



Frequently Asked Questions

Starting a New Postdoc

Q: *When is the next Postdoc Orientation?*

A: A New Postdoc Orientation is held annually in September. Please keep an eye on the OPE Newsletter which will announce when the next Orientation is scheduled. As a new Postdoc, you will also get an email inviting you to register to attend. All new postdocs are automatically added to the OPE Postdoc e-mail distribution group.

Q: *How do I get a copy of the salary scale?*

A: The School of Medicine follows the NIH/NRSA stipend scale. Generally, the stipend scale is updated annually, however, new stipend scales updated during the year at NIH do not become effective until the following year on September 1st. Example: If a new scale is published on October 1, 2022 for FY 2023, then that scale won't become effective for the SOM until September 1, 2023.

Q: *How long can I be a postdoctoral fellow at Emory?*

A: The maximum term of appointment in the School of Medicine under the title of Postdoctoral Fellow should not exceed a total of five years of experience since completion of your terminal degree, though extensions may be possible under special circumstances. After five years, the research mentor must transition the postdoc to a scientist position.

Q: *How much sick and vacation leave do I have?*

A: Postdoctoral fellows have 21 calendar days that contains 15 business days per year of vacation and twelve (12) calendar days that contains 10 business days of paid disability/sick leave per year. See Benefits and Support.

Q: *Can I carry forward any of my unused vacation and sick leave?*

A: No. A postdoc's leave balances are renewed on their anniversary date. A postdoc must use all their leave during the calendar year, or it will be lost. This is called the *Use it or Lose it policy*.

Q: *Are postdoctoral fellows eligible for paid holidays?*

A: Yes. Emory University provides 11 holidays per year plus two floating holidays to eligible employees. [Holiday Schedule](#).

Q: *Am I eligible for Paid Parental leave?*

A: Emory University provides paid parental leave to eligible staff, librarians, and postdoctoral fellows who experience the birth or adoption of a child. For more details, click [here](#) to see the full policy.

Q: *Does all my research experience count towards my relevant experience or just my research at Emory?*

A: Relevant experience may include research experience (including industrial), teaching assistantship, internship, residency, clinical duties, or other time spent in a health-related field beyond that of the qualifying doctoral degree. So all your research experience since receiving your qualifying doctoral degree is counted towards your years of experience.

Q: *When do I get my annual reappointment and salary increase?*

A: Your annual reappointment and increase is processed on your anniversary date with the university. Following NIH guidelines, once the appropriate stipend level has been determined, the trainee or fellow must be paid at that level for the entire year.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW (APR)

Q: *Do I only need to complete the Annual Progress Review form in the list if I have nothing to change with the previous basic information?*

A: The Annual Progress Review should be completed annually and documents your progress throughout the year. It coincides with your annual reappointment and salary increase. The main focus of the review is to be sure you are talking with your PI about goals and progress. We also want to make sure you will have up to date information on your accomplishments when you leave Emory. Please review and update the items in the list as appropriate with those goals in mind.

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Q. Does OPE provide funding for conference travel?

A: Yes. Travel awards are offered annually and reviewed by the EU-PDA committee, which selects the recipients. Award announcements are shared in the OPE newsletter. Additional travel support may also be available through your research mentor, so postdocs are encouraged to discuss funding options directly with their mentor.

Q. What career support is available to postdocs?

A: Postdocs have access to one-on-one career counseling.

LOAN REPAYMENT

Q: Who signs off on NIH Loan repayment applications?

A: This is handled in the SOM through Josh Barwick's office.

Q: Who can sign off on Loan Deferment paperwork?

A: Dr. David Weinshenker, Director, Office of Postdoctoral Education. Email the form to his attention at dweinsh@emory.edu.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY

Q: Can an Emory postdoc be PI for a R21 or R01 NIH grant?

Q: Is an Assistant Scientist or Instructor position in SOM eligible to apply for the K99 award?

A: No – the K99 phase is specifically focused for a mentored trainee in a Postdoc position.

The [website](#) says:

The purpose of the NIH Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) program is to facilitate a timely transition of outstanding postdoctoral researchers with a research and/or clinical doctorate degree from mentored, postdoctoral research positions to independent, tenure-track or equivalent faculty positions.

BUT, the NIH website says:

Individuals are NOT eligible if they:

- Have currently or previously held an independent research faculty or tenure-track

faculty position, or its equivalent, in academia, industry or elsewhere; or

- Have more than 4 years of related postdoctoral research training at the time of initial application or resubmission; or
- Have been an independent PD/PI on NIH research grants (e.g. R01, R03, R21), NIH career development awards (e.g., K01, K07, K08, K23, K25), or other peer-reviewed NIH or non-NIH research grants over \$100,000 direct costs per year, or Project Leads on sub-projects of program project (P01) or center (P50) grants.

