

Introduction to Postdoc Life at the *University of Virginia*

Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs,
Office of the Vice President for Research

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The University of Virginia: A leading research university

- Consistently ranked as one of the top two public research universities since 1998 (*U.S. News*)
- Medical Center named a “Top 100” hospital for the sixth year in a row in 2007 (*Solucient*)
- Faculty secured more than \$310 million in external research funding in 2007-2008
 - 13,636 undergraduates, 6,554 graduate and professional students, 500 postdoctoral researchers, 2,140 faculty



Definition of a Postdoc at U.Va.

- The postdoctoral appointment is temporary and conferred upon an individual who has recently been awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate in the appropriate field and who will be involved in full-time research or scholarship.
- The appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic or research career, is supervised by a senior scholar, and the appointee has the freedom, and is expected, to publish the results of his/her research or scholarship during the period of the appointment.
- The postdoctoral appointment is renewed annually with a standard length of appointment of three years.

Limited term of a postdoc

- Proposed policy revision underway
- 3-year standard limit (special extension up to 5, including all postdoc appts.)
- Justification:
 - Consistent with policy trend among research institutions, e.g. Stanford, UC-Berkeley, Penn, Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, Maryland, Michigan, Wisconsin...

Further Justification

- **National Academies of Science report, *Bridges to Independence: Identifying Opportunities for and Challenges to Fostering the Independence of Young Investigators in the Life Sciences***, “Five years is meant to be the maximum duration of a postdoctoral position with the expected duration much shorter. ... The committee hopes that the normal length of postdoctoral training is close to 3 years, whether in one or multiple environments.”

http://books.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11249&page=85

- “NIH should enforce a 5-year limit on the use of any funding mechanism—including research grants—to support postdoctoral researchers.”

Important: Postdoc classification depends on funding!

Research Associates

- internal funding
(e.g. research grant)
- employee status

Fellows

- extramural funding
(e.g. training grants, fellowships)
- receive stipends
- not employees

Note: Benefits differ in some areas depending on classification.

Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs

- A unit of the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR).
- Functions as a centralized office/clearinghouse for information and assistance.
- Facilitates communication and serves as a liaison with university units, such as:
 - International Studies Office (ISO)
 - University Human Resources (UHR)
 - Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)
 - Individual schools
 - Academic departments



Who we are...

- Wendy Perry, *Director of Graduate and Postdoctoral Professional Development Programs*
 - *Natalie Perry, doctoral intern*
 - *Nick Stroup, undergraduate intern*
- Roseanne Ford, *Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies*
 - Dave Wolcott, *Assistant to the Associate Vice President*
 - TBD, *Program Support Technician*



Thomas C. Skalak
new Vice President for Research

Where we are...

- Varsity Hall Room 004 (lowest level), Hospital Drive
- School of Leadership and Public Policy upstairs



Postdoctoral Enhancement Website: <http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/postdoc/>

Vice President
for Research & Graduate Studies
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Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs

[Health Insurance Information](#)

[Fellow & Research Associate Policies](#)

[International Postdocs](#)

[Resources](#)

[Update Your Information](#)

The University of Virginia has an institutional commitment to enhancing the postdoctoral experience. Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs reviews policies concerning postdoctoral researchers at the University and recommends changes for improvement. The program functions as a clearinghouse for information and a liaison for postdocs with the appropriate University units. It provides assistance in dealing with postdoctoral issues and administrative procedures, such as compensation, health insurance and other benefits, visa requirements, employment duration, research funding sources, and grievance resolution.

Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs also assists postdocs with preparation, training, planning, and decision-making for professional pursuits within and beyond academe by offering seminars, advising services, web resources, and other resource referrals that advance their professional development.

For questions regarding postdoctoral issues, please contact 924.8909 or postdoc-at-virginia.edu.



