

# Postdoctoral Scholars Handbook

Office of Postdoctoral Education



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*Although OPE will make its best efforts to abide by this handbook, OPE reserves the right to interpret, apply, and deviate from the procedures and policies in the handbook as appropriate in particular circumstances and in accordance with the mission and goals of OPE and UAB. OPE also reserves the right to address issues not covered in this handbook and to make changes to the handbook without advance notice. See the most up-to-date version of the handbook on the OPE website. Finally, this handbook does not constitute, and should not be treated as, a contract between the postdoctoral scholar and OPE. UAB is an EO/AA/Disability/Veteran Employer.*



## Welcome to UAB and the Magic City!

On behalf of the Office of Postdoctoral Education, we are excited to welcome you to UAB and help you succeed on and off campus during your postdoctoral tenure! Here at UAB, almost 300 postdoctoral scholars call our university home while training in a variety of disciplines from engineering, mathematics, and natural sciences to public health, medicine, and dentistry. UAB ranks consistently as one of the top institutions among U.S. universities for postdoctoral scholars because of our commitment to your academic and professional success as well as overall wellbeing. We hope your time here is one of personal and professional empowerment and growth.



This handbook is intended to introduce you to important opportunities and resources available to you as a postdoctoral scholar. Highlights include:

- Tuition Assistance
- Access to University-wide Courses and Certificates
- Postdoc-specific Professional Development and Career Programming including Personalized Career Counselling with the Associate Dean
- Funding Opportunities through OPE
  - Career Enhancement Awards
  - Individual Fellowship Incentive Awards
  - Internship Awards
  - Travel Awards for Conferences

As a UAB postdoctoral scholar, you are automatically a member of the [UAB Postdoctoral Association](#). You can also join the [UAB Black Postdoctoral Association](#) that advocates for the professional and social wellbeing of all postdocs. Both groups are peer-led organizations that foster collaboration, inclusivity, and advocacy (with a touch of Blazer Spirit!) for scholars in all disciplines and at all levels of training. UAB is also an institutional member of the National Postdoctoral Association, and all UAB postdoctoral scholars receive free membership. Sign up [here](#).

If any questions or issues arise at any time during your training, please contact our office. We are here to help and look forward to working with you. Welcome again to UAB and the Magic City!

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Curtis, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Research and Training

## CONTACTS QUICK SHEET

### Office of Postdoctoral Education

General Inquiries:

Email: [postdocs@uab.edu](mailto:postdocs@uab.edu)

Website: <https://www.uab.edu/postdocs/>

Associate Dean for Research and  
Training:

Lisa M. Curtis, Ph.D.

Email: [lisacurtis@uabmc.edu](mailto:lisacurtis@uabmc.edu)

Professional and Career Development:

Ashley Foster, Ph.D.

Email: [avfoster@uab.edu](mailto:avfoster@uab.edu)

Phone: 205.975.7020

Finance and Operations:

Lakeysha Keyes

Email: [lkeyes@uab.edu](mailto:lkeyes@uab.edu)

Phone: 205.934.6809

Please feel free to drop by our office at:

Lister Hill Library

Ground Floor – G10

1700 University Blvd.

### UAB Human Resources

General Inquires (e.g. payroll, direct deposit)

Email: [humanresources@uab.edu](mailto:humanresources@uab.edu)

Phone: 205.934.5321

Website: <https://uabhr.freshdesk.com/support/home>

Benefits (e.g. health insurance, retirement plans):

Email: [benefits@uab.edu](mailto:benefits@uab.edu)

Phone: 205.934.3458

Website: <https://www.uab.edu/humanresources/home/benefits/contact>

### International Student and Scholar Services

Email: [iss@uab.edu](mailto:iss@uab.edu)

Phone: 205.934.3328

Website: <https://www.uab.edu/global/visiting-scholars/international-exchange-visitors>

Office Location: Sterne Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 917 13<sup>th</sup> Street South



## INTRODUCING...

### *Office of Postdoctoral Education*

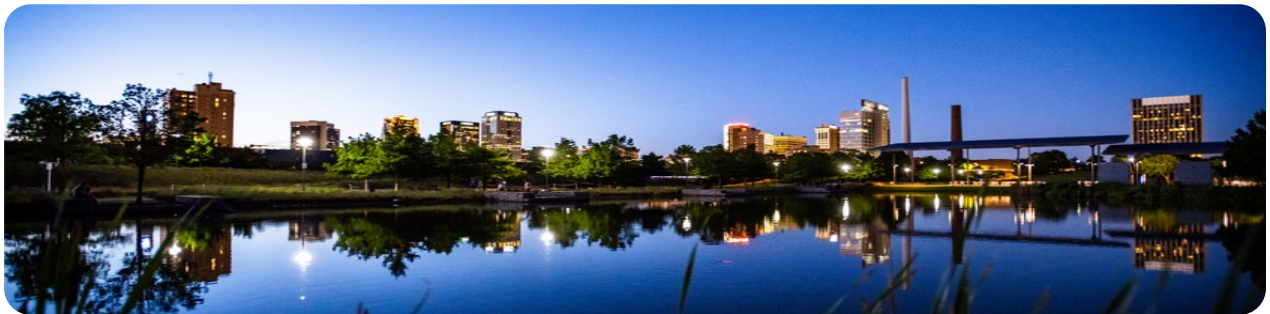
UAB's OPE was established in April 1999 as the nation's third university office devoted exclusively to supporting postdoctoral scholars during their training years. One of their first initiatives involved establishing a base postdoctoral salary for all scholars. Thus, you are joining a community that has a long history of advocating for postdocs and their success! The office runs through the Graduate School and is overseen by the Associate Dean for Research and Training. It works in tandem with UAB's Postdoctoral Associations and the Council on Postdoctoral Education, a committee of postdocs and faculty who counsels OPE on programming and policies that affect scholars.

### *University of Alabama at Birmingham*

UAB is a comprehensive R-1 urban university with a nationally recognized academic health center. 140 countries are represented in its students, faculty, and staff. The university is the only public, four-year degree-granting university in the state's largest metropolitan area, Birmingham. In the state of Alabama as a whole, UAB is the largest research institution as well as the largest single employer. As of 2024, it has a \$12.1 billion annual economic impact and is ranked in the top 4% among U.S. public universities for NIH awards.

### *Birmingham, Alabama*

Since its founding in 1871, Birmingham has grown from a city whose economy revolved around the coal and steel industries to one revolving around medical research, healthcare, banking, and telecommunications. Birmingham is also known as one of the birthplaces of the American Civil Rights Movement given its role in the 1963 Children's Crusade which followed the publication of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from the Birmingham Jail." Countless Birminghamians stood alongside King and Fred Shuttlesworth to ensure social justice for all who call the city home. Today, the metropolitan area boasts a population of 1.1 million people, and the city, located at the base of the Appalachian Mountains, offers more green space per capita than any other city its size in the nation.



## GETTING STARTED CHECKLISTS

To assist you in your tenure as a postdoctoral scholar, below you will find onboarding checklists to help you transition to UAB.



### *To Complete before You Arrive*

- ☐ 1. International Postdocs: Contact [International Student and Scholar Services](#) as soon as the hiring process is initiated.
- ☐ 2. Provide a copy of your most recent CV, an official transcript in English,<sup>1</sup> and a copy of your terminal degree in English to your department's HR personnel as they will need these documents for hiring.
- ☐ 3. Complete Background Check.
  - a. You will receive an email with instructions to the email address you provided during the hiring process on how to complete the background check. The background check will come from *HireRight Customer Support*. You have seven days to complete the background check.<sup>2</sup>
- ☐ 4. Sign your appointment letter.
  - a. Take note of your appointment type as there are two types: **Postdoctoral Trainee (20)** and **Postdoctoral Employee (21)**. Knowing your type will be important when it comes to benefits and taxes.<sup>3</sup>
- ☐ 5. Secure housing.
  - a. UAB hosts an off-campus housing [website](#) that lists current options near campus for rent.
- ☐ 6. - **Postdoctoral Employees (status 21)**: Contact your department's HR personnel to schedule UAB's New Hire Orientation and receive I-9/E-Verify information.
  - a. All domestic and international postdoctoral employees will need to complete this I-9/E-Verify information.- **Postdoctoral Trainees (status 20)**: Contact your department's HR personnel to schedule UAB's New Hire Orientation. You do **not** fill out an I-9/E-Verify form.
- ☐ 7. Schedule first day meeting with faculty mentor.
- ☐ 8. Schedule a welcome meeting with OPE to be completed within the first two weeks of your start date. Email [postdocs@uab.edu](mailto:postdocs@uab.edu) with the subject title "*Welcome Meeting for New Postdoc.*"
- ☐ 9. **Postdoctoral Employees**: Complete the electronic I-9/E-Verify, Section 1.
  - a. Section 1 must be completed no later than your first date of work.
  - b. You will receive an email to the email address you provided during the hiring

<sup>1</sup> UAB strongly recommends using [WES](#) to obtain English translations of transcripts.

<sup>2</sup> We recommend you use Chrome for your background check though it should be compatible with other browsers.

<sup>3</sup> The two types of postdoctoral positions here at UAB are a postdoctoral trainee (status 20) and postdoctoral employee (status 21). Postdoctoral trainees are on fellowships which are funded by training grants while employees are paid directly by other funding mechanisms. See Chapter 2, Section 1 for more information. Postdoctoral scholar refers to both positions.

process on how to complete the online portion of Section 1. Section 2 will be completed in-person with your department's HR personnel.

*To Complete during your First Week*

- ☐ 1. **Postdoctoral Employees (21):** Complete Section 2 of the I-9/E-Verify in-person with your department's HR personnel. This must be done in the first three days of the start date.
- ☐ 2. Request your BlazerID.
  - a. You can complete the form [here](#).
  - b. This cannot be done until the I-9 is complete for employees.
  - c. Ask your HR personnel if you will need keys or any other types of access.
- ☐ 3. Pick up your OneCard and keys.
  - a. The OneCard is the identification card that allows you to enter buildings.
  - b. Locations for One Card offices can be found [here](#).
  - c. This cannot be done until a BlazerID has been initiated.
- ☐ 4. Meet with your faculty mentor to discuss expectations.
- ☐ 5. Meet with OPE to learn about the resources available to postdocs at UAB.

*To Complete during your First Month*

- ☐ 1. Attend UAB's New Hire Orientation "Discover UAB."
  - a. This is a **required meeting** for all new postdoctoral scholars.
  - b. This is usually offered twice a month on a Monday. Your department's HR personnel will contact central HR to register you. Afterwards, you will receive an email with the time and date of the orientation.
  - c. This is a vitally important session to attend as UAB's policies and benefits are discussed, and you can ask questions.
- ☐ 2. **Sign up for benefits including health insurance via the [UAB for Me Portal](#).**
  - a. **You must do this within 30 days of your start date!**
  - b. For more information on benefits available to you, see Chapter 2, Section 2.
- ☐ 3. Develop your IDP with your faculty mentor and forward a copy to OPE.
  - a. The IDP will state expectations for your research project as well as describe your career goals and objectives.
  - b. See also Chapter 1, Section 3 for more detailed information and the Appendix, Section J for a template.
- ☐ 4. Download [Microsoft Teams](#) on your computer or phone.
  - a. This is one of the main ways OPE shares information in real time with scholars about upcoming events and job opportunities. Postdoctoral scholars can also communicate directly with each other by posting on the channel as well.

