Greetings!

I am excited to welcome you to the Columbia University community of scholars and investigators. The Columbia University Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) was established in 2006 to help make your time at Columbia both productive and rewarding. OPA's role is not only to enhance the educational and training experience of postdocs but to also provide counsel to postdocs with respect to mentors, housing, job opportunities, search for funding opportunities, university policies and practices, and life in New York City. OPA also undertakes initiatives to increase visibility of postdocs and to assist in community building among postdocs and serves as an information repository and liaison among postdocs, faculty, administrators, and external constituencies.

OPA can be a starting point for identifying resources available to you during your time at Columbia. Please utilize this handbook and our website (www.postdocs.columbia.edu). If you have any questions please feel free to contact our office by telephone at 212-305-4073 or by email at postdocaffairs@columbia.edu.

I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you personally to our community!

Sincerely,

Lily Secora
Director, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
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Who is a Postdoc at Columbia University?

Postdoctoral appointments provide their recipients with additional training after the doctorate, or its professional equivalent, in preparation for independent careers as scientists and scholars. While rare, some appointments are made to individuals of greater experience who wish to retrain themselves for careers in a new discipline or specialty. Postdocs work under the guidance of a principal investigator who may be a faculty member or an officer of research. Given the purpose of the appointment, postdocs normally remain at the University for a limited duration lasting no more than three years.

Postdoctoral Appointments
There are four grades of postdoctoral appointment at Columbia University. Please note that OPA does not support Postdoctoral Resident Fellows or ACGME Postdoctoral Clinical Fellows.

Postdoctoral Research Scientists/Scholars (PDRS) are recent recipients of the doctorate, or its professional equivalent, who come to the University to continue their training, or individuals of greater experience who wish to retrain themselves in a new discipline or specialty. PDRSs may be appointed for full- or part-time service for a term of up to twelve months, renewable for up to a maximum of three years. Further extensions of an appointment in this rank require the prior permission of the Provost (through the appropriate Chair of a Department or Director of an Institute or Center and the appropriate Dean or Vice President), which is normally granted only to complete a research project. These additional extensions may be granted on an annual basis up to a maximum of two years. PDRSs are paid a salary through the Office of the Controller or by an affiliated hospital or institute.

Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDF) are recent recipients of the doctorate, or its professional equivalent, who have won awards, usually from external agencies, to continue their training at the University, or individuals of greater experience who have won awards permitting them to retrain themselves in a new discipline or specialty. PDFs may be appointed for full- or part-time service for a term of up to twelve months, renewable for up to a maximum of three years. Further extensions of an appointment in this rank require the prior permission of the Provost (through the appropriate Chair of a Department or Director of an Institute or Center and the appropriate Dean or Vice President), which will normally be granted only to complete a research project. These additional extensions may be granted on an annual basis up to a maximum of two years. PDFs are generally not paid a salary;
Who is a Postdoc at Columbia University?

instead, they usually receive fellowship stipends, either through the University or directly from an external funding agency.

Postdoctoral Clinical Fellows (PCF) are recent recipients of the doctorate, who come to the University to gain additional clinical training after completing their residency, or individuals of greater experience who wish to change clinical specialties. PCFs may be appointed for full- or part-time service for a term of up to twelve months, renewable for up to a maximum of three years. Further extensions of an appointment in this rank require the prior permission of the Provost (through the appropriate Chair of a Department or Director of an Institute or Center and the appropriate Dean or Vice President). These additional extensions may be granted on an annual basis up to a maximum of two years. PCFs may simultaneously hold appointments as officers of instruction of the rank of “Assistant in Clinical (Department)”. Depending upon the source of funding, one of these appointments will be full-time and the other, part-time. When a PCF receives a stipend, the appointment as a postdoctoral clinical fellow is full-time and the Assistant in Clinical (Department) is part-time. The reverse is true when the individual is paid a salary.

