



SALK POSTDOC TRAINEE INFORMATION

Welcome to the Salk Institute! We take great pride in supporting postdoctoral fellows like you.

Within these pages, you will find important information about working at the Salk Institute. We have also included links to valuable information about our state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge research initiatives, and renowned faculty members who are eager to inspire and mentor you on your scientific journey.

As a postdoctoral fellow, you play a pivotal role in our collaborative culture, fostering an environment of innovation and cooperation where ideas flourish and breakthroughs happen. We encourage you to explore the various sections of this document and familiarize yourself with the wealth of resources at your disposal.

We encourage you to have conversations with your PI or a member of the Human Resources/Talent Acquisition team to ensure that we increase your knowledge and understanding of your new workplace. We also encourage you to engage in interdisciplinary dialogues and forge meaningful connections with fellow researchers from diverse backgrounds, enriching your experience and broadening your perspectives. Upon your start, you will have an orientation with the Pre & Postdoctoral Office (PDO). This team will provide you with an introduction to the many resources available to you as a postdoctoral trainee and they look forward to working with you throughout your career at Salk.

We are committed to providing you with an enriching and fulfilling experience during your tenure as a postdoctoral fellow. Let your curiosity drive you forward, and we are confident that your contributions will leave a lasting impact on our institution and the wider scientific community.

Welcome aboard! We look forward to witnessing the remarkable discoveries you will make as part of our esteemed team. Together, let's create a future with incredible scientific breakthroughs!

This document is divided into 3 sections:

- [Salk Values Statements](#)
- [Important Information for you to discuss with your PI](#)
- [Links to key resources](#)

Salk Statement of Values

Integrity
Community
Accountability
Respect
Empowerment

I CARE

The Salk Values

The Salk Values were developed by gathering feedback from across the Institute to capture the key behaviors that will create a great culture. The acronym “**I CARE**” provides a simple way to remember each of the values and reminds each of us of the importance of focusing not only on what we do each day but on how we interact with our colleagues.

Integrity guides our moral compass and underpins our every action

We do what is right in all situations for no other reason than because it is right. We uphold honesty and ethical behavior and make good on our commitments. We understand that words and deeds matter and that integrity leads to trust.

Community enables us to harness the power of our collective talents

We work together towards common goals. We recognize the importance of diversity where everyone’s ideas, identities, backgrounds, and perspectives are valued and pave the paths that propel us forward. We understand our pioneering role in the broader scientific community and take pride in our efforts to have a positive impact on the world.

Accountability keeps us focused, and keeps us honest

We are responsible not only for our own success, but the success of our teams and the entire Institute. We consider how the actions we take and the decisions we make in our own work may impact others.

Respect creates the foundation of trust and brings out the best in us all.

We value the experiences, identities, and feelings of those we work with, regardless of their position or their relationship to us. We provide feedback in a constructive manner, use appropriate language, and allow others to share their thoughts and ideas without fear of ridicule.

Empowerment amplifies all voices and inspires the pursuit of greatness.

We lift each other up, enabling us to grow continuously and live to our fullest potential. We support the expression of ideas, encourage self-advocacy, inspire confidence, and recognize that an environment of mutual respect is critical to our collective success.

Important Information for you to discuss with your PI

General Items to Discuss:

- **Technology** – Discuss expectations around computers and software
- **Time Away from the Institute** – Discuss how much paid time away from the lab postdocs should expect; and share the details included below regarding Salk related benefits
- **Hours of Work and Metrics of Success**
- **Salaries & Funding** – Provide clarity on how salaries are set and why
- **Conference and Educational Travel** – Ensure clarity around what should be expected
- **Mentorship and IDP** – Discuss support provided by the PI and the Pre & Postdoc Office
- **Support for International Students** – Discuss support provided by Immigration Services in HR

Specific Information to Consider:

Technology

- PIs should discuss expectations around access to computers and software.
- It is the responsibility of each PI to provide necessary technology for trainees to complete their work, including computers and software. PIs may provide access to a computer and software in the lab or may provide for the use of laptop to be used both in and outside the lab.
- Postdocs may use their own computer with the approval of the PI
- Computers purchased with Institute funds are Institute property and must be returned at the termination of training/employment.