*To Complete during your First Semester*

- ☐ 1. Attend OPE's **required** Postdoctoral Orientation.
  - a. This is held frequently throughout the year. OPE will communicate with you the



- date at the welcome meeting and via email and Teams.
- b. The session covers postdoctoral training requirements, resources, and events. It is also a great time to ask questions and meet fellow postdocs!
- ☐ 2. Attend OPE's **required** Individual Development Plan Workshop.
  - a. This is held frequently throughout the year. OPE will communicate with you the date at the welcome meeting and via email and Teams.
- ☐ 3. Register for GRD 717: Integrity of Scientific Principles.
  - a. This fulfills UAB's Office of Research mandate as well as the NIH and NSF requirement for Responsible Conduct of Research.
  - b. **You must complete this course in the first year of your training.** The scheduling of this course will be discussed during your welcome meeting.
- ☐ 4. Meet with your faculty mentor within four months of your start date to assess current progress and reevaluate training and responsibilities if needed.
- ☐ 5. Ask questions, learn a lot, and, yes, have fun!

### OFFBOARDING CHECKLIST

Once notification of nonrenewal or termination has been received or voluntary resignation has been given in writing:



- ☐ 1. Discuss with your faculty mentor any transition documents/actions that need to be made.
  - a. Verify with them that they have the most updated datasets and manuscripts with which you were involved. All datasets and manuscripts stay with the mentor at UAB.
  - b. Determine how authorship will be assigned on work not yet ready for submission. If needed, discuss what further work is needed on your part to be included as author in future submissions.
  - c. Confirm with your mentor what files you can take with you.
- ☐ 2. Start saving any uab.edu/uabmc.edu emails or files from your UAB ShareFile/Box that you may need. You will lose access to your uab.edu account 90 days after termination (e.g. your last work date). You will lose access to your uabmc.edu account the day immediately following your termination date.
- ☐ 3. Schedule an exit interview with OPE. **This is a required exit meeting.**
- ☐ 4. Forward your uab.edu inbox to a personal email inbox or inform your network of a change in email address. Instructions on the former can be found [here](#).
- ☐ 5. Turn in your OneCard and keys to the department's administrator.

*Thank you for sharing your talent with UAB! We wish you the very best!*

**Chapter 1:**  
**Professionalism as a Postdoctoral Scholar**

## Section I

### PROFESSIONALISM

A postdoctoral scholar position is a full-time training position geared towards equipping the scholar with the professional and career development skills they need to succeed in their chosen career path. The scholar works closely with their faculty mentor to learn from their expertise in their chosen field as well as receive guidance and mentoring in the realm of research and teaching. The postdoctoral scholar aids the mentor in their own research projects while at the same time developing independent projects of inquiry, which the mentor supports. Thus, at its core, postdoctoral training is one of collaboration, and for a successful postdoctoral tenure, it is vital for the postdoc and mentor to understand their roles and conduct themselves with professionalism.

Here at UAB, we encourage both scholars and mentors to develop an open line of communication from the very beginning. The mentor should state the expectations the postdoc should follow while working with them, and the scholar should raise any accommodations they may need. Attendance, timeliness (e.g., when the workday begins and ends), the procedure for requesting paid-time off, appropriate dress code, and the possibility of remote work should all be addressed before the first workday and as needed. While mutual agreement between the scholar and mentor is encouraged, the mentor has final say on all work accommodations and expectations.<sup>4</sup>

Standards of professionalism, therefore, require the postdoctoral scholar to notify the mentor in an appropriate and timely manner of any changes to the normal daily routine of their training. This includes notifying the mentor when taking paid time off, which must be approved, and when resigning from their position.

Rather than waiting for invitations or instructions from the mentor, successful postdoctoral scholars ask for what they need, find their own new resources, meet new people, and solicit invitations to speak about their work. Developing a proactive mindset hastens the journey from trainee to professional. Furthermore, the more postdoctoral scholars support the program of their mentor, the greater their value as team members becomes. This can lead to a richer research experience, the respect of other members, and support in developing a future career. In addition to getting work completed, good practices for scholars include keeping up with the latest advances, communicating those advances to the mentor and their fellow team members, and interacting regularly with others in their departments and across campus. Expectations about the postdoctoral scholar's contributions to the immediate community should be discussed carefully with the mentor and, in some cases, their fellow team members as well.

In a training position at an academic institution, the scholar should conduct themselves with curiosity, thoughtfulness, and integrity. They should be personally accountable when mistakes are made but ask for help when needed as they are here to learn. They should treat all members of the university community with respect and fairness and value the diversity of opinion and life

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<sup>4</sup> If the postdoctoral scholar has a co-mentor alongside the primary mentor, the latter makes the final decision when it comes to establishing expectations for the scholar.

experiences that all community members bring. Scholars should learn a great deal from not only their mentor but also their peers and fellow team members. Thus, they need to embrace the opportunity to be leaders, especially towards undergraduate and graduate students. Lastly, they should be prepared for meetings and take initiative when appropriate as well as promote a healthy and safe working environment and treat all research subjects – animals and people – humanely, ethically, and responsibly.

For all the standards of conduct expected of postdoctoral scholars, see the [UAB Enterprise Code of Conduct](#).



## Section II

### GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF A POSTDOC

- a. Communicate frequently, openly, and honestly with the faculty mentor(s) regarding training needs, research, scholarship, and career advancements.
- b. Establish a mentoring team to provide guidance for research projects and career goals.
- c. Conduct research with integrity and to the highest ethical standards as laid out in UAB's [Policy Concerning the Responsible Conduct of Research and Other Scholarly Activities](#) as well as the [Authorship Policy](#).
- d. Abide by all [UAB Policies and Procedures](#) as they relate to postdoctoral scholars.
- e. Comply with all relevant federal, state, and municipal regulations and guidelines that relate to human subjects research, the care and use of animals, and the use of hazardous materials.
- f. Disclose to the mentor anything concerning the possession and desire to distribute materials, reagents and software as well as copyrightable and potentially patentable discoveries derived from the postdoctoral scholar's research.
- g. Treat all members of the research team and the university community with collegiality.
- h. Submit all requests in writing for paid time off to the mentor and receive approval before the leave date starts (or as soon as possible as it relates to sick leave).<sup>5</sup>
- i. Abide by the mentor's final decisions regarding work accommodations and expectations.

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<sup>5</sup> Portions of the list taken from University of South Florida's Office of Postdoctoral Affairs [website](#) and the University of Pittsburgh, Office of the Provost, Guidelines for Postdoctoral Associates and Postdoctoral Scholars, which can be found [here](#).



## Section III

### INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

An individual development plan (IDP) is a tool to explore, define, and plan the postdoctoral scholar's training experience in all aspects, including research, professional development, and career goals. At its foundation, the IDP establishes, in writing, the career aims of the scholar and the steps needed by both the postdoc and the faculty mentor for the scholar to reach those goals. The IDP, consequently, focuses on research training as it relates to the postdoc's professional growth and career readiness. It also emphasizes the professional experience needed so that they can succeed in the job market.

OPE mandates that within thirty days of the postdoc's start date, the scholar sends the mutually prepared and signed IDP to its office. Attendance at the required Individual Development Plan Workshop, during the scholar's first semester, will aid in refining that plan to meet the specific needs of the individual.

During the first month of your postdoctoral training, the scholar and their faculty mentor should meet to create a written document that:

- a. Establishes clear expectations for both the scholar and the faculty mentor.
  - i. Review the two sections above as well as the *Best Practices for the Mentor/Mentee Relationship* in the Appendix, Section I.
- b. Outlines the postdoc's research, professional development, and **career goals**.
- c. Sets short-term and long-term objectives with targeted dates that are realistic and measurable.
- d. Identifies concrete actions that the scholar will take to ensure achievement of the training goals.
  - i. Tip: Review the courses, workshops, and professional awards OPE offers when determining actions the scholar can take.
  - ii. If the postdoc is interested in developing a teaching portfolio for an academic career, make sure that opportunities for teaching are defined in the IDP.
  - iii. Consider what conferences and programming in the coming year would be beneficial to the postdoc's professional and technical growth. Show how these opportunities align with the scholar's career goals.
  - iv. Find opportunities for dissemination of research that would meet training goals.
- e. Discusses challenges that might prevent the postdoc from achieving goals and brainstorms ways to overcome them.
- f. Highlights the development of the postdoc's independent research project separate from the mentor (most applicable to those going into academic research).<sup>6</sup>