Postdoctoral Residency Fellows (PRF) hold the doctorate of Medicine, Dental Medicine or Dental Surgery and are enrolled in programs at affiliated hospitals and institutes for the purpose of obtaining additional clinical training before embarking on independent careers as physicians and dentists. They may be appointed for part-time service for a term of up to twelve months. The appointment is renewable annually so long as the PRF continues in a training program.
Before You Arrive at Columbia…

**Initial Appointment Letters**

All postdoc candidates should review their offer letter from their Advisor prior to their arrival on campus. The letter must clearly state the terms of the proposed future working relationship. Please be sure it includes the following information:

1. **Exact title of position offered and an indication of whether the appointment is full-time or part-time;**

2. **Effective dates of appointment. If the appointment is anticipated to be for more than one year, the letter should indicate the number of years that it can be renewed. It should also state that the end date of the appointment may be affected by the individual’s visa expiration date (if any) and/or terms of a sponsored project;**

3. **Exact amount of stipend or salary. If compensation is through a stipend, the letter must also indicate the source of funds;**

4. **Specific role in the anticipated research project;**

5. **Teaching responsibilities, if any; and**

6. **Any additional information pertinent to the appointment.**

The letter should be signed by the appropriate chair of the department or director of an institute/center and proper dean or vice president, as required.

**Authorization for Employment**

A postdoctoral research scientist/scholar is required to produce documentation that he/she is either a US citizen or authorized to be employed in the United States; this requirement is satisfied by completion of the government-issued Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9 Form) no later than the first day of work. This form is available from your department administrator or online (www.uscis.gov/i-9) and must be returned to him/her on or prior to your first day of work.

*Postdoctoral research fellows, clinical fellows and residency fellows are not required to sign an I-9 Form.*
Before You Arrive at Columbia…

**Social Security Numbers**

A social security number (SSN) is required in order to lawfully work in the United States and receive a salary. To get a SSN or a replacement card, you must prove your U.S. citizenship or immigration status, age, identity, and employment eligibility. Only certain documents are accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include:

- U.S. birth certificate
- U.S. passport
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Certificate of Citizenship

If you are not a U.S. citizen, different rules apply for proving your immigration status.

Under the current law, only certain documents can be accepted as proof of identity. If you do not have a SSN, the Social Security Administration’s website (www.ssa.gov) provides detailed information about the application process and acceptable proofs of identity.

Once you have applied for a SSN you will be given a receipt. Bring this receipt to your departmental administrator for his/her use in preparing the paperwork for your appointment. Once you receive your official card from Social Security Administration, give your department administrator a copy so that your records can be updated properly and the appropriate paperwork filed.

Social Security offices are located throughout the City and are open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday except on legal holidays. You may apply at any office unless you live in Brooklyn or Queens.

The nearest Social Security Office to Columbia’s Morningside Campus is located at:

Cav Building, 6th Floor
55 West 125th Street
(between Lenox and 5th Avenue)
New York, NY 10027
800.772.1213
Before You Arrive at Columbia…

The nearest Social Security Office to Columbia’s Medical Center Campus is located at:

4292 Broadway (182nd Street)  
New York, NY 10033  
800.772.1213

Alternate Social Security Administration Office:  
237 West 48th Street, 5th Floor  
between 8th Avenue and Broadway  
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
800.772.1213

**Brooklyn residents must apply at:**  
Brooklyn Social Security Card Center  
154 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday, 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**Queens residents must apply at:**  
Queens Social Security Card Center  
155-10 Jamaica Avenue, 2nd floor  
Jamaica, NY 11432  
Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Thursday, 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The employee should bring his or her passport, I-94 card, the I-797 Notice of Approval or DS-2019 (for those in J-1 status), and a letter from the hiring department to the Social Security Administration office. It will take approximately three weeks to obtain a Social Security card from Social Security Administration.

**Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers**

An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is a tax processing number issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The IRS issues ITINs to foreign nationals and others who are required to have a US taxpayer identification number for US tax returns and payment responsibilities under the Internal Revenue Code (i.e., those who are to receive stipends only), but who are not eligible for a SSN.

ITINs are for federal tax reporting only and are not intended to serve any other purpose. An ITIN does not authorize you to work in the...
Before You Arrive at Columbia…

United States or provide eligibility for Social Security benefits or the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Examples of individuals who need ITINs include:

- Non-resident alien filing a U.S. tax return and not eligible for an SSN;

- U.S. resident alien (based on days present in the United States) filing a U.S. tax return and not eligible for SSN;

- Dependent or spouse of a U.S. citizen/resident alien; or

- Dependent or spouse of a non-resident alien visa holder.

Please visit the IRS website (www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96287,00.html) for additional information.