So does it depend if your position is a 'dependent' one, that is you are not entitled to full faculty privileges? If you have full faculty privileges and are allowed to submit an R01 grant from this position in your department, then you are independent and would not be eligible? Emory's position is that an assistant scientist and instructor positions are NOT mentored positions.

Emory's classification to the Fair Labor and Standard's Act that Postdoctoral Fellows are mentored positions and receive a stipend according the NRSA training table.

In contrast, Assistant Scientist and Instructor positions are classified as independent positions and receive a salary after the resume is reviewed for the appropriate wage. Wage and stipend are important points of distinction.

In the past, there was a Postdoc who just received funding for a K99 and their mentor wanted to move them into a Staff Scientist position. The Program Officer stated that was not allowable because the K99 specifically states that it has to be a Postdoc position.

Point #4: "All levels in the Staff Scientists job series, with the approval of his/her Faculty supervisor and Department Chair, may submit proposals." [Principal Investigator Eligibility Policy](#)

F32 Fellowships

Q: *Is there OPE-specific verbiage that can/should be included in the Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training section?*

A: Grant Writing Boot Camps – Dynamic grant writing boot camps directed by professional grant writers are offered for Postdoctoral Fellows (Ph.D. and M.D.) and junior faculty preparing NRSA and K grants. These sessions are designed to help the trainee and their sponsor develop a mature and well-developed application. These tutorial series provide trainees with an interactive forum that discusses the goals of each grant component plus the attributes of strong and weak sections. Webinars are also created of each section so that attendees can re-review the material as they write their own sections. These sessions are followed by individual editing sessions guided by grant writers to provide appropriate feedback, guidance, and editing. Our

funding success rate is upwards of 50% for applications submitted from Postdoctoral Fellows and junior faculty. Over 90% of those that received K career development awards have moved forward to tenure-track faculty positions.

Q: *Why are there no taxes taken out of my paycheck after I receive an F32 grant?*

A: Stipends are not considered salaries. Therefore, no funds are removed for taxes or for Social Security. While no funds are withheld/submitted on a 1099 Form for tax purposes, the recipient is still required to pay taxes. [See Postdoc Fellowship Benefits.](#)

Q: *How are my benefits being paid?*

A: In terms of benefits, the mentor is required to pay all of your health benefits. That amount will be equal to the amount required to cover the benefits and goes straight to covering those benefits. A separate job code is used to designate the benefits portion of your salary.

END OF POSTDOCTORAL POSITION

Q: *I know that Emory reimburses employees for remaining PTO; does that apply to postdocs?*

A: No – Postdocs fall under the “faculty” category. So, it is “use it or lose it” policy

The official policy on the OPE website states

Unused leave is not carried over to the next year or paid at the end of termination of the position. The postdoctoral fellow who does not use his/her leave in the year it is available loses the leave. This policy is often called “Use it or lose it”. Postdoctoral fellows should discuss leave with their mentors in advance of making plans for leave.

Q: *I am leaving my postdoc position/I got a job/I transitioned to a new position at Emory. Is there anything I need to do for the Office of Postdoctoral Education?*

A: Please send OPE a copy of your resignation letter as soon as possible. Also, complete [OPE Outcome Form](#). The data is used in aggregate for OPE's NIH reporting requirements and in Emory NIH grant applications regarding Emory Postdoc outcomes.

POLICY & COMPLIANCE

Q: *Where can I go for help if I encounter an issue with my mentor, lab, or appointment?*

A: Postdocs can reach out to the Office of Postdoctoral Education (OPE@emory.edu) or the Ombuds Office.

POSTDOC/GRAD AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION INQUIRES

Grad Student/Scientist seeking Postdoc position

They need to identify and contact the investigator that does research relevant to their research experiences and skills.

<https://www.med.emory.edu/education/postdoctoral-training/prospective-postdocs/index.html>

They can also contact Emory HR to ask about the Postdoc positions that open.

<https://www.hr.emory.edu/eu/career/>

Person seeking Grad School/Med School

You can learn more about applying to Emory's School of Medical here:

<https://www.med.emory.edu/education/programs/md/admissions/index.html>

You can learn more about applying to Emory's Graduate Programs here:

<https://www.emory.edu/home/admission/graduate-professional.html>