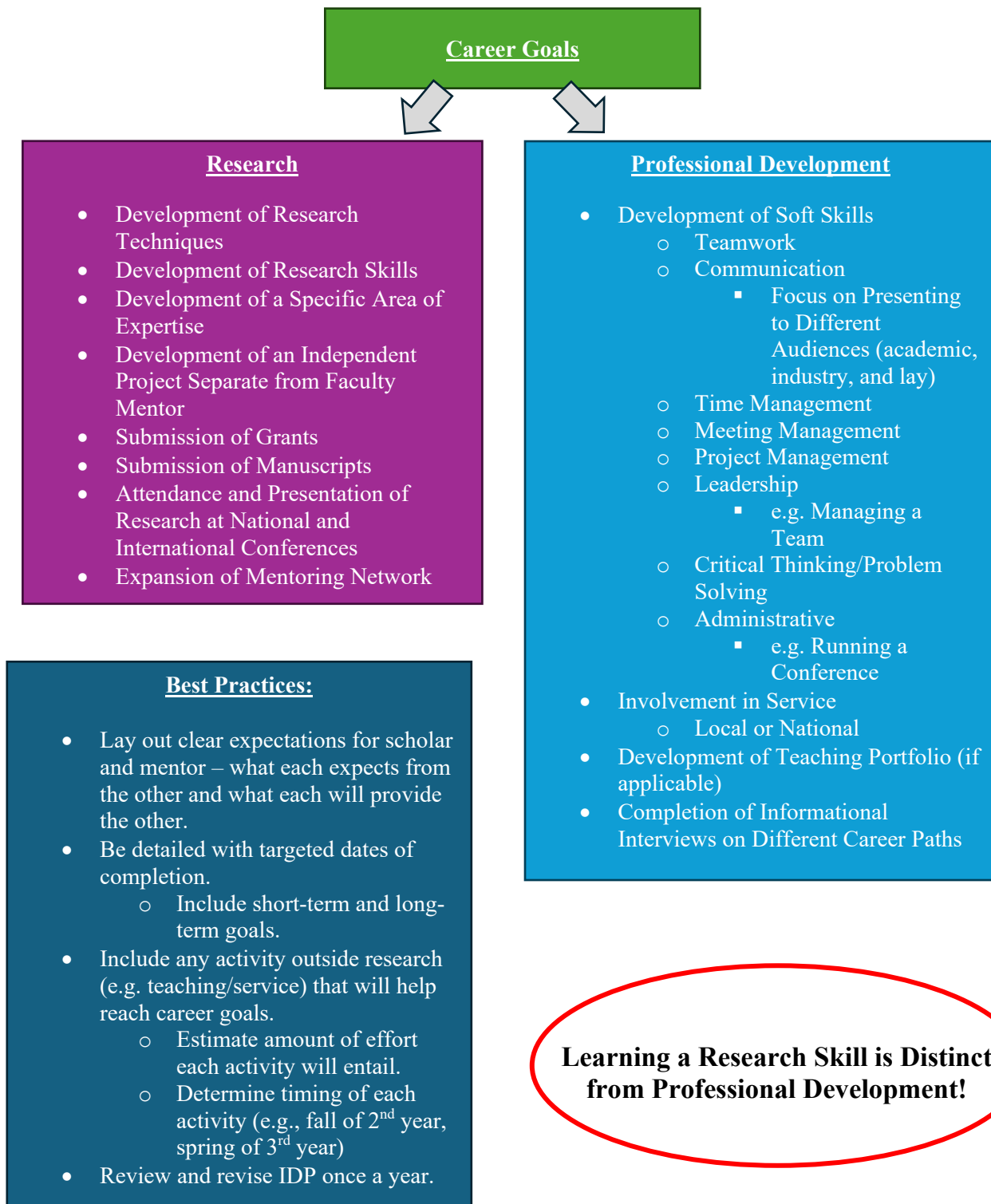
The scholar must discuss their IDP with their faculty mentor at least once a year. OPE strongly

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<sup>6</sup> The above list is drafted, in part, from Stanford's Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, Your Individual Development Plan [website](#).

recommends that the postdoc update their IDP after each meeting with new tasks for the forthcoming year. For the annual review, a status report should be used to identify if the training is on schedule or if new barriers have arisen.

### ***Construction of an IDP***



## Templates

OPE strongly recommends using the UAB template in the Appendix, Section J as it gives space for the postdoc to plug in UAB offerings. Online templates to supplement the provided one can also be found here:

- Science Careers (STEM focused): <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>
- Imagine PhD (Humanities & Social Science focused): <https://www.imaginephd.com/>
  - IDP assistance can be found under “My Plan.”
- American Chemical Society: <https://chemidp.acs.org/>
- PHass-IDP: <https://www.careersinpublichealth.org/>
  - Geared towards postdocs in public health and the social sciences.



## Section IV

### POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATIONS

As a postdoc at UAB, the scholar has several opportunities to grow their peer network and develop leadership skills through three postdoctoral associations. OPE encourages postdocs to take advantage of these organizations as they are avenues in which to engage in collaboration, career readiness, and community. All of these domains are crucial in the development of professionalism.

#### *National Postdoctoral Association*

**UAB is an institutional member of the NPA.** As a result, you can join the NPA for free. To join, select on the [membership page](#) that you are an “affiliate individual member, postdoc” with UAB and use your uab.edu email.

The [NPA](#) is a national organization that aims to improve the postdoctoral experience by supporting a culture of inclusive connection. It facilitates enhanced professional growth, raises awareness of issues affecting postdocs, and collaborates with stakeholders in the postdoctoral community. The NPA offers virtual and in-person sessions as well as an annual national conference that focus on topics such as research and training advancement, personal and professional development, and career readiness. It also maintains a [career center](#) website that lists postdoctoral, industry, and academic positions.

#### *UAB Postdoctoral Association*

The [UAB PDA](#) is a volunteer organization that provides a voice for the interest of postdoctoral scholars. It works to encourage meaningful and constructive dialogue with the Office of Postdoctoral Education, the Council on Postdoctoral Education, and the university to advocate for improvements in policies affecting postdocs. It also organizes and carries out social and

educational events for postdocs such as the spring Postdoc Research Day. Lastly, PDA offers opportunities for developing leadership skills through service on the Executive Board. Elections are held in the summer, and positions are available to all scholars regardless of time at UAB.

All postdocs at UAB are automatically members of the UAB PDA. You can reach out to the [Executive Board](#) via Teams or chat with them at their many events.

#### *UAB Black Postdoctoral Association*

The [BPDA](#) is a voluntary organization run by postdoctoral scholars at UAB that advocates for the professional and social wellbeing of postdocs. Open to all postdoctoral scholars at UAB, the BPDA is focused on recognizing the contributions and needs of historically marginalized communities in academic research and medicine and, thus, has been at the forefront of advocating for postdoctoral education by cultivating spaces of community and collaboration. The BPDA's two main goals emphasize a scholar's growth personally and professionally as well as sense of belonging. Just like for the PDA, there are opportunities for leadership within the BPDA.

For more information, email [blackpostdocs@uab.edu](mailto:blackpostdocs@uab.edu).





**Chapter 2:**  
**Being a Postdoctoral Scholar at UAB: The Basics**

## Section I

### APPOINTMENT TYPES AND PROCESSES

“Postdoctoral scholar” is used at UAB to identify those individuals who have received their terminal degree (such as Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., D.V.M., or O.D.), and who are pursuing further mentored training. A postdoctoral position is a time-limited appointment of one to four years. Postdoctoral scholars may be funded by training grants, research grants, or institutional resources.

There are two types of postdoctoral scholars at UAB:

- a. **Postdoctoral Scholar Trainee - Status Code 20:** A postdoctoral trainee is an individual on a fellowship whose training is funded by an external training grant mechanism. Examples: T32 training, F32 fellowship, or American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- b. **Postdoctoral Scholar Employee - Status Code 21:** A postdoctoral employee is an individual who, while pursuing further research training, receives a salary for services provided to by UAB. This position is typically funded by external faculty research grants or institutional funds.

It is important for the scholar to know whether they are a trainee (status 20) or employee (status 21) as taxes and benefits are directly related to the appointment type. See Chapter 2, Section 2 for information on benefits and Section H in the Appendix for information on taxes.

#### *Appointment Letter*

The initial appointment letter tells the postdoctoral scholar their appointment type, start and end dates, and salary or stipend amount. It also includes their main research duties. The letter must be signed by the faculty mentor and the postdoctoral scholar to be valid. With each year of desired additional training, the scholar will receive a reappointment letter, and all postdoctoral appointment and reappointment letters are coordinated through OPE. Please note that a postdoc’s appointment type may change from letter to letter due to their funding source.

Please also note that by signing the appointment letter, the scholar agrees to abide by all UAB policies and standards of conduct. They can be found in this postdoctoral scholar handbook and at the [UAB Policies and Procedures Library website](#). These include UAB’s [Enterprise Code of Conduct](#), UAB’s [Drug-Free Campus and Workplace Policy](#), UAB’s [Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy](#), and UAB’s [Responsible Conduct of Research and Other Scholarly Activities](#). Please keep in mind that the postdoc may be subject to other UAB handbooks depending on the nature of their status at UAB (e.g., if they are enrolled in classes, postdocs also fall under student handbooks).

## *Appointment Lengths*

A postdoctoral position is a short-term, training position. Appointments are established for an initial period of one year with the possibility of being reappointed one year at a time for an additional three years. This time-limited appointment protects the scholar from an indefinite length of stay in a training position and provides annual review of the scholar's progress towards their professional and career goals. Furthermore, a postdoctoral scholar who has been at UAB for one year or more and then moves to a different faculty mentor's lab at UAB does not have their tenure at UAB reset to year one. Importantly, if there are breaks in the scholar's progress, please inform OPE so that their records are accurate. Extraordinary delays should also be conveyed to OPE.

### *Fifth-Year Postdoc*

Postdoctoral scholars should prepare for completion of their postdoctoral tenure at the end of their fourth year. The initial IDP and subsequent reviews should reflect this timeline. Under special circumstances, postdoctoral scholars may be eligible for a fifth year of training. If a fifth-year extension is necessary, a **Fifth-Year Extension form** should be submitted to OPE for review by the Associate Dean for Research and Training before the end of the postdoctoral scholar's fourth year.<sup>7</sup> Justification for a fifth-year must show compelling reasons for extension and a clear and detailed career transition plan with timed (e.g., quarterly) benchmarks and targeted dates of completion for stated objectives. The plan must also include how the scholar will transition to their next position. The document needs to be specific in its direction and steps. This request must be signed by both the faculty mentor(s) and the postdoc. In all cases, appointment as a postdoctoral scholar at UAB is limited to a period not to exceed five years. *A fifth-year appointment letter will not be issued without a signed Extension Form.*

### *Probationary Period*

In the first year of the postdoctoral scholar's tenure at UAB, the probationary period covers the first three months after an IDP has been developed and submitted to OPE (months 2-4 of their initial training year). At the end of this period, the scholar and mentor must meet to review the IDP and make any adjustments. If the mentor determines that the postdoc requires remediation and/or additional training in order to successfully perform their research project, they will undergo a documented secondary three-month probationary period (months 5-7 of their initial training year). Deficiencies and remediation plans must be conveyed to the postdoc in writing along with specific tasks and objectives that describe satisfactory performance. If research performance has not improved



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<sup>7</sup> The request form can be found [here](#).

and/or if there is a lack of research progress as defined in the IDP following the secondary probationary period or at any other time thereafter but prior to the appointment end date, the appointment, with approval from the Associate Dean for Research and Training, may be terminated with one month's notice.

### *Reappointment Letters*

Postdoctoral scholars are appointed for one-year periods and, thus, must be reappointed every year on the anniversary of their start date if they continue in training.<sup>8</sup> The scholar's department HR personnel or faculty mentor will notify OPE that a reappointment letter must be generated through OPE at least **three months prior to the yearly end date**. The reappointment letter will be signed by the faculty mentor and the postdoctoral scholar. OPE, on behalf of the Associate Dean, will confirm receipt.

### *Change in Appointment Type*

Whenever a postdoctoral scholar's source of funding change requires a change in their appointment type (e.g. from status 21 to 20 or from status 20 to 21), a new appointment letter must be generated by OPE showing the new appointment type. Postdoctoral scholars are advised to review their benefits and tax situation as soon as possible upon changing status as the change may require reenrollment of health insurance and alterations in how they pay taxes.

### *Part-Time Positions (policy under review)*

A postdoctoral scholar may request their position be changed to part-time or enter a position as part-time because of a variety of reasons including the birth or adoption of a child, care for an ill or injured family member, or their own physical impairments. A position cannot be part-time due to lack of funds to meet the NIH minimum salary/stipend standards.

