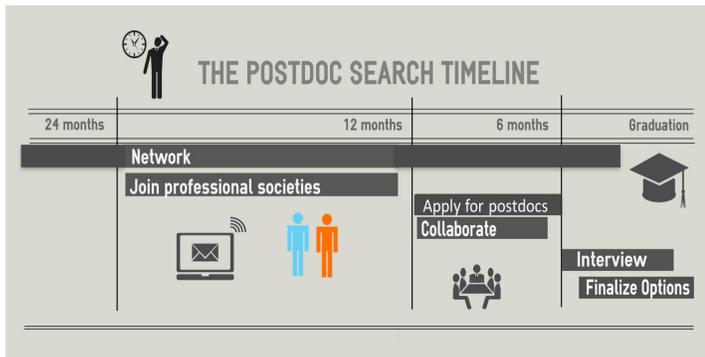


# Career Center

## Postdoc Search



### Networking method

In the American working culture, networking is the strongest way to search for any position, including postdocs. Meeting and conversing with a potential employer or postdoc mentor can benefit you greatly when you apply for the position. Your application will often receive extra attention since these researchers and employers already know you. Networking is an important step in looking for any type of postdoc. Your existing academic network can be a powerful tool in your postdoc search. Once you have defined the goals for your postdoc, talk with your current research mentor about what you are looking for. Ask them about colleagues they know working on particular topics, using certain methods, or who have a good track record of preparing postdocs for your career path(s) of interest. Also talk with members of your dissertation committee or other faculty at Duke to see whom they can connect you to.

### Network at conferences

- Look at the list of conference attendees ahead of time to see who works at institutions where you'd like to do a postdoc
- Contact researchers ahead of the conference and schedule a time to meet with them (consider this an informal interview)
- Talk to the graduate students and postdocs working at institutions of interest or for potential postdoc mentors to learn more about their experiences
- Strike up a conversation with other students and postdocs in your field
- Seek out a researcher whose work interests you at a presentation, poster session, or networking event

### Network beyond conferences

- Email potential postdoc mentors or colleagues to set up a meeting or phone call to talk about their work and experiences
- Ask current and former postdocs about their positions, how they found them, and advice they have for you
- Career fairs and networking events at Duke (schedule listed on CareerConnections, <http://careerconnections.duke.edu>)
- Duke Alumni Association, <https://alumni.duke.edu>
- LinkedIn, <https://www.linkedin.com>

### Apply directly to faculty or programs

Another option is to apply to postdoc programs or directly to faculty mentors. If you are searching for faculty to contact, try some of these methods:

- Consider the geographical locations you're most interested in and then browse department listings for institutions in those areas; you can also search for mentorship awards given by that institution
- Search the literature for who is doing research in areas you find interesting
- Browse members of your professional societies

Once you have identified faculty you'd potentially interested in working with, read through their website and most recent publications. Look at their previous co-authors as some may be current faculty at Duke who can facilitate an introduction. Information you gain in these ways will be useful as you prepare your application materials and send them via email. Your cover letter will be the body of the email, and you can attach a CV or other documents to the message. Even if you apply through an official postdoc program, researching the institutions and faculty will help you craft your application documents.

### International students

International students looking for postdoc positions in the U.S. can employ the same networking and application methods listed above. Early in the conversation, be sure to ask potential mentors if they have funding to support international scholars.

## International students (cont.)

Further resources for international students looking for postdoc positions in the U.S.

- National Postdoc Association guides and resources, <http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/?page=International>
- Fogarty International Center of the NIH maintains a database of non-NIH funding opportunities in the U.S. and abroad, <https://www.fic.nih.gov/Funding/NonNIH/Pages/postdoctoral.aspx>

## Postdocs outside the U.S.

It is important to investigate how a postdoc position outside the U.S. may be different than the postdocs you've worked with at Duke or other American institutions. Ask about expectations for postdocs, length of the appointment, sources of funding, salary/benefits, and other details to make sure there are no surprises after you accept a position. Consider too what opportunities a postdoc outside the U.S. uniquely offers you that could help you obtain your next position.

Applying to postdocs abroad is similar to applying in the U.S. Your best method is to network with researchers at conferences. Cold-contact potential postdoc mentors by email can also work. There are numerous resources that you can use to look for sources of funding:

- Fogarty International Center (see link in International Students section)
- Human Frontier Science Program offers postdoc fellowships for scientists to work in foreign laboratories, <http://www.hfsp.org/>
- Humboldt Research Fellowships for postdocs in Germany, <https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/humboldt-fellowship-postdoc.html>
- Newton International Fellowship for postdocs in the United Kingdom, <http://www.newtonfellowships.org/>
- Database of academic jobs and postdoc positions in Europe, <http://academicpositions.eu>

Read more about

- Experiences and advice of a scientist who completed his postdoc abroad, <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2014/01/american-postdoc-abroad>
- Advice for making the most of the experience, <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2009/08/ups-and-downs-doing-postdoc-europe>
- A recount of a postdoc abroad includes funding resources, <http://www.lifescied.org/content/1/4/128.full>