



UCF

**College of  
Graduate Studies**

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

## UCF Postdoctoral Scholar Handbook

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Welcome to the University of Central Florida. At UCF we value our research and its key role in economic development and national competitiveness. We recognize that Postdoctoral Scholars contribute significantly to our research programs. We hope that your experiences at UCF will provide you with the training and professional development that you need to ensure a long and successful career.

### What is a “Postdoc”?

A Postdoctoral Scholar, as defined by the Florida State University System, is a trainee responsible to and under the direction of a Principal Investigator of a specific research program of a state university. Postdocs are appointed for the purpose of receiving further training in the academic program specialty and gaining experience in other areas of activity appropriate to a career as a university faculty member. A postdoc is responsible for assisting in and conducting research.

These are twelve-month appointments with limited benefits and may be renewed annually up to four years for eligible candidates. Extensions beyond four years require approval from the College of Graduate Studies Associate Dean. There are no advertising or search requirements for these types of appointments. The hiring official may simply hire the candidate of his or her choice following state and federal law and university regulations and policies.

### Professional Development Program

UCF provides professional development for postdoctoral scholars through a variety of services and programs. The objectives of the Program are to (1) ensure the postdoctoral experience is positive for both the postdoctoral scholar and his/her mentor, (2) provide critical lessons for the postdoctoral scholar that will contribute to a successful career, and (3) produce satisfied UCF postdoctoral scholar alumni.

Postdoctoral scholars are invited to participate in the College of Graduate Studies [Pathways to Success](#) workshops program. Pathways to Success provides free development opportunities through a variety of workshop topics including Academic Integrity, Research, Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, and Professional Development. Postdoctoral scholars do not need to pre-register for workshops. Most workshops are held in the Graduate Student Center located in Colbourn Hall, room 146.

Additionally, postdoctoral scholars are encouraged to complete the Graduate Grantsmanship Webcourse. This Webcourse will equip you with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully obtain external research funding through five modules. Please email [gradworkshops@ucf.edu](mailto:gradworkshops@ucf.edu) for access to this course.

### Postdoctoral Scholar Handbook

This handbook is intended to provide the information, contacts and suggestions necessary for postdoctoral scholars to begin and succeed in their employment at UCF. The policies and guidance provided in this handbook may be changed at any time. The handbook does not represent a contract between UCF and the postdoctoral scholar.

### About UCF

UCF is a thriving preeminent research university in metropolitan Orlando. UCF has a tradition of quality instruction, research and service, promoting the advancement and application of knowledge. UCF has 13 colleges, over 200 degree programs, and more than 63,000 students.

In all of its teaching, research and service programs, UCF continually reaffirms its commitment to become one of America's great public, metropolitan research universities. For more information on current facts about UCF, please see <http://ikm.ucf.edu>.

## Employment at UCF

New employees may obtain an employee identification number (EmplID) before completing the hiring process. The EmplID assignment will enable the employee to begin the process of securing a parking decal from the University Parking and Transportation Services office, access to University Library services, as well as ability to order course books and other information to support their transition to the university.

[UCF Card Services](#) provides official university identification cards to students, faculty and staff. The UCF Card can be obtained by the college/area hiring the postdoctoral scholar.

## Benefits

Postdoctoral scholars are considered OPS employees with limited benefits and are eligible for insurance, retirement, annual and sick leave, and other UCF benefit programs. General guidelines can be found at: <https://hr.ucf.edu/current-employees/benefits/additional-employee-benefits/>. Please note that some benefit programs are for A&P and USPS employees only.

## Health Insurance

UCF participates in the State Group Insurance Program. People First is the plan administrator and is responsible for plan enrollments, determining eligibility, and processing changes. Please see [https://hr.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/UCF\\_Employee\\_Benefits\\_Guide.pdf](https://hr.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/UCF_Employee_Benefits_Guide.pdf) for enrollment instructions.

International Postdoctoral Scholars: international employees will need to obtain a valid Social Security Number (SSN) or Tax Identification Number (TIN) in order to initially enroll for health insurance with the state of Florida. This process takes place during the normal hiring procedure and the scholar's enrollment will be handled as a regularly eligible employee.

Dependents of international employees will need a valid SSN or TIN, but they can be enrolled initially with the dependent's name and date of birth. Please note, there may be a gap in coverage for dependents prior to and during the enrollment process, and dependents may be dropped from coverage without the proper documentation being submitted to HR upon request. Additionally, health insurance will not be able to process any medical claims for any persons without a valid SSN or TIN. Contact UCF Human Resources for further details.

## Tuition Waivers

Currently UCF does not offer tuition waivers or tuition assistance for Postdoctoral Scholars.