Before a part-time position is requested, please consult the funder of the scholar's salary or stipend as some funders may not allow part-time positions. If the funder allows for a part-time position, the Part-Time Request form must be submitted. The form will ask the reason for the request, number of hours to be worked, projected length of time in this position, and salary. This form must be received by OPE before the appointment letter will be issued.

### *Nonrenewal*

Postdoctoral scholars, in all years of their postdoctoral tenure, must be notified by their faculty mentors in writing **at least ninety days in advance** that their appointment will not be renewed for the next year. OPE strongly encourages that mentors use the Notification of

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<sup>8</sup> A scholar can be appointed for less than a year after their first year only in extenuating circumstances, which the mentor must provide when requesting a renewal of less than a year. The Associate Dean for Research and Training will then either approve or deny the request.



Nonrenewal form to document notification of nonrenewal. Additionally, faculty mentors must detail what the expectations and responsibilities are for the postdoc during their remaining time in that position.

#### *Early Termination due to Poor Performance/Violation of HR Policy*

A postdoctoral scholar can receive notification from their faculty mentor of an early termination due to poor performance issues or violation of UAB HR policies.<sup>9</sup> This termination requires the scholar to be notified at least thirty days in writing prior to the new termination date. OPE recommends faculty mentors to use the Early Termination due to Poor Performance form to document notification to the postdoc. First-year postdocs cannot receive an early termination notice before the beginning of their eighth month due to their probationary period.

#### *Early Termination due to Loss of Funding*

In the second and subsequent years of appointment, if a faculty mentor experiences sudden loss of funding, a minimum of three months' notice in writing must be given to the postdoctoral scholar by the mentor. The faculty mentor must complete and submit the Request to Terminate Due to Loss of Funding form, which then must be approved by the Associate Dean for Research and Training to be valid.

#### *Voluntary Resignation (by postdoctoral scholar)*

Best practices recommend that if the postdoctoral scholar is leaving voluntarily before the end of their appointment, they should tell their faculty mentor in writing at least thirty days before their last day. A Notification to Resign form can be found online.

## Section II

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

#### *Salary*

UAB strongly encourages postdoctoral scholars to be funded to the levels recommended by the National Institutes of Health's National Research Service Award (NRSA) stipend guidelines.

If it is impossible to fund according to the NRSA guidelines, the minimum starting salary at UAB is \$56,400 plus benefits. The Heersink School of Medicine (HSOM) requires that all HSOM scholars be paid according to the 2023 [NIH NRSA stipend pay scale](#) with compensation appropriate to their years as a postdoc.

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<sup>9</sup> OPE follows the UAB Termination of Employment for immediate dismissal. To find examples of actions that fall under immediate dismissal, please see [here](#).

## Benefits

All postdoctoral scholars – both trainees and employees – receive benefits. The extent of benefits depends on the scholar's appointment type. Please see the chart below. More information from UAB Human Resources on benefits for postdoctoral trainees can be found [here](#) and for postdoctoral employees [here](#).

**It is vital that the scholar sign up for benefits as soon as possible via the [UAB for Me Portal](#) (sign in with your BlazerID). The postdoc must choose their benefits within thirty days of their start date, or they forfeit the ability to enroll in benefits until the next calendar year.**

Postdoctoral Scholar Trainee (Status 20)		
Benefits	Trainee	Trainee Family
VIVA Health Insurance	can purchase employer plan <sup>10</sup>	can purchase employer plan
BCBS Dental Insurance	can purchase employer plan	can purchase employer plan
VSP Vision Insurance	can purchase employer plan	can purchase employer plan
Group Term Life Insurance	provided at no cost	not eligible
Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance	provided at no cost	not eligible
Long-term Disability Insurance	provided at no cost	not eligible
Retirement	not eligible	not eligible

Postdoctoral Scholar Employee (Status 21)		
Benefits	Employee	Employee Family
VIVA Health Insurance	can purchase employer plan <sup>11</sup>	can purchase employer plan
BCBS Dental Insurance	can purchase employer plan	can purchase employer plan
VSP Vision Insurance	can purchase employer plan	can purchase employer plan
Group Term Life Insurance	provided at no cost and can purchase more	not eligible
Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance	provided at no cost and can purchase more	not eligible
Long-term Disability Insurance	provided at no cost	not eligible
Retirement	voluntary 403(b) plan where UAB matches monthly contribution up to 5% or voluntary 457(B) plan with no UAB match	not eligible

<sup>10</sup> Trainees receive an additional IRS-reportable award upfront that covers the cost of health insurance for themselves and family. They will then use that award to pay for their insurance.

<sup>11</sup> Employees will have health insurance payments deducted from their paycheck.

### Section III

#### PAID TIME OFF

##### *Vacation Time*

All postdoctoral scholars are eligible for 10 paid UAB business days off per year starting six months from their appointment start date. Vacation days do not accrue and cannot be carried over from year to year. All requests for vacation leave should be **made in writing** and must be **approved by the faculty mentor**. Postdoctoral scholars and their mentors are responsible for maintaining appropriate records.

Please note that the faculty mentor may not approve the specific time requested. It is recommended that scholars give ample notification of dates requested off so accommodations, if needed, can be made.

##### *Sick Leave*

Postdoctoral scholars are provided sick leave at the rate of 10 paid UAB business days per year. Sick leave should not be used as vacation. Sick days do not accrue and cannot be carried over from year to year. Postdocs should notify their mentor as soon as reasonably possible of the need to take sick leave. Postdoctoral scholars and their mentors are responsible for maintaining appropriate records concerning the number of days sick leave is taken.



##### *Parental Leave*

Postdoctoral scholars are eligible for 22 paid UAB business days (a little over four weeks) following or just prior to birth or adoption of a child. If both spouses are employed as postdoctoral scholars, each one is eligible for parental leave. Postdoctoral scholars and their mentors are responsible for maintaining appropriate records concerning parental leave.

### Section IV

#### TUITION ASSISTANCE

All postdoctoral scholars – trainees and employees – receive tuition assistance to complete coursework here at UAB. The type of tuition assistance they receive is aligned with the postdoctoral scholar's appointment type.

### *Postdoctoral Trainees*

Postdoctoral trainees receive, in addition to any tuition benefits as provided through their training or fellowship grants, six free credit hours of tuition each academic year (August-July) through OPE. If a trainee wishes to drop a course after the last day to Drop/Add, they will forfeit the tuition benefit provided by OPE for the next twelve months.

This benefit may only be accessed when all other tuition benefits through the scholar's training grant have been used.

### *Postdoctoral Employees*

Postdoctoral employees, after working as a postdoc for six months, receive, through the university, educational assistance for themselves and their families. For the postdoctoral employee, this includes 100% in-state tuition assistance for undergraduate, graduate, and professional program courses at UAB. For their children and spouses, they receive 50% in-state tuition assistance for undergraduate credit courses at UAB. Note that the scholar will have to pay taxes on any tuition assistance for graduate courses over \$5,250 given during one calendar year (January-December). These taxes will be deducted from your payroll.

For more information on educational assistance through the university, see [UAB's Educational Assistance Policy](#) and Financial Affairs' [website](#).

### *All Postdoctoral Scholars*

Please note that postdoctoral scholars may be responsible for paying certain fees associated with particular programs and schools. For example, the AI in Medicine certificate, through the School of Medicine, has a "Medicine Graduate Support Fee" that may not be covered depending on your appointment type. Audited classes are not eligible for any type of tuition assistance or benefits.

For more information on how to use tuition assistance, please see *Chapter 3: Enhancing the Postdoctoral Scholar Experience*.





**Chapter 3:**  
**Enhancing the Postdoctoral Scholar Experience**

## Section I

### USING YOUR TUITION ASSISTANCE

All postdoctoral scholars receive tuition assistance to take credit-bearing courses here at UAB. The amount of tuition assistance one receives depends on their appointment type. Please see “Tuition Assistance” in Chapter 2, Section 4 to review tuition benefits offered according to appointment type.

To use tuition assistance, the postdoctoral scholar must apply as a student within the Graduate School, and once accepted, register for classes. Instructions on how to apply and register can be found in Section A of the Appendix.

While there is no university-wide restriction on what courses a scholar may take, the scholar must discuss with their faculty mentor their course load and receive approval before registering. If the course(s) is intended to enhance postdoctoral training, the postdoc must write in their IDP how the course(s) relates to their career goals, how much time they will spend on taking the class(es), and how they will ensure the course(s) will not impede research effort. The IDP (original or revised) should be signed by both the scholar and the mentor. If the course(s) is not intended to enhance training, the postdoctoral scholar needs to ensure the class(es) does not impeded progress towards completion of their training goals.

#### *Responsible Conduct of Research*

All postdoctoral scholars must take UAB’s Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course, *GRD 717: Principles of Scientific Integrity* during their first year of training, regardless of if they took it as a doctoral student. This class fulfills UAB’s [Office of Research requirement](#) on research ethics as well as the mandates for RCR by the [National Institutes of Health](#) and [National Science Foundation](#).

*GRD 717: Principles of Scientific Integrity* covers the nature, extent, and causes of fraud in science; UAB policies on fraud; ideals of good sound ethical research; the responsibilities of authorship and peer review; potential problems raised by the commercialization of research; and ethical issues involved in animal experimentation and clinical trials. It is taught every semester and incorporates online training and in-person discussion. The course is taught by OPE’s Associate Dean for Research and Training.

#### *Important GPA Note*

- To remain eligible for tuition, the scholar must have at least a 3.0 graduate grade point average on any prior graduate course work taken at UAB and must maintain an overall UAB graduate grade point average of 3.0 or better.

#### *Professional Development Courses and Certificates*

Many of our postdoctoral scholars take classes offered by the Office of Interdisciplinary

Graduate and Professional Studies (IGPS). To view the classes and certificates they offer, please visit their website [here](#) or email [igps@uab.edu](mailto:igps@uab.edu). These offerings are also discussed in the IDP Workshop.

- a. Courses and certificates range in focus from leadership to lab management, mentoring, teaching in higher education, and research communication.
- b. Certificates can be earned in as little as 15 credit hours (usually 5 classes).

### *Master's in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies*

Postdoctoral scholars can earn a personalized Master's in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies by completing two certificates approved by IGPS and fulfilling a capstone project. For more information on this degree, please visit their [website](#) or email [igps@uab.edu](mailto:igps@uab.edu).