[Access the Postdoc Handbook](#)

Contact Us

P.O. Box 400895
Charlottesville, VA 22904
Tel: 434.924.8909
Fax: 434.924.8720

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Postdoc Handbook

Vice President
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Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs

[Health Insurance Information](#) | [Fellow & Research Associate Policies](#) | [International Postdocs](#) | [Resources](#) | [Update Your Information](#)

Postdoctoral Handbook

Welcome to the University of Virginia and Charlottesville! We hope that you find your new assignment as a postdoctoral researcher both challenging and rewarding. This handbook is intended to serve as an introduction to postdoc life at U.Va. and to the Charlottesville community. It covers the following topics:

- [About Us](#)
- [Definition of Postdoc at U.Va.](#)
- [Salary / Stipend / Taxes](#)
- [Benefits](#)
- [Leave](#)
- [Information for Postdocs from Foreign Countries](#)
- [Research Issues](#)
- [Career and Professional Development](#)
- [Getting to Know the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County](#)



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For International Postdocs

Vice President
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Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs

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Immigration Issues

[Human Resources-Compliance and Immigration Services](#) and the [International Student and Scholar Program \(ISSP\)](#) at U.Va. are the central resources for matters related to acquiring and maintaining a lawful presence in the United States. The [International Studies Office \(ISO\)](#) also supports international students and scholars with their transition to American society and culture, as well as advising on all matters of concern to the University's international community. The contact for J1/J2 exchange visitors is [Cliff Maxwell](#) (434-982-3015). The contact for Compliance and Immigration Services for H-1/B, O-1, PR-Employment is [Tim White](#) (434-982-2735).

Other Resources

The primary University resource for developing written and spoken English skills is the [Center for American English Language and Culture \(CAELC\)](#). CAELC offers a bi-annual course jointly developed by VPR and CAELC and designed specifically for postdoctoral researchers. Postdocs are also welcome to enroll in other CAELC courses as space allows.

The National Postdoctoral Association publishes an [International Postdoc Survival Guide](#) and provides links to other helpful information targeted specifically to the needs and interests of international postdocs.

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What we do...

services on behalf of postdocs

- Administer health insurance and other benefits for postdoctoral **fellows**
- Make referrals to the Center for American English Language & Culture (CAELC), which offers courses to improve English skills
- Provide conflict resolution services, in conjunction with Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP)
 - Manage postdoc listserv
 - Manage Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs website:
www.virginia.edu/vprgs/postdoc
 - Develop postdoc policy at U.Va.
 - Represent U.Va. in the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA)



What we do...

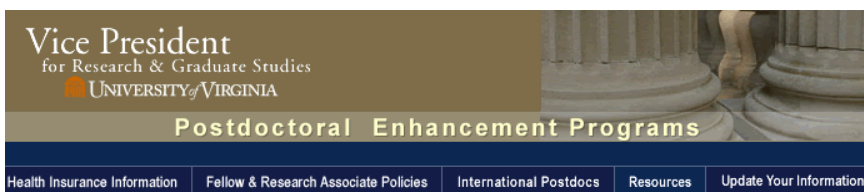
career & professional development

- Postdoc Lunchtime Seminar Series Fall 2008
 - The National Postdoctoral Association (September 26)
 - Ethics in Research: Who Owns What? (October 31)
 - New Vice President's Address (December 5)
- Last Year's Postdoc Lunchtime Seminar Series
 - Visa Issues for Postdocs
 - Applying for Permanent Residency
 - Developing a Research Project
 - CVs and Cover Letters
 - Transitioning from Postdoc to Faculty Member
 - Academic Interviewing
 - Starting a Business



● *NOTE: NEW LOCATION FOR SEMINARS:
Biomedical Engineering, MR5, Room 1041*

Seminar slides available at: <http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/postdoc/resources.html>



Postdoc Positions

All searches for internally-funded postdoctoral positions are managed through [University Human Resources \(UHR\)](#). Please visit [UHR](#) to view available postdoctoral positions, which are generally listed with the title "Research Associate."

Postdoc "Fast Fact" Sheet

A "fast fact" sheet containing information on postdoc life at U.Va. is available [here](#).