## Annual and Sick Leave

Postdoctoral scholars are eligible for five days of Sick Leave and ten days of Annual Leave per Academic Year. Leave balances are tracked internally by the department in which they work. It is the responsibility of the department to explain the terms of the leave allocation and track usage and renewal. Postdoctoral scholars are not eligible for leave payouts; any unused balances at the end of the academic year will be forfeited.

## Holidays

Postdoctoral scholars are eligible for paid Holidays when the university is officially closed. UCF regulations require employees to be in pay status (working or using leave with pay) their last scheduled workday prior to a holiday in order to be paid for that holiday. Eligible full-time employees will receive a maximum of eight hours for each holiday, regardless of the days or hours that constitute the workday or workweek.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday.

- New Year's Day, January 1
- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, observed the third Monday in January
- Memorial Day, observed the last Monday in May
- Independence Day, July 4
- Labor Day, the first Monday in September
- Veteran's Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas, December 25

## Family and Medical Leave

Postdoctoral scholars are eligible for leave through the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (FMLA), a federal law that covers all UCF employees; it entitles UCF employees who meet certain eligibility requirements to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per fiscal year for specified Medical and Family reasons. To be eligible, employees must have been employed by UCF for one full year and have worked 1,250 hours in the twelve months preceding the leave.

Forms requesting medical or parental leave can be found on the UCF Human Resources website at <http://hr.ucf.edu/liaisons-and-managers/manager-resources/personnel-issues/leave-of-absence/#leaves-of-absence>.

## Information for Postdoctoral Scholars from Other Countries

Departments and colleges may sponsor an international scholar to come to UCF for the purpose of teaching, lecturing, consulting and/or conducting research. This is accomplished through the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchanges. All international scholars must hold appropriate visa status while at UCF. Postdoctoral scholars are issued either a J-1 visa or a H1-B visa.

The National Postdoctoral Association has some good information for international postdoctoral scholars at <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/?page=International>.

For more information and assistance with visa processing, refer to [UCF Global](#).

## Your Paycheck and Tax Liability

The University of Central Florida operates on a biweekly payroll cycle. The work week begins on Friday and ends two weeks later on Thursday. Section 110.113 of the Florida Statutes requires mandatory participation in the direct deposit program as a condition of employment. Therefore, postdoctoral scholars are required to establish direct deposit as a condition of employment.

There are two types of taxes that will be automatically deducted from your paychecks at UCF. These two types are federal income tax and FICA. FICA is the combination of social security and Medicare taxes. Some employees are exempt from paying federal income tax and/or FICA. Exemptions are typically based on visa status, country of citizenship, and whether you are a resident or nonresident for tax purposes.

Immigration law refers to foreign nationals as immigrants, non-immigrants, or undocumented. Tax law refers only to **resident aliens** and **nonresident aliens**. Resident aliens are taxed in the same manner as U.S. citizens while nonresident aliens are taxed based on special rules. Your tax filing status is determined by the "substantial presence test." The substantial presence test is based on how much time you have been present in the United States. This test can be quite confusing and difficult to figure out. [UCF Global](#) will determine whether you are a resident or nonresident for tax purposes.

For more information on the substantial presence test, please refer to the Internal Revenue Service website ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)) and type "substantial presence test" in the search engine.

## Postdoctoral Responsibilities

Postdoctoral scholars are expected to advise their mentor of any problems they may encounter in the course of completing their assigned tasks. Mutual trust and communication between the postdoctoral scholar and mentor are essential in building a strong working relationship.

## Individual Development Plan

Within the first three months of employment, it is recommended that each postdoctoral scholar create an individual development plan (IDP) approved by their mentor that identifies short- and long-term career objectives and a timetable for achieving them. The IDP can then form a basis for performance review by your mentor. For more information, see [Professional Development](#).

## Career Planning

An important part of postdoctoral scholar development planning is exploring career options for Ph.D.s. The [National Postdoctoral Association](#) has some excellent resources for career planning. Potential careers may include academia, industry, medicine, science policy, science writing, technology transfer, a start-up company, science librarian, etc. Selecting the appropriate career requires self-assessment and research.

[UCF Career Services](#) may also prove to be a resource, particularly for developing good interview and networking skills, as well as CV, letter and portfolio preparation.

## Avoiding Research Misconduct

University employees, faculty, staff, students and affiliates will not fabricate, falsify or plagiarize in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. The university and its employees, faculty, staff, students and affiliates engaged in research activity fully comply with Federal agency regulations and State ethical statutes in conducting research and in reporting and responding to allegations of Research Misconduct. The university enforces Research Misconduct procedures and guidelines in response to Research Misconduct allegations and dispositions. The university fosters research integrity by providing Research Misconduct training to employees, faculty, staff and students engaged in research activity, and informing them of the university's policies and procedures regarding responsible conduct in research.