## Section II

### **PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING**

Throughout the year, OPE hosts several programs and events aimed towards educational, professional, and career development. They include

#### *A. Professional Development*

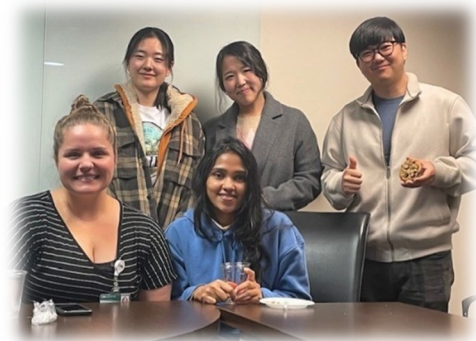
1. Individual Development Workshop
  - o This workshop, designed for postdoctoral scholars in their first semester of their training tenure, introduces postdocs to resources available on campus that are specifically geared towards professional and career development. Postdocs are then guided on how they could use these resources within their own plan to achieve their particular career goals.
2. Postdoctoral Grant-Writing Workshop Series
  - o This workshop series focuses on developing a postdoctoral grant such as an NIH F32 grant. Designed for first- and second-year scholars (though others are welcomed), it consists of periodic meetings for six-seven months that will guide postdocs through the steps of writing and submitting a grant application. Scholars will be responsible for writing aspects of the grant outside of the workshop as well as taking part in the peer-review of their fellow cohort members' applications.
3. Career Transition Workshop Series
  - o This workshop series, geared towards third-year scholars and beyond, consists of once-a-month meetings for six months and will guide the postdoc through the process of researching different career options, conducting informational meetings, preparing and applying for positions, participating in informational interviews as well as tips on negotiating, job talks, and etiquette. Scholars will learn how to navigate the everchanging job market, draft application documents, and handle rejection letters.
4. Diving into Your Career

- This summer series introduces postdoctoral scholars to various career paths that former postdocs have taken. Previous presenters have included a science writer, a policy consultant, and an entrepreneur who founded their own business.
- 5. One-on-One Career Counselling
  - The postdoc can meet individually with OPE staff and/or the Associate Dean for Research and Training to discuss their specific needs and challenges in relation to their personal career search or career development. Staff can support basic career advising, which includes preparing a resume and discussing job search strategies. The Associate Dean provides more detailed and personalized counselling regarding specific career development needs and desires as well as any challenging situations. To schedule these appointments, just email OPE.
- 6. Career and Professional Development Seminars
  - These seminars, scheduled periodically throughout the year, focus on a range of topics including the development of soft skills and CVs/resumes as well as intellectual property protection and data management.

Additional professional and career development resources are available on campus. Please schedule a one-on-one counselling session for more information.

#### *B. Social Networking and Engagement*

1. Coffee with the OPE
  - Occurring periodically throughout the year, this event brings together postdocs and OPE through social networking centered on coffee, treats, and games. This is a great opportunity to meet other postdocs, meet the Associate Dean, and bring up any concerns about training or UAB with OPE.
2. Postdoc Appreciation Week (September)
  - Held every third week of September, Postdoc Appreciation Week celebrates the expertise and dedication scholars bring to the UAB community. An event takes place each day, and the celebration culminates with Friday's Postdoc Appreciation Lunch where awards are handed out to postdocs for their contributions not only to research but also the postdoctoral community.
3. Postdoc Research Day (May)
  - This one-day symposium, organized by the PDA and sponsored by OPE, highlights the innovative research currently being pursued by postdocs. Scholars can either present their work in an oral presentation or via a three-minute data blitz. We even have cash prizes for the winners!
4. Community Service Opportunities
  - Throughout the year, scholars can engage with the Birmingham community through service and collaboration. These events, many of them hosted by the PDA and BPDA, are avenues for postdocs to connect with their peers outside of research.



### Section III

#### AWARDS

##### *Career Enhancement Award*

To enhance postdoctoral professional development, Career Enhancement Awards of up to **\$1,500.00** may be given to scholars who wish to learn new skills at extramural courses (e.g. NIH, Cold Spring Harbor, Woods Hole, etc.).

Due Date for Application: Currently accepted on a rolling basis.

##### Eligibility:

- a. Previous CEA recipients are welcome to apply but should state in the application the date(s) of previous awards as well as the report of the activity(ies) completed with the award(s) and why this second training event is necessary.
- b. Applicants must be postdoctoral scholars in good standing at UAB.
- c. The activity must be included in the scholar's IDP with rationale as to how it furthers the scholar's career development.

##### Requirements:

- a. Current curriculum vitae.
- b. Short description (no longer than 2 pages) of the educational activity.
- c. Current IDP.
- d. Letter from the postdoctoral scholar's faculty mentor endorsing the activity.
- e. Letter of invitation from the collaborative research partner or sponsoring institution/event (if possible).
- f. Budget of anticipated expenses.

The application must be submitted online via the application [portal](#) and will be reviewed and ranked according to the following criteria:

- a. Potential impact of the education activity to the career development of the applicant.
- b. Research productivity of the applicant during their postdoctoral training as judged by publications and presentations in national and international meetings.

The award will be given as reimbursement for expenses incurred towards the travel and participation in the extramural course. Thus, the scholar will need to submit, after the event, their receipts to their department's financial officer. OPE will then work with the department to reimburse the postdoc. OPE follows [UAB policy](#) as to what expenses are reimbursable.

##### *Individual Fellowship Incentive Program*

To ensure their future success, postdoctoral scholars must begin an independent track record of extramural funding early in their careers. Consequently, OPE has established the Individual Fellowship Incentive Program to reward scholars who have pursued grant or fellowship funding that covers **more than half of their annual stipend** during their postdoc training year(s) here at UAB.



Two awards are available under this program. The postdoctoral scholar can receive each award only once during their tenure.



- a. *Incentive Award* - \$500 is given to a postdoctoral scholar who submits an application for an individual fellowship. This award is given for first submissions only.
- b. *Funded Grant Award* - \$1,500 is awarded to a postdoctoral scholar who has successfully received an extramural fellowship or grant for one year. If the fellowship or grant is awarded for a second year, the scholar can receive an additional \$1,500.

Due Date for Applications: Currently accepted on a rolling basis.

#### Eligibility:

- a. This program is available to postdoctoral scholars in any discipline in which extramural individual fellowship funding is available.
- b. *The extramural funding must provide more than half of the applicant's current base stipend.*
- c. Postdoctoral scholars need to be classified as appointment status 20 by their grant award date to be eligible for the Funded Grant Award.

#### Requirements:

- a. *Incentive Award:*
  - i. Written verification from mentor that the grant is competitive.
  - ii. PDF of application.
  - iii. Documentation that the fellowship provides greater than half of the scholar's stipend.
  - iv. Verification of receipt by funding agency.
- b. *Funded Grant Award:*
  - i. Email [postdocs@uab.edu](mailto:postdocs@uab.edu) with copy of award notice.
  - ii. If the scholar's grant is for two years, the postdoc will need to email OPE again with notification from the funder that the second-year funds have been awarded.

The application of the Incentive Award must be submitted online via the application [portal](#).

#### *Internship Award*

To enhance career opportunities available to postdoctoral scholars by encouraging them to expand their professional network and gain new skills, this award provides a scholar with funds to cover their absence as they complete an internship in an industrial, administrative, or academic setting within UAB or the Birmingham area. Specifically, these funds of up to **\$5,000** will be used to purchase a percentage of a postdoctoral scholar's effort from their mentor for the purpose of completing an internship. The scholar does not actually receive

the monetary award.

Due Date for Application: Currently accepted on a rolling basis.

Eligibility:

- a. Internships for lengths up to six weeks may be performed in an industrial, administrative, or academic setting. The length of the internship may be extended pending faculty mentor's approval and availability of supplementary funds from the internship host.
- b. Internships must be completed within one year of notice of award.
- c. All postdoctoral scholars in their second or subsequent years of postdoctoral training are eligible.
- d. The internship must be included in the scholar's IDP with rationale as to how it furthers the scholar's career development.

Requirements:

- a. Current curriculum vitae.
- b. Short description (no longer than 2 pages) of the internship as well as the potential benefits to postdoctoral career.
- c. Current IDP.
- d. Letter from the postdoctoral scholar's faculty mentor endorsing the activity.
- e. Letter of invitation from the collaborative research faculty or professional organization.
- f. Description of the internship training plan, the evaluation process, and how it is relevant to the scholar's IDP.

The application must be submitted online via the application [portal](#). All applications will be reviewed by OPE and ranked according to the following criteria:

- a. Potential impact of the education activity to the career development of the applicant.
- b. Research productivity of the applicant during their postdoctoral training as judged by publication and presentations in national and international meetings.

Post-Award Requirements:

- a. Awardees will be required to present a summary of their internship experiences during the OPE career workshop series and provide a summary for inclusion in the OPE newsletter.
- b. Participating faculty mentors and internship hosts will be required to submit evaluations of the postdoctoral interns to OPE at the end of the internship and provide feedback regarding the benefit of the postdoctoral internship experience to their respective places of research.
- c. Failure to abide by these post-award requirements may preclude the scholar from receiving additional awards from OPE.

*Travel Award*

To encourage sharing research beyond UAB, **up to \$500.00** can be awarded to postdoctoral scholars in order to offset costs of travelling to national or international conferences for the purpose of giving an **oral presentation**.

Due Date for Application: Currently accepted on a rolling basis.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be postdoctoral scholars in good standing at UAB.

Requirements:

- a. Current curriculum vitae.
- b. Short description (no longer than 2 pages) of the meeting/conference as well as the potential benefits to scholar's career plan.
- c. Letter from the Postdoctoral Scholar's faculty mentor endorsing the travel.
- d. Letter of invitation from the meeting/conference organizers to give an oral presentation on research-related work.
- e. Budget of anticipated expenses.

The application must be submitted online via the application [portal](#). All applications will be reviewed by OPE and ranked according to the following criteria:

- a. Potential impact of attendance at the scientific meeting or conference to the career development of the applicant.
- b. Research productivity of the applicant during their postdoctoral training as judged by publications and presentations in national and international meetings.

The award will be given as reimbursement for expenses incurred towards the travel and participation in the conference. Thus, the scholar will need to submit, after the meeting, their receipts to their department's financial officer. OPE will then work with the department to reimburse the postdoc. OPE follows [UAB policy](#) as to what expenses are reimbursable.

## Section IV

### RESEARCH SERVICES

#### *Office of Scholarly Communication*

The mission of the [Office of Scholarly Communication](#) (OSC) is to support the UAB community in navigating and understanding scholarly communication principles including copyright and fair use, author agreements, research data management, scholarly impact, and public access to scholarly works.



The OSC's services include:

- a. On-demand consultations and workshops on scholarly communication topics.
- b. Assistance selecting journals and identifying open access funding sources.
- c. Research data management support such as data interviews, data management plan

- review, and data repository selection.
- d. Showcase and provide ongoing access to UAB's research, scholarship, publications, presentations, and creative works.

They often hold events throughout the year on topics such as open access journals, data management, and building your scholarly narrative. OSC also has agreements with some open access journals that will waive authorship fees. Reach out to the office to see if your journal qualifies.

To contact the OSC, email Dr. Marla Hertz at [mihertz@uab.edu](mailto:mihertz@uab.edu) or call 205.934.0694.