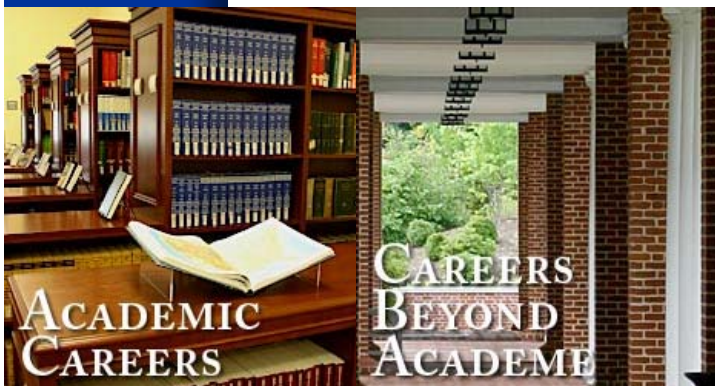
Postdoc Seminar Series

Beginning in June 2005, Postdoctoral Enhancement Programs initiated a seminar series for postdoctoral fellows and associates at the University. The series aims to provide the postdoctoral community with information and resources above and beyond that provided through individual departments and principal investigators (PIs). Seminars generally take place from 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm in Jordan Hall 2-A-B-C. Below is information on past and future seminars. Where available, links have been provided to materials presented by speakers (*.pdf). If you are a post-doctoral fellow or associate and would like to suggest a seminar topic, please e-mail postdoc-at-virginia.edu.

Month	Speaker	Topic
April 3, 2008	Prof. Robin A. Felder	Translating ideas from the research laboratory to the community: A practical primer
March 10, 2008	Wendy E. Perry, Ph.D.	Academic interviewing
February 11, 2008	Prof. Shayn Peirce-Cottler	Transitioning from postdoc to junior faculty member
January 29, 2008	Dahlia French, Esq.	Applying for permanent residency in the United States
November 30, 2007	Wendy E. Perry, Ph.D.	CVs and cover letters for academic and research audiences
October 23, 2007	Dr. Ariel Gomez, M.D.	Developing a research project: From inspiration to perspiration
September 17, 2007	Dahlia French, Esq.	Visa issues for international postdocs
August 31, 2007	Prof. Roseanne Ford	Introduction to postdoc life
May 25, 2007	James Masuoka, Ph.D.	Transitioning from postdoc to faculty member
POSTPONED	Kevin O'Brien, SRI	Bench-top to bedside: Commercializing new technologies
April 13, 2007	Prof. Pamela Norris	Negotiation skills (handout)
February 23, 2007	Prof. Brian Duling	Proper representation of data in scholarly research
January 26, 2007	Teaching Resource Center	Preparing a teaching portfolio
December 12, 2006	Prof. Dave Hudson	Ethics in research: Who owns what?
November 17, 2006	Dahlia French, Esq.	International postdoc issues
October 2006	Prof. Brian Wamhoff	Grant Writing 101
September 2006	Emily Bardeen	Introduction to CVs and resumes

More career & professional development

- Seminars for graduate students
 - (Postdocs invited to all! Details via listserv)
- One-on-one career and professional development counseling sessions
 - Critique of job search materials, mock interviews, job search assistance, self-assessments (Meyers-Briggs)
- Extensive career-related info for advanced degrees at: artsandsciences.virginia.edu/gradschoolcareer



Career Options for Postdocs

- The number of tenure-track faculty positions has increased only 32% since 1975,
- ...while the number of postdocs has increased roughly 400%.
- To be competitive you must be proactive!
- Some may wish to consider career options beyond academe, for example in:
 - *Business/industry*
 - *Government*
 - *Non-profit/NGOs*

Biomedical Workforce by Classification

Classification	1975	1997	% change	% total 1975	% total 1997
academics					
tenured or tenure-track	22,230	29,300	132%	61%	35%
non-tenure track	668	6,822	1021%	2%	8%
postdocs	2,615	9,620	368%	7%	11%
other	1,706	7,296	428%	5%	9%
industry					
professionals	5,273	21,643	410%	14%	26%
postdocs	53	561	1058%	0%	1%
government					
professionals	3,785	7,212	191%	10%	9%
postdocs	245	1,437	587%	1%	2%

“Addressing the Nation’s Changing Needs for Biomedical and Behavioral Scientists,” National Academy Press, 2000.

How to succeed as a postdoc: structure

“...postdocs reporting the greatest amount of structured oversight and formal training are much more likely to say they are satisfied, to give their advisors high ratings, to experience relatively few conflicts with their advisors, and to be more productive in terms of numbers of publications compared with those with the least oversight and training.”