**Research Misconduct** means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. **Fabrication** is making up data or results and recording or reporting them. **Falsification** is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. **Plagiarism** is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Responsible conduct of research requires the following:

1. **Properly treat data:** data should be recorded accurately and in sufficient detail for replication. It should be saved in an accessible location with suitable format and under appropriate environmental conditions that ensure it will useable long term.
2. **Follow appropriate research protocols:** Discuss any deviation from protocols with your supervisor. Communicate any actual or perceived problems to your supervisor immediately. Discuss questionable results with your supervisor and collaborators.
3. **Acknowledge collaborative contributions and assign appropriate credit in publications:** Always use proper citations, avoid repetitive or fragmentary publications, and follow best practices of your discipline. Discuss authorship with all research collaborators at the outset of a project so that everyone

involved understands who will be listed as an author and the expectations regarding use of the data by those involved in the research.

4. **Ensure that human participants are protected:** All Human Research conducted by UCF faculty, staff, and students must be reviewed by the UCF [Institutional Review Board](#) and approved for compliance with regulatory and ethical requirements before it may be undertaken (unless the IRB determines that the activity is exempt from IRB review).

## Policy on Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest can occur when one or more parties have interests that interfere with their university responsibility. No employee shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her official position or any property or resource which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her official duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for himself, herself, or others.

Postdoctoral scholars must complete a Potential Conflict of Interest or Commitment disclosure form to ensure that no unresolved conflict exists between primary university commitments and outside activities, interests, and commitments. This statement conforms to Florida Statutes, policies of the Board of Governors and UCF, and current federal guidelines requiring disclosure for professional activities of faculty members, administrators, and investigators.

Disclosure establishes specific facts to help your mentor and other appropriate university officials determine whether a potential conflict exists so they can manage or eliminate the problem when possible. If a conflict is identified upon review by your supervisor or other appropriate university officials, you will be notified and assisted with any resolution.

## Ownership of Intellectual Property

University of Central Florida is authorized by Section 1004.23 of the Florida Statute to manage, protect and license inventions and work products developed by University Personnel. The University has implemented this authority through UCF Regulation 2.029 Patents, Trademarks and Trade Secrets ([http://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter2/documents/2.029PatentsTrademarksSecretsNov11FINAL\\_000.pdf](http://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter2/documents/2.029PatentsTrademarksSecretsNov11FINAL_000.pdf)) and UCF Regulation 2.033 Copyright and Works ([http://regulations.ucf.edu/docs/notices/2033CopyrightsandWorksNov11FINAL\\_000.pdf](http://regulations.ucf.edu/docs/notices/2033CopyrightsandWorksNov11FINAL_000.pdf)), and for in-unit employees, through applicable portions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

UCF's mission is focused on teaching, research, and service. Central to this mission is the dissemination and application of research results for the benefit of society. Technology transfer and commercialization are integral to this mission. The Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) identifies, assesses, protects, markets, and licenses commercially viable intellectual property developed at UCF. The OTT facilitates commercialization of university innovations by partnering with industry, entrepreneurs, and investors to transform ground-breaking ideas into successful products.

The process of technology commercialization begins with disclosure of the invention or work to the OTT. In accordance with UCF Regulations 2.029 and 2.033 and the CBA, described above, all University Personnel are required to disclose to the Office of Technology Transfer all inventions and certain works that may be owned by the University.



The Office of Technology Transfer assesses novelty and marketability of an invention or work and determines the extent to which the University chooses to be involved in the protection, development, and promotion of this intellectual property. The Office of Technology Transfer informs the employee of the University's decision. When the University elects to obtain a letter of patent or register a copyright, the University pays the cost of obtaining such formalized registrations.

Postdoctoral scholars are required to maintain accurate and complete laboratory notebooks and/or other written documentation of invention(s) and creation of works. Prior to leaving UCF, postdoctoral scholars must submit the original copy of all and any such documentation including any reports, software code, and/or any other outstanding items to their mentor, although postdoctoral scholars may retain a copy for their files.

For more information on patents, copyright and trademarks, please visit the OTT website: <http://tt.research.ucf.edu>.

## Conflict Resolution

Postdoctoral scholars may on occasion face conflicts at the workplace for various reasons. To prevent conflicts the following is recommended:

- Mentors of postdoctoral scholars should provide clear guidance on their expectations for postdoctoral scholars,
- Mentors of postdoctoral scholars should provide a written annual performance review, and
- Postdoctoral scholars should attend conflict resolution training provided by Integrity and Ethical Development.