### *Office of Sponsored Programs*

The Office of Sponsored Programs performs preliminary review and approval of grant and fellowship proposal submissions. It is the UAB office that submits proposals through grants.gov and most awarding agency portals, and it serves as the representative of UAB with official signing authority. Hence, it negotiates and executes contracts and agreements and then processes awards for distribution and account setup. All funding requests, including all grant proposal submissions, must be submitted through and approved by OSP.

For more information, visit their [website](#) or email them at [osp@uab.edu](mailto:osp@uab.edu). It is also through this office that you can contact the Office of the IRB, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Export Control, Research Safety and Security, Research Development Office, and Material Transfer Office. Just click on their contact button at the bottom of their home page.

Lastly, OSP also hosts a [website](#) devoted to helping the UAB community find funding opportunities.

## Section V

### TEACHING

With approval of their faculty mentor, postdocs may partake in teaching responsibilities. In the scholar's IDP, the postdoc needs to state how teaching forms a cohesive part of their career advancement plan. Teaching-specific objectives and tasks may be appropriate to include here. The IDP must also stipulate the amount of time the postdoctoral scholar will reserve for these duties as well as the expectations they are required to meet.

Departmental administrators do not need to process the postdoc's teaching position as a secondary assignment; it will need to be processed as a non-recurring element.

## Section VI

### **MOONLIGHTING**

Postdoctoral scholars are allowed to moonlight in clinical spaces as long as they have the approval of their faculty mentor. Departmental administrators do not need to process their moonlighting as a secondary assignment; it will need to be processed as a non-recurring element. There are currently no guidelines from OPE on the limit of moonlighting hours for postdocs.



## APPENDIX



## Section A

### REGISTERING FOR CLASSES

#### *Applying to the Graduate School*

1. Register as a non-degree seeking student within the Graduate School.
  - a. Apply to the Graduate School by clicking [here](#) and logging in with your BlazerID.
  - b. Click on Start “A New Application.”
  - c. Fill out the boxes as stated below. **This is very important as you will be directed to pay the application fee if you do not replicate the below.**
    - i. For which of the following are you applying? Choose “Non-Degree Seeking Student.”
    - ii. What is your intended program of study? Choose “Postdoctoral Fellow.”
    - iii. Format: Choose “On-Ground.”
    - iv. Concentration: Choose “No Concentration.”
    - v. Term: Choose the semester you wish to start.
  - d. Continue filling out all required components of the application such as biographical information, education history including providing transcripts in English, non-degree policy form, etc.
  - e. If it asks you to pay the application fee, you have done something wrong. Start a new application.
2. Once you have been accepted into the Graduate School, you can register for classes via BlazerNet.

* For which of the following are you applying?
Non-Degree Seeking Student
* What is your intended program of study?
Postdoctoral Fellow
* Format
On-Ground
What is your concentration?
No Concentration
* Term
Spring 2025

#### *Registering for Classes*

1. Access BlazerNet from the UAB [homepage](#).
  - a. Click on the magnifying glass in the very top right bar. A box will appear with a selection of portal logins on the right. Click BlazerNet and log in with your BlazerID.
2. On your Student Profile, click on the Registration link in the green ribbon.
3. From the Registration menu, click “Add, Drop, or Withdraw from Classes” and select your semester.
4. To register for GRD courses, find “GRD -Graduate School” from the drop-down subject box.
5. A list of GRD classes will appear. Select the class you wish to complete.

Tuition will appear on your Student Account once you register for classes. OPE or the

university will pay your tuition around the semester's Last Day to Add/Drop. It will then disappear from your account. Please note you may be responsible for paying certain fees associated with particular programs and schools.

Once you register for classes, the system automatically enrolls you in student health insurance. **You will need to upload proof of health insurance via BlazerNet** to get the fee removed from your account. Tuition assistance does not cover student health insurance. For more information on submitting an insurance waiver (i.e. providing proof of your postdoctoral health insurance), please visit [here](#).

**All postdoctoral scholars will also be required to comply with Student Health's mandates on immunizations.** Even if you were cleared by UAB Employee Health, Student Health does not have access to these records and may have additional requirements in order for you to take classes. **You will, therefore, need to upload proof of immunizations to the Student Health Portal (accessible through BlazerNet) before the semester begins.** OPE cannot waive this requirement. To see what immunizations you need, please visit Student Health's website [here](#).

For international postdocs, if your student account has a hold in relation to immigration, just email ISSS to remove the hold, and they will do so.

## Section B

### CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

#### *Childcare*

##### UAB Child Development Center

UAB's on-campus NAEYC-accredited Child Development Center is managed and operated by KinderCare Education at Work. Its hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. They serve only children of UAB employees, including postdocs, and students ranging from 6 weeks to 6 years old. Visit their [website](#) or call 205.934.7353.



You can also find a list of over 20 UAB-sponsored and community childcare [here](#).

#### *Conflict Resolution*

##### Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office provides a place where faculty, staff, mentored graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars ("visitors") can seek confidential, neutral, impartial, and informal guidance regarding concerns, issues, conflicts, or problems involving academic or employment matters.

The Ombuds Office will help visitors clarify concerns, answer questions, explain policies and procedures, and explore resolution options. The Ombuds Office has the authority to discuss a range of options with visitors, including both informal and formal processes and make referrals to the appropriate resource or office.

To contact the Ombuds Office, please email Michelle Horvath at [mhorvath@uab.edu](mailto:mhorvath@uab.edu).

### *Disability Support Services*

#### Aware Disability Management Program

The AWARE program provides confidential disability-management services when an employee's job is affected by a physical, mental, or emotional impairment and, thus, helps coordinate employee requests for reasonable workplace accommodations. To submit a reasonable accommodation request form, please see [here](#) or call 205.934.3513.

#### Disability Support Services (Student)

If you are a UAB student (e.g. enrolled in a class) with a disability, you can contact Disability Support Services (DSS). DSS provides an accessible university experience through collaboration with UAB partners. These partnerships create a campus where individuals with disabilities have equal access to programs, activities, and opportunities by removing barriers, providing individualized services, and facilitating accommodations.

To learn more about DSS resources, including the ADA/504 Grievance Procedure, visit their [website](#), call 205.934.4205, or email [dss@uab.edu](mailto:dss@uab.edu). You can also visit them in the Hill Student Center, Suite 409.

### *English Language Programs*

English Language Programs (ELP) is a professional resource for English-language learning and cross-cultural training in the Birmingham metropolitan area run through UAB. The ELP offers a range of English as Second Language (ESL) courses to students, area residents, business people, local corporations, and international visitors.

Two Programs of Interest:

- a. UAB offers *part-time study opportunities* for staff and students who wish to improve their English through non-credit courses. For more information on classes and how to register, see [here](#).
  - i. You can also call 205.996.9993 for more information.
- b. UAB *Learning Resource Center* offers individual and group tutoring on the English language. To make an appointment with a tutor, start [here](#).
  - i. To find more information, you can stop by the LRC, which is located on the second floor of Sterne Library, sharing the same space as INTO UAB.

## *Financial Support*

### Employee Emergency Assistance Program

The Employee Emergency Assistance Program (EEAP) helps UAB employees, including postdocs, who need financial assistance because of a crisis situation in their lives such as a fire, natural disaster, theft, accident, safety from a domestic violence situation, or illness. After completing a documentation process, employees can qualify for confidential financial assistance during their time of need.

The program has provided \$4.6 million to 4,700 employees, and employees may receive a maximum of \$1,500 during a 12-month period with a maximum lifetime award of three annual maximums or a total of \$4,500. Full-time regular and temporary employees, part-time regular employees, postdoc scholars, fellows, residents, those who work three 12-hour shifts per week, and retirees up to 90 days following retirement are eligible for EEAP assistance.

For more information, please visit their [website](#).

### Employee Perks

As a UAB postdoc, you receive discounts on a range of services ranging from travel to electronics to restaurants. For example, you receive 10% off a regular ticket to visit the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta. To view all perks, please visit the perks [website](#).

### Legacy Community Federal Credit Union

Address: 1920 4th Avenue South

Phone Number: 205.930.5000

Website: <https://www.legacycreditunion.com/>

#### 1. Opening a Credit Card

Legacy Community Federal Credit Union (LCFCU) offers newly-arrived foreign nationals the opportunity to obtain a credit card active for the duration of their visa length. The application requires a social security number, the appointment letter showing salary and start date, and another identification such a passport, driver's license, or US government or military ID.

#### 2. Applying for a Money Loan

LCFCU provides help with unplanned cash flow shortages. A new postdoctoral scholar can exhaust their available funds quickly when paying deposits on rent, utilities, etc. and may require a small loan to tide them over until they receive a paycheck. The application requires a social security number, the appointment letter showing salary and start date, and another identification such a passport, driver's license, or US government or military ID. The loan duration will match the duration of their visa length for international postdocs.

#### 3. College Graduate Car Loan Payment



LCFCU provides help with a recent graduate's first auto loan so that they can buy a car. This loan is only available to 1) postdoctoral scholars who have graduated in the last 24 months 2) are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and 3) are buying their first car. The maximum limit of the loan is \$25,000 for a new or used car.

\*The LCFCU will not eliminate anyone from their services because of lack of credit history, but will need to know, as all financial institutions do, that an individual's ability to repay a loan or pay a credit card bill is not hindered from excessive debt. They will need documentation showing salary and have agreed to accept the appointment letter as proof. The application for a loan or credit card will ask about any debt amount owed. After comparison of these two figures, they will determine qualification and notify the applicant about the requested service. Approval is subject to the terms and conditions of LCFCU.

## Section C

### HEALTH AND WELLNESS

*In a Crisis? Text "UAB" to 741-741 to be connected to a live, trained counselor.*

#### *Food Security*

##### Blazer Kitchen

Address: 1613 11th Ave S

Phone Number: 205.996.2040

Website: <https://www.uab.edu/benfund/programs/blazer-kitchen>

Blazer Kitchen is supported by the UAB Benevolent Fund with the purpose of increasing food security in the Blazer family by providing healthy food, resources, and referrals to UAB employees, postdocs, students, and their families, all while making sure those who visit are treated with dignity, compassion, and integrity. Members of the UAB community shop at Blazer Kitchen just as they would at a grocery store but at no cost.

You must make an appointment before visiting Blazer Kitchen. To make an appointment, click [here](#). It is open every other week on Wednesdays 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Thursdays 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

#### *Physical Health*

##### Campus Rec Center

Address: 1501 University Blvd.

Phone: 205.934.8224

Website: <https://www.uab.edu/students/universityrecreation/facility/campus-recreation-center>

University Recreation provides fitness, wellness, and recreational opportunities for the UAB community and beyond. URec makes this possible by offering a variety of fun programs and



quality services within the state-of-the-art facility of the Campus Rec Center. In 3 floors and 152,275 square feet, you will find everything you need to stay active under one roof – fitness center, court space, swimming pool, climbing wall, studios, and more.