Sigma Xi Postdoc Survey, 2005

www.sigmaxi.org/postdoc/highlights.pdf



Sigma Xi Postdoc Survey 2005



How to succeed as a postdoc: plan

“...a single-standard deviation difference in our measure of structured oversight or of formal training (roughly the equivalent to adding a written plan that covers both postdoc and advisor responsibilities and instituting regular, formal reviews) corresponds to the same difference in satisfaction seen in people with salary differentials of \$20,000.”

Sigma Xi postdoc Survey, 2005

www.sigmaxi.org/postdoc/highlights.pdf

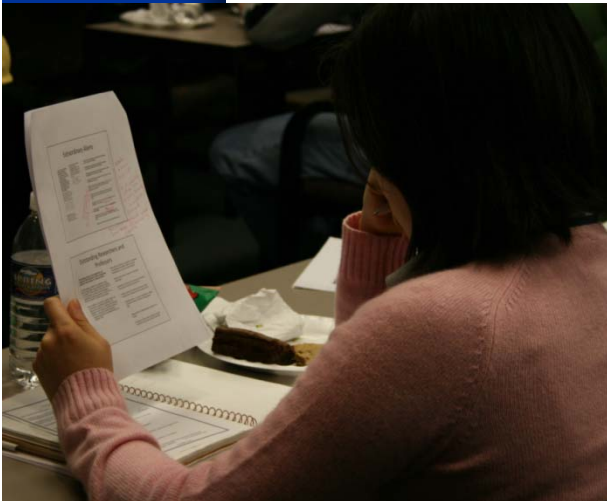


Individual Development Plan

The simple process of having a written plan for the training objectives and milestones of the postdoctoral experience correlates with significantly greater productivity and career satisfaction.

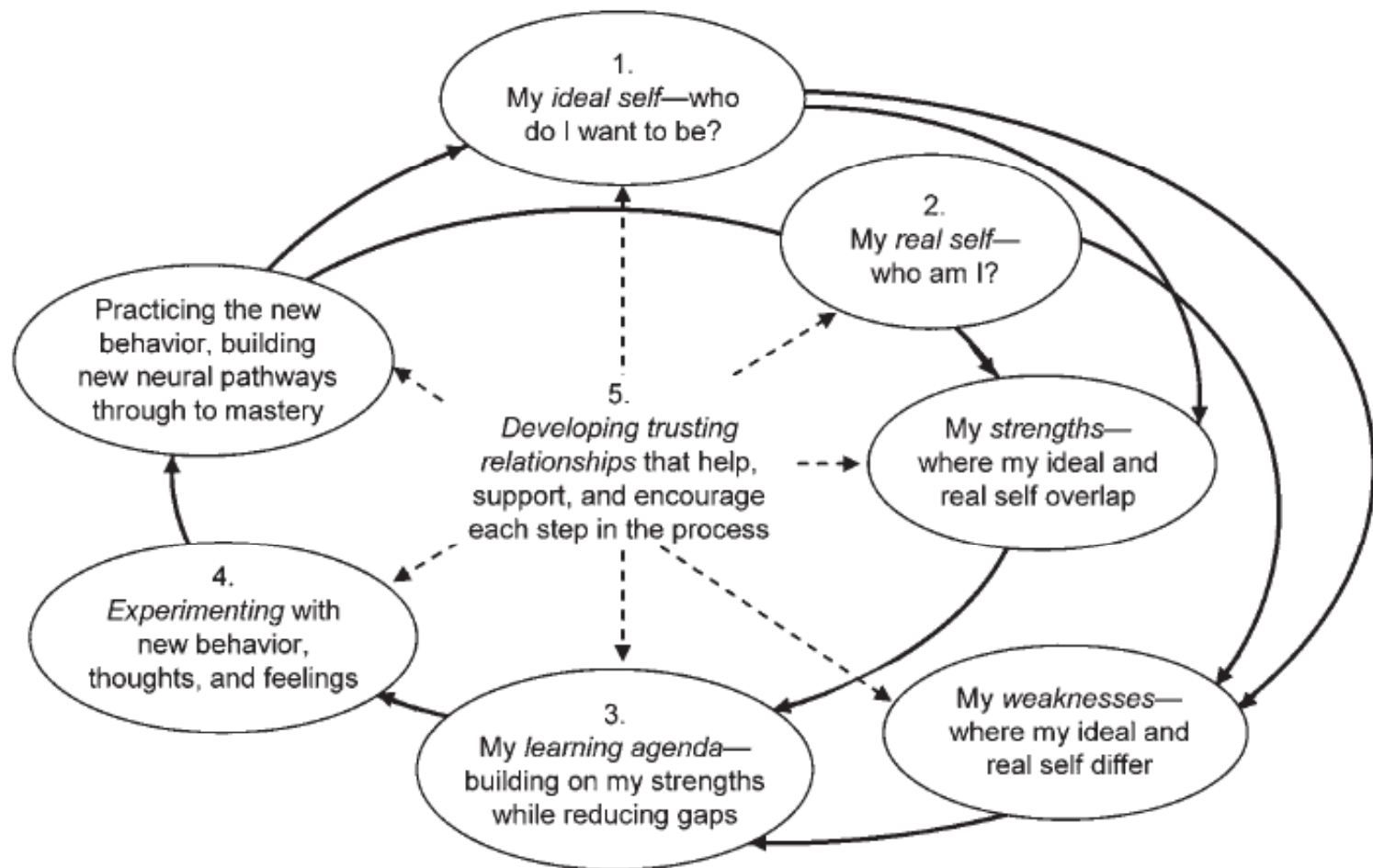
<http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/postdoc/career.html>