Time Away from the Institute

- Trainees should be encouraged by PIs to take care of their health (both physical and mental). Being well-rested and mentally refreshed enhances productivity.
- The Salk Institute provides all employees with pay for 15 designated holidays each year. The specific holiday schedule for each year is posted on the Salk intranet, Salkland.
- Postdocs do not accrue vacation days or have a defined number of paid days off each year. PIs communicate the specific number of paid days off a postdoc can expect to take each year.
- All postdocs accrue sick time at a rate of four hours per pay period, one day per month, according to the Salk policy for all employees. Sick time can be carried over until a maximum of 240 hours/30 days is accrued. Unused sick time IS NOT paid out at the end of the postdoc assignment.
- Postdocs are entitled to Short Term Disability leave provided by the state of California. If a postdoc will be away from work due to injury or illness for 5 or more consecutive workdays, they should reach out to the benefits team (benefits@salk.edu) and can review the benefits provided by the state at www.edd.ca.gov.
- Postdocs – men and women - are also eligible for California Paid Family Leave for “baby bonding,” to care for an ill family member or other reasons defined by the state. Information is available from the benefits team and at www.edd.ca.gov.

Hours Worked & Metrics of Success

- Scientific research often does not follow a standard 40 hour, 9-5 work week. Expectations of time spent in lab and on related work should be clearly communicated between PI and trainees.
- How research progress is measured by the PI should be communicated to trainees. For example, research progress & milestones are a common metric of productivity, instead of, or in addition to, hours spent on scientific work. Expected milestones and approximate timelines should be discussed and agreed upon (ideally as part of an IDP, see below).
- Faculty is encouraged to schedule regular meetings with their trainees to discuss performance and address any concerns a trainee may have related to scientific success and experiences in the lab.

Salaries and Funding

- Funding opportunities and requirements vary among individual laboratories. Expectations for trainee funding applications and awards should be established.
- Minimum postdoc salaries are determined by the Salk Human Resources department after considering NIH NRSA standards, market data, and California minimum salary requirements.
- Contingent upon available funding and funding source, an individual's salary may be increased within the defined salary range at the PI's discretion.
- In addition to salaries, PIs may arrange for special payments to trainees who receive awards in excess of an established amount.

Conference & Educational Travel

- Conference, workshop, and coursework attendance can be critical to scientific training. In consultation with the trainee, the PI determines the (1) timing and frequency of conference or educational travel and (2) the amount that will be covered for conference or educational travel by the PI.
- Salk's Society for Research Fellows (SRF) offers career development awards, up to \$1000 for eligible expenses
- Some training grants provide a training allowance that may be used toward conference attendance, subject to approval by the PI.

Mentorship & Individual Development Plan (IDP)

- The NIH requires an IDP to be completed annually by PIs and trainees funded by NIH.
- Beyond NIH requirements, IDPs are critical tools for career planning and development.
- We encourage all trainees to generate an IDP and to spend significant time considering their goals each year, discuss these goals at length with their PI, sign and date the IDP, and reference the IDP each year when discussing professional and research progress.
- Templates for different IDPs can be found on the PDO pages on Salkland.
- Trainees require skill development beyond bench work (e.g., giving scientific talks, grant and manuscript writing, publishing in scientific journals, project management, and mentoring junior lab members), and the PI should provide training and opportunities in these areas. The trainee should also take an active role in identifying such opportunities.
- PIs should help facilitate career transitions as part of mentorship duties, including reference letters, assistance networking, practice interview talks, etc., as appropriate. This extends beyond traditional academic careers. PIs should initiate conversations with trainees about their willingness to support continued growth and development.
- Trainees should feel comfortable approaching their PI for scientific advice, career advice, to clarify research expectations, update research progress, and communicate life events that may affect research progress. The PI should cultivate an atmosphere of acceptance and psychological safety to enable the trainee to speak up regarding these issues.
- Salk PIs and trainees come from around the world and bring a diverse set of personal and cultural values. PIs and trainees should be mindful of differences in cultural norms and communication barriers in cases of disagreement or conflict. Ample research indicates that culturally responsive (as opposed to colorblind) mentorship engages trainees and helps them thrive.
- Postdocs are expected to meet with the Pre & Postdoctoral Office (PDO) upon starting at Salk, which will include an introduction to further resources available at Salk.
- Salk is a sustaining member of the National Postdoc Association. Through this membership, all postdoctoral trainees are eligible for a free affiliate membership.
 - Among their numerous resources is the [International Postdoc Survival Guide](#).
- Salk welcomes all trainees to contact the PDO or the Human Resources department to address questions and concerns.

Additional Support for International Scholars

- Immigration Services within Salk's HR function will contact the international scholar as part of the onboarding process for postdocs.
- This support is available to assist with handling visas and related immigration requirements; PIs and trainees are encouraged to consult with them regarding both issues and general advice.

Resources and Links



Below are some resources that may be useful to look at:

[*Salk Science Guide*](#)

[*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion*](#)

[*Salk Benefits Overview*](#)