Membership fees start at \$29 a month. For rates and more information, visit their [website](#).

### My Health Rewards

All UAB benefit-eligible employees, including postdocs, enrolled in a UAB medical plan can earn up to \$350 for healthy behaviors throughout the year. This outcomes-based initiative rewards participants for completing age/gender specific screenings, participating in care-management programs, logging their physical activity, and making healthy decisions. Log in to the [My Health Rewards portal](#) to see a full list of point-eligible activities and key behaviors.

### *Mental Health*

#### Code Blaze Resources for UAB Faculty & Staff

These are free, online resources to help employees address issues they are facing in their search for successful work/life integration. Topics range from addiction, anxiety, caregiving, and grief to finances, LGBTQ issues, parenting, and stress management.

To access the resources, visit their [website](#).

#### Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Employee Assistance & Counseling Center offers free, confidential support services for UAB employees, including postdocs, and members of their immediate household. Their services include:

- Counseling for individuals, couples, and families
- Financial wellness counseling
- Supervisor training and consultation
- Stress management resources
- Campus-wide screenings
- Educational programs and events
- Referrals to resources in the community
- Case management services

To schedule an appointment or find out more information, visit them via their [website](#), email them at [uabeacc@uab.edu](mailto:uabeacc@uab.edu), or call 205.934.2281.

## Heersink School of Medicine Office of Wellness

This office offers confidential conversations, consultation, and coaching for postdoctoral scholars **including those outside of the School of Medicine.**

Services include:

- Wellness check-ins.
- One-on-one assessment and consultations.
- Informal coaching and advising through conversation.
- Group sessions.
- Referral assistance.

Make an appointment by emailing them at [uabmedicineofficeofwellness@uabmc.edu](mailto:uabmedicineofficeofwellness@uabmc.edu).

## TAO (Therapy Assisted Online)

[Therapy Assisted Online](#) includes over 150 brief, effective, educational sessions covering over 50 common topics and skills related to mental health, wellness, and substance use issues. TAO includes interactive sessions, mindfulness exercises, and practice tools all aimed at helping you achieve your goals.

To create an account, visit [here](#) and use your uab.edu email address to register.

## UABwell App

The UABwell app collects UAB services, information, and resources about mental health in one central location that is easily and quickly accessible on mobile devices. It allows you to build a customizable, personalized self-care plan, along with a habit tracker so you can track your progress. Lastly, the app features an integrated calendar that locates all the campus mental health events, organizations, and departments all in one place.

To download the app, visit [here](#).

## Section D

### GETTING AROUND: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

#### Birmingham City Buses

Max Transit runs buses throughout Birmingham and surrounding cities. To see routes and find out more information, visit the Max Transit [website](#).

Birmingham On-Demand is a ride-sharing service that runs through an app. Most fares are \$1.50 or less. Zones of service include campus and the surrounding neighborhoods. You can also request a ride to the airport. To download the app, visit the On-Demand [website](#).

#### Blaze Ride

Blaze Ride is a service for employees with limited mobility to use as they travel across campus. An employee must have already registered with the AWARE program before they can access the service. To request a ride, use the [TransLOC app](#) or call 205.934.3514.

### Blazer Market Route

On Saturdays from 10:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m., the UAB Blazer Express (green) buses provide free transport to grocery stores in Birmingham. They leave between 14<sup>th</sup> St. S. and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave S. by the Starbucks at the Hill Student Center. Just bring your OneCard. The schedule is available [here](#).



### Driver License for State of Alabama

Every Alabama resident who operates any motor vehicle (except a farm tractor or implement of husbandry temporarily upon any street or highway) must have a driver license. If you need to acquire a driver license, you must visit a [local driver license office](#) (our county is Jefferson). You may be required to pass a written test and/or a driving test.

Before you go, visit the [ALEA website](#) to find out what is needed for an out-of-state license transfer (e.g. you have a driver license from Mississippi but now need an Alabama driver license) or if you are non-U.S. citizen applying for a license. The [Driver's Manuel](#) is helpful in detailing the process and the documents you need.

\*Tip: [Make an appointment](#) to visit the driver license office. This will save you time!

### Motorist Assistance Road Services (MARS)

MARS is a free service available to all visitors, students, and employees parking on campus who need help with a dead battery, air in a flat tire, or keys locked in a car. The service is available weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. except holidays. For help, call 205.975.6277.

### Parking

Permits are required to park on UAB campus. To purchase a permit, complete the [Parking Permit Application](#) and visit the UAB Transportation Office (608 8th Street South) to receive the actual permit. You will be assigned to a parking lot based upon your job position and building from which you work. Shuttles run throughout the day and evening between express parking and campus. The parking website can be found [here](#).

### Safety Escort

The UAB Blazer Express Safety Escort provides late-night, on-demand van service for UAB

students, postdocs, and employees 9:00 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. every day. UAB students, postdocs, and employees must present their OneCard to be transported. Visitors will be allowed to use the service when accompanied by a card-carrying student, postdoc, or employee.

The Safety Escort coverage area extends to these borders:

- Railroad Park to the north
- Eighth Street to the west
- 22nd Street to the east
- 14th Avenue to the south

Use the [TransLOC app](#) or call 205.934.3514 to request a ride on campus.

## Section E

### REPORTING OFFICES

#### Human Resources/UAB Ethics Hotline

UAB is committed to equal opportunity in education and employment and the maintenance and promotion of nondiscrimination and prevention of discriminatory harassment in all aspects of education, recruitment, and employment of individuals throughout the university. Discrimination on the basis of sex is also prohibited, including sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of pregnancy or related conditions. You are encouraged to review UAB's [Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy](#) and visit the UAB Title IX [webpage](#).

To file a report of discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or retaliation, you can submit a report to [Human Resources](#) (click the green button on the righthand side that says "Report a concern") or the [UAB Ethics Hotline](#). You can submit anonymously.

#### Title IX Office

UAB is committed to providing an environment that respects the dignity of its students, faculty, staff, patients, and visitors and is free from all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment and discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and related conditions, and related retaliation. The Title IX Office provides assistance and support to UAB staff, postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and students by offering avenues to report incidents of prohibited conduct such as sex discrimination, sexual harassment (including incest, non-consensual sexual intercourse or sexual contact, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and stalking), sex discrimination, and retaliation.

To report incidents of prohibited conduct, click [here](#).

To contact the Title IX office, call 205.996.1340 or email [titleixoffice@uab.edu](mailto:titleixoffice@uab.edu). The office is also located at the Hill Student Center, Suite 405



## Section F

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

According to UAB's attendance policy, employees are required to report to their designated work location either on-site, hybrid or remote, in uniform if applicable, and to be prepared for duty at the beginning of their work period. Being repeatedly absent from work or tardy to work without good reason or an approved accommodation jeopardizes an employee's merit evaluation and presents grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Attendance will be monitored on a regular basis and unsatisfactory attendance will be addressed in a timely and consistent manner. If the employee demonstrates a pattern or practice of absenteeism or tardiness in an attempt to circumvent the policy or fails to begin work as scheduled thereby affecting patient care and/or business, additional disciplinary action may be taken and may be outside the steps listed below. Examples of such practices are: an employee always calls in on a Friday or Monday; the employee always calls in for two consecutive days off; or employee clocks in at the closest clock to the entrance to the building and is not at the assigned work area ready to begin work.

The steps of documented progressive discipline are as follows:

Step 1: Documented Verbal Warning

Step 2: 1st Written Warning

Step 3: 2nd Written Warning (may include a suspension without pay and/or imposed probation)

Step 4: Termination

Once an employee reaches the documented verbal warning stage, progressive steps will be issued for attendance occurrences that continue within the rolling 12-month period.

An employee who has accumulated at least three (3) written warnings in an eighteen (18) month period is subject to termination without proceeding through the remaining steps of progressive discipline. These warnings may be for any reason to include attendance, performance, behavior, etc.

**Furthermore, postdoctoral scholars are expected to notify their faculty mentor in accordance with their department's procedures for absences and/or tardies in the event they cannot work as scheduled. A postdoc who fails to call or report to work is considered a no call/no show. Any one incident of failure to call/show may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Three (3) consecutive scheduled shifts of failure to work as scheduled and failure to notify the faculty mentor will be considered job abandonment/AWOL and subject the postdoc to termination of employment. In any case of possible early termination, the case must be discussed with the Associate Dean for Research and Training prior to termination.**

For more information, see UAB's full [attendance policy](#).

## Section G

### GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The Grievance Resolution Procedure for postdoctoral scholars is an internal mechanism designed to assure prompt and impartial consideration of an action or decision that has materially and/or adversely affected your employment at UAB and which you allege has been reached unfairly, improperly or in violation of university policy. However, a grievance does not include or apply to the following types of actions or decisions:

- a. decisions regarding the denial of reappointment.
- b. claims of discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation, which are subjects of other university policies, unless such policies expressly incorporate this handbook's grievance procedure. See in particular UAB's [Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy](#) and the [Title IX Policy](#).
  - To report discrimination or harassment, please see *Reporting Offices* in Section B of this Appendix.
- c. allegations or findings of research misconduct.
- d. dissatisfaction with existing university policies, procedures or guidelines (only misapplication of a policy, procedure or guideline as to specific individuals are grievances within this policy).
- e. decisions made by UAB public safety officers with respect to the postdoctoral scholar.

The Grievance Resolution Procedure is available to all postdoctoral scholars. They may use this procedure without penalty or fear of reprisal.

#### *Grievance Resolution Procedure*

1. Report to Associate Dean for Research and Training for Informal Resolution: A formal grievance may be invoked only after the prospective grievant has first reported the basis for their dispute to the Associate Dean for Research and Training within ten days of the disputed event/action. The Associate Dean shall have a reasonable opportunity to resolve the dispute informally before a grievance can be initiated. During this informal resolution period, the postdoctoral scholar will be provided advice regarding best practices for successful resolution (though the advice does not ensure certainty in resolution of the grievance). The postdoc may choose to follow the advice or not; however not doing so may lead to more limited opportunities for resolution. During this time, the postdoctoral scholar and mentor are expected to engage in this process fully and in good faith.

If the Associate Dean's effort to resolve the dispute is unsuccessful, they will notify the postdoctoral scholar of their right to initiate a formal grievance.

2. Initiate a Formal Grievance: To initiate a grievance, a postdoctoral scholar must provide a written statement to the Associate Dean in which they state specifically the facts believed to support the charge and the desired outcome no later than thirty days

following notification from the Associate Dean that a formal grievance may be initiated. After having determined that the facts stated by the postdoctoral scholar may be grieved,<sup>12</sup> the Associate Dean shall notify the responding party that a grievance has been filed, shall provide a copy of the charge to them, and shall allow the responding party five UAB business days in which to provide to the Associate Dean their response to the allegation(s) made by the grievant.

