MU Graduate School

Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs

# Office of Postdoctoral Education

The [Office of Postdoctoral Education](#) is housed within the Office of Graduate Studies and is responsible for the establishment of policies, benefits, and services available to postdoctoral scholars. We are invested in productive postdoc experience.

## **The Office of Postdoctoral Education oversees the following:**

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

Office of Postdoctoral Education  
Office: 204 Hill Hall, Columbia, MO 65211  
Toll-free: 800-877-6312  
Phone: 573-884-1402  
[Postdoc@missouri.edu](mailto:Postdoc@missouri.edu)  
<https://mizzou.us/ope>

# New Postdoctoral Scholar Arrival Checklist

## Getting Started at Mizzou

### 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.
- If you haven't been invited for Postdoc Welcome & Resources Overview presentation, contact the postdoc office at [postdoc@missouri.edu](mailto:postdoc@missouri.edu).
- 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-1VisitingScholars. Upon arrival in Columbia, you must check in at the MU International Center. If you have an alternative/equivalent Visa, use this site as a guide and contact the [International Center Adviser](#) pertaining to what documents you will need to
  - Apply for a social security card and
  - Apply for a driver's license.

Note: 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 a 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 at [muhrsnrtaxoffice@missouri.edu](mailto:muhrsnrtaxoffice@missouri.edu) 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).
- Additional postdoctoral resources, professional development, and networking opportunities are available through the [MU Postdoctoral Association \(MUPA\)](#), [Office of Postdoctoral Education](#), and the [Graduate School's gradEssentials](#) program. In addition to these campus resources, the University of Missouri is an institutional member of the [National Postdoctoral Association \(NPA\)](#).
- The Office of Postdoctoral Education maintains an email distribution list and it is updated monthly. If for any reason you do not receive emails from the Office of Postdoctoral Education, please contact the office at [postdoc@missouri.edu](mailto:postdoc@missouri.edu).

### Within first year:

- Filing your taxes: taxes that may be withheld from your pay checks by Mizzou include: 1) Federal and State income tax, and 2) FICA (Social Security & Medicare) tax. Visa holders: Tax residency and tax treaty exemptions may affect these taxes. Tax information is available from the Nonresident Tax Office at [umsharerservicesu1@umsystem.edu](mailto:umsharerservicesu1@umsystem.edu)

## 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. 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.

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 Columbia:

- **Airport shuttle:** You can use an airport shuttle (van service) to get to Columbia from St. Louis or Kansas City. [MO-X](#), based in Columbia and serves the St. Louis and Kansas City airports. Check the website 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

- Visit [City of Columbia](#) check Resident &Visitors tabs [Columbia Convention and Visitors](#)
- [Daniel Boone Regional Library](#)
- [USPS](#)
- [FEDEX](#)
- [UPS](#)
- [MU Health Care](#)
- [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](#)

## Discrimination and Harassment

### 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.



## Benefit Information

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:
  - <https://www.umsystem.edu/totalrewards/benefits>
- More information about funding of benefits for postdoctoral fellows:
  - <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/benefits-funding/>

## 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 Resource Services [Other Benefits](#) page.

For more information about University of Missouri Benefits and Retirement, please visit:

<https://www.umsystem.edu/totalrewards>

Questions may be directed to:

Mark Ellis

573-884-2350

[ellismw@umsystem.edu](mailto:ellismw@umsystem.edu)

15 Jesse Hall

Columbia, MO 65211

Or contact:

UM HR Service Center

573-882-2146

## Employee Assistance Programs

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a continuum of tools, resources and counseling services to support emotional wellness, the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and to adapt to change and difficult times (building resilience, reducing stress, getting quality sleep, strengthening social connections, coping with loss, and being mindful).

All programs offer experienced consultants at no cost for support, guidance and resources to help you navigate small questions and big problems related to a range of issues, including stress, anxiety and depression; relationship problems; grief and loss and parent and family issues.

- Stress Management
- Family Concerns
- Alcoholism
- Substance Abuse
- Relationship Difficulty
- Phase of Life – Transition Management
- Change Management
- Acute Stress at Work
- Compassion Fatigue
- Crisis Intervention
- Emotional Intelligence
- Fostering Positive Relationships at Work
- Generations in the Workplace
- Grieving the Loss of a Family/Team Member
- <https://www.umsystem.edu/totalrewards/benefits/eap>

## Links to Important Benefit Information

Postdocs are considered non-regular faculty appointments at the University of Missouri. The following websites have more relevant information.

- [Total benefits](#) (health, dental, vision, and more)
- [Tuition assistance](#)

# MU Postdoctoral Association (MUPA)

MUPA's mission

- Foster professional development and social interaction
- Provide community and a collective voice
- Liaison between postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and administration.

MUPA board:

- MU postdoctoral fellows who volunteer their time
- Organizes professional development and social events
- Supported by the Director of Postdoctoral Education
- Hosts National Postdoc Appreciation Week at MU during September each year

Resources postdoctoral fellows:

- [MU Postdoctoral Association\(MUPA\)](#)
  - MUPA Travel Grants - Postdoctoral fellows at the University of Missouri are eligible to apply for funding for academic conferences and professional development opportunities through the postdoctoral association. Each postdoctoral fellow can be awarded a travel award once per academic year.
- [MUPA Facebook Page](#)

# MU Black Postdoctoral Association (MBPA)

MBPA is an inclusive and interdisciplinary organization created to enhance the experience of Black postdoctoral fellows on the MU campus, while providing opportunities for career development and peer-to-peer mentorship to ensure the professional and personal success of its members.