40% more publications per year!



Intentional Change Theory

Richard Boyatzis & Annie McKee, 2001



How to succeed as a postdoc: summary

- Establish a plan with your advisor/mentor
 - Identify responsibilities/expectations of advisor/mentor
 - Identify responsibilities/expectations of postdoc
 - Establish process of evaluation, formal and/or informal*
- Be familiar with policies governing your appointment (*i.e.* [policy on Professional Research Staff](#))
- Participate in training seminars and other educational opportunities (*e.g.* trc.virginia.edu)
- Take advantage of career and professional development services and opportunities



* *Minimum evaluation intervals are outlined in the policy on Professional Research Staff (PRS).*

National Postdoctoral Association

<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/>



NATIONAL POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATION
providing a national voice and seeking positive change for postdocs

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- [Contact the NPA](#)

Site Search

Enter Search Text

Special Interest Groups

NPA Home

2009 NPA Annual Meeting Update



The NPA is proud to announce that Peter Doherty, Ph.D. will be the keynote speaker for the NPA 7th Annual Meeting. [Read more...](#)

NEWS

- [NPA Issues Position Paper on Postdoc Stipends](#)
- [NPA 2008 Board of Directors Call for Nominations](#)
- [Campaign to Increase Postdoc Stipends Continues](#)

[Past news items](#)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- 2007 Annual Report now available ([download PDF](#))
- Spring Issue of [The POSTDOCKET](#) now available.
- Updated: [Responsible Conduct of Research Toolkit](#)
- [Postdoc Tax Article Update](#): Fellows and Child Care Tax Credit
- New Postdoc Office Toolkit article: [Providing Benefits for Postdocs](#)
- Just Updated: [A Quick Guide to Visas for International Postdocs](#)
- [Institutional Policy Database](#): View the new format and recent updates.

Get Involved

- [Join in your field](#)
- [Free resources](#)
- [Make a difference](#)
- [Facts, figures & more](#)
- [Bruce Science Update Meeting](#)

U.Va. Postdoctoral Association

- In formation.
- Interest meeting:
 - Friday, Sept. 12, 12:00 noon-1:00pm
 - Cell Biology Library, Jordan 3006 & 3008
- Contact Anne Allison or Christine Tooley if interested in helping to get things started.
 - aba3h@virginia.edu
 - ces5g@virginia.edu

Last Year's Inaugural POSTDOCTOBERFEST!