3. Form a Hearing Committee: Following receipt of the statement from the responding party, the Associate Dean will select a committee of three faculty members and two postdoctoral scholars to hear the grievance and shall provide to the committee the written statements of the parties. The faculty members chosen to serve on the committee shall not have had prior knowledge of the issue(s) grieved. After having chosen one of their numbers to be chairperson, the committee shall determine the date of the grievance hearing and shall notify the parties of the date and time of the hearing, which shall not be sooner than five UAB business days from the date notification was sent to the parties by the committee. The committee should, at this time, also disclose the identity of its members to the grievant so that they can raise any concerns of a conflict of interest or bias related to the committee members. After hearing their concern(s), the Associate Dean will be the one to determine if bias or conflict actually exists.
4. Hold a Hearing: Each party shall be required to provide to the committee a list of potential supporting witnesses, if any, and a brief statement describing what information each witness has regarding the facts at issue. A witness should be a person with first-hand knowledge of facts pertinent to the resolution of the issue(s) grieved. The committee may choose not to hear testimony from a listed witness if the information described is not first-hand knowledge or is otherwise not relevant to the issue(s) grieved.

The formal grievance hearing shall not be bound by formal rules of evidence or judicial rules of procedure. The committee may hear any testimony or consider any supporting evidence that it deems to be pertinent to the issue(s) grieved. Both the grievant and the responding party may be present throughout the hearing. The grievant may also be accompanied by an advisor of their choosing, however, the advisor may not participate in the hearing other than to advise the grievant.

The grievant shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard, to question witnesses indirectly through the committee, to rebut adverse evidence, and to make a brief closing statement. Members of the committee may ask any questions at any time during the hearing and may elect to disallow or to curtail testimony that the committee determines to be unnecessarily redundant or not probative of the issue(s) being heard. Throughout the hearing, all persons present shall conduct themselves in an orderly manner, and anyone who fails to do so may be removed from the hearing.

The committee shall be responsible for the conduct of the hearing at all times.

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<sup>12</sup> If the Associate Dean determines that a grievance is not appropriate, the grievant is notified of this outcome. The decision cannot be appealed.

Hearings before the committee are confidential proceeding and only those persons determined by the committee to have a need to be present shall be included. Except for the grievant, the responding party, and the advisor of the grievant, if any, all other witnesses shall be excluded from the hearing room, except when testifying. No more than one witness shall be called to testify at a time, and all questioning of witnesses shall be by the committee unless the committee shall decide otherwise.

Although the specific procedure for the conduct of the hearing may vary somewhat, the process shall generally include the following: (1) call to order by the chair; (2) introduction of those present; (3) statement of the issue(s) grieved; (4) presentation of the evidence and testimony in support of the issue(s) grieved; (5) questioning of grievant's witnesses; (6) presentation of evidence and testimony in opposition to the charge; (7) questioning of responding party's witnesses; (8) closing statements.

5. Issue of Committee Decision: As soon as practical following the conclusion of the hearing, the committee shall meet in private session to consider all of the evidence presented and shall decide on one of two outcomes. The outcome shall be determined by a "preponderance of the evidence" standard: the facts more likely than not either prove or disprove the issue(s) before the committee. The decision of the committee shall be that the issue(s) is either (1) proven by a preponderance of the evidence or (2) not proven by a preponderance of the evidence.

Following their deliberations, the committee shall provide a brief narrative statement explaining its finding(s) and a summary of the supporting facts. The committee's written decision shall be transmitted to the Associate Dean for Research and Training for appropriate action. The Associate Dean shall notify the grievant and the responding party of the committee's decision and any action to be taken as a result of the committee's findings

6. Appeal to Graduate School Dean: Upon notification to the grievant of the committee's decision, the Associate Dean for Research and Training shall also advise the grievant of their right to appeal the committee's decision in writing to the Dean of the Graduate School. An appeal to the Graduate School Dean shall be limited to the presentation of new, previously unavailable evidence, and/or the identification of procedural error in the hearing process.
7. Final Resolution: After a review of any new evidence presented on appeal and/or a review of the process afforded the grievant, the Graduate School Dean shall notify the grievant, the responding party, and the Associate Dean of their decision, which shall be final.

## Section H

### TAX INFORMATION

**Disclaimer: The below does not constitute tax or legal advice. We highly suggest that you contact a qualified tax professional if you have questions or concerns.**

A postdoctoral scholar's appointment type will determine how they report income and pay taxes.

#### Postdoctoral Trainee (20)

A postdoctoral trainee is an individual who is receiving a fellowship, as defined by the IRS, and receives an amount to aid in the pursuit of research training (e.g., this amount pays for living expenses while training). In accordance with IRS regulations, UAB does not automatically withhold federal or state income taxes from trainees' wages. However, these wages are taxable by the federal government and may be taxable by the state. Therefore, the postdoctoral trainee will have to file quarterly federal and state estimated income tax returns and, consequently, may pay estimated quarterly taxes. Again, we highly suggest that you contact a qualified tax professional to make sure you understand your individual tax situation.

#### Postdoctoral Employee (21)

A postdoctoral employee is an individual who, while pursuing further training, provides services to UAB for compensation. They receive a salary, which is fully taxable, and UAB does then withhold federal and state income taxes on employees. Postdocs in this status, therefore, receive a W2 from UAB each year and are responsible for filing federal and state tax returns once a year between January 15 and April 15.

#### International Scholars

International scholars follow the above regulations to a degree. If the scholar comes from a country that has a tax treaty with the U.S., they may be exempt from paying U.S. taxes or they may have some other benefit. Yet, even if they are exempt from paying federal taxes, they are not necessarily exempt from paying state taxes. You should always file a federal and state tax return since it is through that avenue that you will claim federal tax-exemption or pay taxes that you owe. Please contact ISSS for further information and assistance. *If you are an international postdoctoral trainee, please do this in the first two months.*



Also pay attention to ISSS's weekly e-newsletter *Globetrotter* for announcements about free tax preparation assistance at the beginning of each calendar year. You can also visit their [website](#) for the necessary forms.





The University of Alabama at Birmingham

## **Best Practices for the Mentor/Mentee Relationship**

This document provides guiding principles to support the development of a positive relationship between a mentor and mentee. The purpose of these guidelines is to promote a mutual understanding of expectations and to develop a communicative relationship between the mentor and mentee from the beginning of training. A successful training experience requires commitment from the mentor and from the mentee.

### **Expectations of a Mentor**

- To understand that the educational period is devoted to advanced training intended for the development of skills needed to promote the career of the trainee.
- To work with the trainee to develop a mutually agreed upon research plan with well-defined expectations and goals early in the training period. Evaluate regularly and develop a backup plan if first project is not successful.
- To provide regular feedback on performance and to provide a formal evaluation at least annually.
- To maintain a relationship with the trainee that is based on trust and mutual respect. To cultivate a culture of tolerance and to comply with all existing University policies, including the Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, Title IX Sexual Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy, Duty to Report and Non-retaliation Policy, and other relevant policies.
- To promote and comply with all ethical standards for conducting research, including all institutional, state, and federal regulations as they relate to responsible conduct in research, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, data reporting, ownership, and sharing.
- To ensure that confidential information is properly maintained and disposed of in a secure manner, as required by FERPA and any other applicable federal or state law or University policy or procedure.
- To provide the trainee with guidance and mentoring and to seek the assistance of other faculty and departmental/institutional resources when necessary.
- To encourage the trainee to seek input from multiple mentors, faculty, and peers, and to ensure trainee has regular committee meetings per program requirements, or at least once per year.
- To demonstrate a professional tone of communication and constructive criticism to the trainee.
- To provide a supportive training environment to facilitate the trainee's professional growth.
- To assist the trainee in submitting research for publication in a timely manner and to give appropriate credit to the trainee for work done.
- To acknowledge the trainee's contribution to the development of any intellectual property as appropriate and consistent with all applicable University policies.
- To foster career development and to encourage and assist the trainee to apply for appropriate fellowships and awards that support the transition to independence.
- To encourage and facilitate the interaction of the trainee with fellow scientists both intra- and extra-murally, including the trainee's attendance at professional meetings to network and present research findings.
- To understand that there are multiple career options available for trainees and to provide assistance in exploring appropriate options, calling on other experts as appropriate.

## Expectations of a Mentee

- To understand that the trainee has the primary responsibility for the development of their own career which requires lifelong learning.
- To develop with the mentor a mutually agreed upon research plan that includes well-defined goals and timelines. Develop a backup plan if first project is not successful.
- To seek regular feedback on their performance and career planning and ask for a written evaluation at least annually.
- To perform research activities conscientiously, to maintain complete and accurate research records, and to catalog and maintain all tangible research materials that result from the research project.
- To comply with all ethical standards, including all institutional, state, and federal regulations as they related to responsible conduct in research, possible conflicts of interest, privacy and human subjects research, animal care and use, laboratory safety, authorship, peer-review guidelines, data ownership, reporting, and sharing.
- To show respect for and work collegially with faculty, trainees, staff, and other individuals with whom the trainee interacts.
- To comply with all existing University policies, including the Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy, Title IX Sexual Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy, Duty to Report and Non-retaliation Policy, and other relevant policies.
- To assume progressive responsibility and management of their research project(s) as it matures.
- To demonstrate honest and professional communication with the mentor.
- To have open and timely discussions with the mentor concerning the dissemination of research findings, authorship and the distribution of research materials to third parties.
- To work with the mentor to disseminate research results through regional/national presentations, peer reviewed publications, etc. in a timely manner
- To understand that the trainee is ultimately responsible for their own career development.
- With respect to data ownership, to understand that the original notebooks, digital files, and tangible research materials belong to the institution and will remain in the lab when the trainee finishes training, in accordance with institutional policy.
- To actively seek out opportunities outside the laboratory (e.g., professional development seminars and workshops on oral communication, scientific writing, collaborative research, and teaching) to develop the full set of professional skills necessary for success in the trainee's chosen career.

All mentors and mentees are responsible for adhering to UAB's academic policies, as published in [Catalog of Graduate Programs](http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/) (<http://catalog.uab.edu/graduate/>)

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## Notice of Receipt

The document above details best practices of conduct for both mentors and mentees. Additional resources are available in the UAB Faculty Handbook and the Graduate Catalog. By signing below, the mentor and mentee acknowledge receipt and understanding of the document above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor Name, Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor Name, Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee Name, Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentee Name, Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Updated 10/29/18 These "best practices" are broad guidelines adapted from AAMC's [Compact Between Postdoctoral Appointees and Their Mentors](#).*

Date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Postdoc Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postdoc Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**LEGEND:**

- Gap:** what do you need training in?
- Type:** Which skill, Research or Professional, does this gap address?
- Task to complete:** what will address deficiency?
- When to start:** what year/quarter will this task begin?
- Resource(s):** what resource(s) might effectively be used?
- Timing for completion:** when (i.e., what year/quarter) would you attempt to complete this task?

Postdoc signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor signature: \_\_\_\_\_