- [MBPA Resources:](#)
- [Professional development seminars and social events](#)
- [MBPA Scholarship](#)
- [MBPA Instagram Page](#)

# International Postdoctoral Scholars

## 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 Visas
- Beginner's Guide to Income Taxes for International Postdocs
- Been There, Done That! Advice from Experienced Postdocs

[International Postdoc Survival Guide](#)

## 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: <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/policy/international-postdocs/>

## Professional Development Events

### 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.
- Individual Consultations - Valli Sarveswaran, Director of Postdoctoral Education, is available for personal career consultations. You can meet with Valli in person or virtually. Visit [Valli's Bookings site](#) to schedule an appointment.
- 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)

- <https://online.missouri.edu/degreeprograms/education/college-teaching/grad-cert/index.aspx?redirect=college-teaching/graduate-certificate>
- TheProfessoriate (ELPA9456)
  - Offered online in fall semester and face-to-face in spring semester
- College Teaching (ELPA9448) 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\_AF8830/PUB\_AF8831)
  - 3 credit courses

## Research Resources

The [Division of Research, Innovation, and Impact](#) 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 Advancement](#) 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.

## LGBTQ Resources

- MU LGBTQ Resource Center
  - Events details
  - Sign up for the newsletter
  - Contacts for the helplines
  - How to change your pronouns in Canvas
  - Gender neutral bathrooms

- Mizzou's non-discrimination policy
- <https://lgbtq.missouri.edu/>
- LGBTQ Library Resources at Mizzou
  - <https://library.missouri.edu/news/ellis-library/lgbtq-library-resources-at-mizzou>

## Office for Financial Success

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

### Office for Financial Success

Department of Personal Financial Planning

financialsuccess@missouri.edu

162 Stanley Hall

Columbia, MO 65211

<https://financialsuccess.missouri.edu/>

## Mizzou Resources Specific to Mizzou Postdocs

Mizzou postdocs are a part of the most diverse group of scholars on campus and enjoy the following.

- Access to the postdoc office for 1:1 career development consultation.
- Access to professional and career development activities offered by [MU Postdoctoral Association](#).
- Being able to be part of the governing board of the [MU Postdoctoral Association](#).
- Be on the postdoc listserv and receive professional & career development, job, & funding opportunities.
- Access to social events organized by the [MU Postdoctoral Association](#) and meet with other postdocs.
- Be part of the [Postdoc LinkedIn group](#).
- Eligible to apply for [Postdoc Travel Grant](#) (\$350; 3 rounds/year) administered by [MU Postdoctoral Association](#), [Postdoc Research Grants](#) (\$500, \$750, or \$1,500; 2 rounds/year), and [Postdoc Research &](#)

Teaching Awards (\$1,000 per year each).

- Being able to nominate [Postdoctoral Mentor of the Year](#).

## **External Resources Available to Mizzou Postdocs**

### **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 Mizzou'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 Web content
- 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, click [here](#) and then "Affiliate Individual Member, Postdoc" as your membership type. Create a username and enter your first and last name. Next, you will be prompted to confirm your membership type. Lastly, complete the demographic information, and enter the University of Missouri as your organization. It is as simple as that!
- <https://www.nationalpostdoc.org/>

### **Postdoc Academy**

Creates a comprehensive and flexible professional development program targeting the needs of postdocs.

- Succeeding as a Postdoc
- Building Skills for a Successful Career
- Postdoc Academy Learning Sessions (PALS)
- Available to anyone.
- <https://www.postdocacademy.org/>

### **Versatile PHD**

VPhD is the largest online community dedicated to non-academic and non-faculty careers for PhD

graduates in humanities, social sciences and STEM fields.

- It helps graduate students, ABDs and PhDs identify, prepare for and excel in professional careers.
- Before you can access Versatile PhD, you must authenticate with your MU credentials.
- Once you've authenticated, you can then log in (or sign up) to access MU's VPhD portal.
- The University of Missouri is an institutional member of the VPhD and Mizzou postdocs may enjoy the benefits of an VPhD Membership.
- <https://versatilephd.com/>

## myIDP

myIDP - a unique, web-based career-planning tool tailored to meet the needs of PhD students and postdocs in the sciences.

myIDP provides:

- Exercises to help you examine your skills, interests, and values
- A list of 20 scientific career paths with a prediction of which ones best fit your skills and interests
- A tool for setting strategic goals for the coming year, with optional reminders to keep you on track
- Articles and resources to guide you through the process
- Available to anyone.
- <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>

## ImaginePhD

ImaginePhD is a free online career exploration and planning tool for PhD students and postdoctoral scholars in the humanities and social sciences.

- Assess their career-related skills, interests, and values
- Explore careers paths appropriate to their disciplines
- Create self-defined goals
- Map out next steps for career and professional development success
- Available to anyone.
- <https://www.imaginephd.com/>

## Going Global

- Helps job seekers find opportunities both at home and abroad.
- Includes links to H1B visa info and company lists for international students, city and country guides for more than 120 international locations, and cultural overview and job search advice for non-native applicants.
- Includes access to CultureWizard, an online learning solution that helps people effectively engage with each other across cultures and countries.
- The University of Missouri is an institutional member of the GoingGlobal and Mizzou postdocs may enjoy the benefits of a GoingGlobal Membership.
- <https://online.goingglobal.com/>



## BigInterview

Big Interview is a web-based program that combines comprehensive training and hands-on practice to help students improve their interview skills and build their confidence. Students can access a database of thousands of questions for various experience levels and industries and rate and share their interview answers for feedback.

- Mock interviews, answer builder, interview roulette, question library
- Resume builder
- The University of Missouri is an institutional member of the BigInterview and Mizzou postdocs may enjoy the benefits of a BigInterview Membership.
- <https://missouri.biginterview.com/>

## Maps

- [University of Missouri campus map](#)
- [Street map from the City of Columbia, Missouri](#)