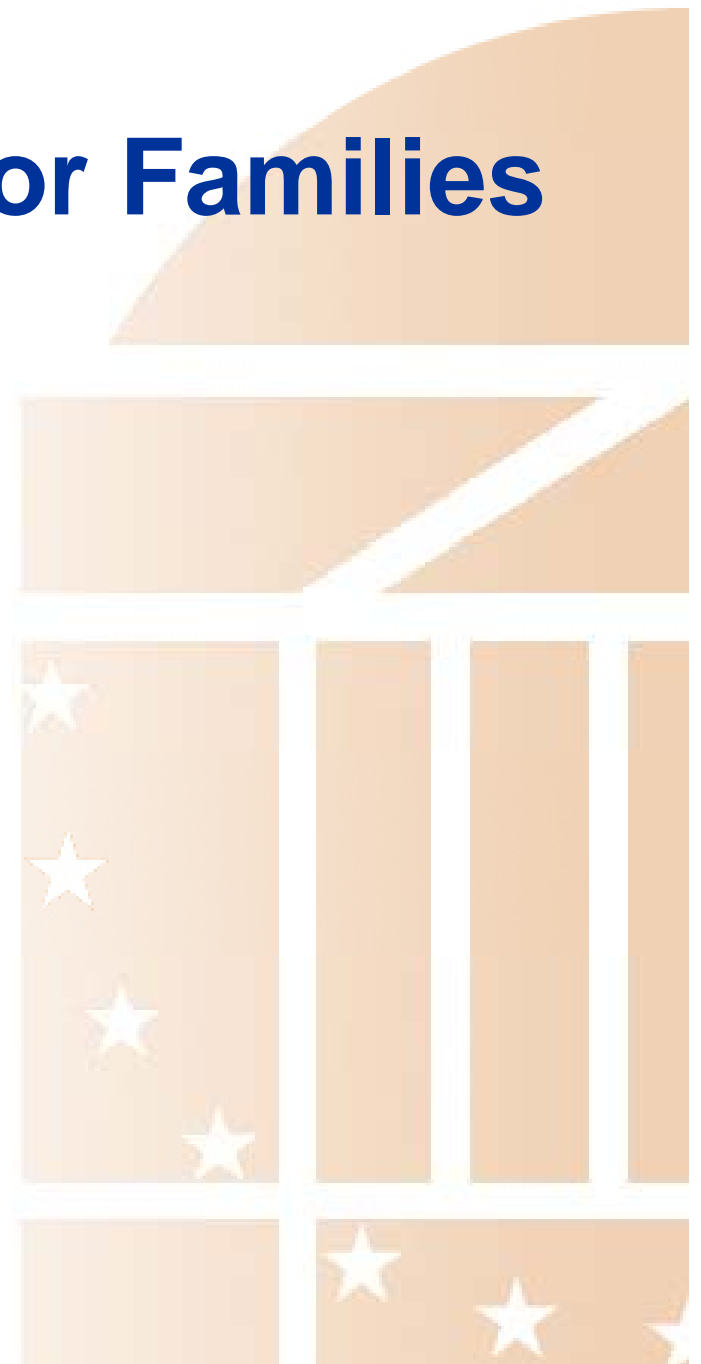


U.Va. Referrals

- **Benefits** (Human Resources)
PH: 434-924-4392, <http://www.hrs.virginia.edu/benefits.html>
- **Compliance & Immigration Services** (Human Resources)
PH: 434-243-2031; email: immigration@virginia.edu
- **Center for American English Language and Culture**
PH: 434-924-3371, <http://www.virginia.edu/provost/caelc/>
- **International Studies Office**
PH: 434-982-3010, <http://www.virginia.edu/iso/>

U.Va. Resources for Families

- **Students With Children Program**
(now open to postdocs!)
PH: 434-924-7133
<http://www.virginia.edu/deanofstudents/programsandservices/studentchildren.html>
 - Listserv
 - Undergrad babysitters
 - Lots of useful links
- **Women's Center**
<http://womenscenter.virginia.edu/>
 - Childcare list



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Where can I find out about health insurance and other benefits?

Contact a Benefits counselor at University Human Resources, 434-924-4598.

See also the following links:

Research Associates: <http://www.hrs.virginia.edu/benefits/classified/class-1.html>

Fellows: <http://www.hrs.virginia.edu/benefits/postdoc/postdoc-1.html>

- Where can I sign up for health insurance as a postdoc **fellow**?

Have your department contact Wendy Perry, wperry@virginia.edu, 434-924-8909.

More FAQs

- Where can I learn about tax-related issues?

Consult a tax professional. Also attend one of two fall seminars on topic: Sept. 18 (US citizens) & 25 (internationals). Details via listserv.

- Where can I find info about Charlottesville?

The Graduate Guide:

<http://www.virginia.edu/graduateguide/>

Exploring UVa and Charlottesville:

<http://www.virginia.edu/exploring.html>

Questions & Discussion



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