Conflicts may occur among team members or between the postdoc and mentor. Ideally, these should be resolved among the individuals involved by direct communication. If this is not possible, postdoctoral scholars should seek advice from other mentors, then work up the academic chain of command including the unit chair or director, dean, and then, if the conflict has not been resolved, the College of Graduate Studies.

At any point, postdoctoral scholars also have access to the [Ombuds Office](#), which is an informal, impartial, independent and confidential resource for all members of the UCF community. The UCF Ombuds Officer is a neutral facilitator and will listen to concerns, help individuals explore options, offer suggestions and advice, and assist in the resolution of the concern. Referral and direction to appropriate individuals and offices, and clarification of University policies and procedures are services of the office.

## Responsible Conduct of Research

University employees, faculty, staff, students and affiliates will not fabricate, falsify or plagiarize in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. The university and its employees, faculty, staff, students and affiliates engaged in research activity will fully comply with Federal agency regulations and State ethical statutes in conducting research and in reporting and responding to allegations of Research Misconduct. The university will enforce Research Misconduct procedures and guidelines in response to Research Misconduct allegations and dispositions. The university will foster research integrity by providing Research Misconduct training to employees, faculty, staff and students

engaged in research activity, and informing them of the university's policies and procedures regarding responsible conduct in research.

The [Office of Research and Commercialization](#) (ORC) offers a variety of tools to assure research conducted at UCF adheres with regulatory guidelines and meets the highest standards of responsible conduct.

ORC provides online responsible conduct of research training through [CITI's Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#), which is free to UCF students, faculty and staff.

### Important Research Related Links

- [Office of Research and Commercialization](#)
- [Read the pre-publication workshop summary of Ethics Education and Scientific and Engineering Research: What's Been Learned? What Should be Done?](#)
- [National Academy for Engineering, Center for Engineering Ethics and Society](#)
- [Ethics in Science and Engineering National Clearinghouse](#)
- [Office of Research Integrity research misconduct - RCR Resources web page:](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies - CITI Training](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies - Ethics/Responsible Conduct of Research Workshops](#)

### Funding Resources and Assistance

The [Research Development](#) team in the Office of Research and Commercialization helps researchers develop research opportunities and find funding for their projects. They offer training in the use of a variety of funding tools, assist with internal program submissions, conduct workshops related to proposal development, and provide pre-award advisement and proposal development assistance. More specifically, they:

Assist Postdoctoral Scholars in Identifying Funding Sources

- Develop Contacts with Funding Agencies
- Initiate Discussions with Companies

Assist Postdoctoral Scholars in Preparing Proposals

- Identify Internal and External Collaborators
- Discuss and Review Proposals
- Provide Editorial Assistance
- Discuss Budgets

Connect Postdoctoral Scholars with Funding Resources

- [Science Careers Job Board](#)
- [Science GrantsNet](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Individual Searches](#)

## Quality of Life Information

### Housing

Monthly rates for apartments range between \$600 and \$1,100 per month for one-, two- or three-bedroom apartments. Please keep in mind that many of the apartments around the UCF area have a shuttle system to UCF, where individual homes may not. You can review the route to our shuttle system if you will be relying on public transportation at <http://parking.ucf.edu/shuttles>.

The UCF [Neighborhood Relations and Safety Education website](#) is a one-stop shop for all your off-campus living needs:

- [A Knight's Guide to Living Off Campus](#)
- [Off Campus Housing Search](#)

Other search sites for housing:

- [www.apartmentlist.com/fl/orlando](http://www.apartmentlist.com/fl/orlando)
- [www.apartmentguide.com/apartments/Florida/Orlando](http://www.apartmentguide.com/apartments/Florida/Orlando)
- [www.apartmentfinder.com](http://www.apartmentfinder.com)
- [www.rent.com](http://www.rent.com)
- [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)
- [www.centralfloridaapts.com](http://www.centralfloridaapts.com)
- [www.apartmentratings.com](http://www.apartmentratings.com)

### Childcare

The [UCF Creative School for Children](#) offers childcare assistance to children of UCF employees and the community.

### Parking and Transportation

Postdoctoral scholars have a number of transit options that can connect to almost anywhere in Greater Orlando. More information can be found at <http://parking.ucf.edu/shuttles>. Parking on campus requires a valid parking permit. You must first register online at <http://parking.ucf.edu/permits>. You are also required to provide a valid UCF ID or government-issued picture ID.

### Other Useful UCF Links

- [Campus Dish \(dining services\)](#)
- [Environmental Health and Safety](#)
- [Victim Services](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Health Services](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [UCF Libraries](#)
- [Office of Research and Commercialization](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)