Compensation Columbia’s Office of the Provost establishes minimum salary guidelines for postdocs (other than those on external fellowships) on the Morningside Campus and the Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences establishes these guidelines for the Medical Center on an annual basis. Please refer to the Provost’s webpage (www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa) in order to access the most current information. You can also get the most up-to-date minimum salary levels by contacting OPA. Compensation levels for those postdocs on external fellowships are governed by the terms of those fellowships.
When You Arrive at Columbia…

**University ID Card**
You should plan to pick up your University ID card on your first day on campus. In addition to being your official employment ID, it is also used to borrow library books, gain admittance to campus buildings, and utilize the gym. Anyone obtaining a University ID card for the first time must show a valid passport or U.S. ID.

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<td>204 Kent Hall</td>
<td>Monday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>Tuesday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thursday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<th>CUMC ID Office</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>109-A Black Building 650 West 168th Street</td>
<td>Monday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>Tuesday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>Thursday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.</td>
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**Your UNI & Email**
Every student, faculty member, and permanent staff member is assigned a University Network ID (UNI), consisting of your initials plus an arbitrary number. Not only is your UNI your main Columbia e-mail account (i.e. uni@columbia.edu) but also allows you to access computer services and electronic resources. You will also need your UNI to gain access to restricted library information on the Web, Human Resources and other University systems.

As soon as you receive your UNI, please go online to (http://uni.columbia.edu) to activate your account and set your password.

Once your postdoc appointment ends, you will have a one month grace period with your Columbia email account before it is closed. You may submit a request to the CUIT helpdesk to have an auto-response put into place for six months. In this case, no email is actually forwarded to your new email address but the sender will receive an auto-message telling the sender your new email address at which they can reach you.

**Orientation**
OPA hosts orientations every month for all postdocs. Orientations rotate between the Morningside and Medical Center campuses (except in December), and are announced on the events calendar section of the OPA website. Although Lamont postdocs have their own orientation, they are more than welcome to attend an OPA-hosted orientation on one of the other campuses.
Moving to the Big Apple...

Most postdocs live on the Upper West Side, Morningside Heights or Washington Heights, depending on their department location.

**Upper West Side (UWS)**

Spanning from Central Park West to the Hudson River and 60th to 96th Streets, the UWS has a distinct laid-back atmosphere attributed to the large student and artist population. Three major subway lines (1/2/3/A/C/B/D) run through the UWS making it easily accessible to the rest of the City.
Moving to the Big Apple…

**Morningside Heights**  
Bounded by Riverside Park to the west and Morningside Park to the east, Morningside Heights runs from 110th Street to 122nd Street. Although it is inextricably linked to Columbia University, it has retained its connections to neighboring Harlem. The 1 subway line provides quick access between Columbia’s Morningside and Medical Center campuses.

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**Washington Heights/Inwood**  
Covering the entire extreme northern part of Manhattan (anything north of 168th Street), Washington Heights and Inwood are two of the most up and coming neighborhoods in Manhattan. They appeal to many who seek lower housing costs and, in places, a more serene setting, without actually leaving Manhattan and its subway connections. The past few years have seen students, artists, musicians and young professionals lured to the area by the affordable housing and beautiful parks. The A/C/1 subway lines allow quick access to lower Manhattan.
Moving to the Big Apple…

Riverdale  
Over the recent years, Riverdale has attracted many families from Manhattan. It is a part of the Bronx, immediately north of Manhattan and one can easily access the city via the 1 subway line, Metro North Rail and express buses.

Northern New Jersey  
Due to the wealth of public transportation, Northern New Jersey has become a less expensive option for postdocs working at the Medical Center. Towns such as Fort Lee, Leonia, Englewood, Teaneck and Hackensack are easily accessible to the northern section of Manhattan and are quick bus ride across the George Washington Bridge.

Whichever neighborhood you decide to live in, it is imperative that you visit (or have someone visit for you) any room or apartment you are considering renting before you make any agreements or sign a lease.
Moving to the Big Apple…

Columbia University Morningside Campus Map
Moving to the Big Apple…
There are several resources at Columbia University to help ease a postdoc’s apartment hunt in New York City. Please note: **Only postdoctoral research scientists/scholars and postdoctoral research fellows** are eligible to apply for University housing.

**Office of University Apartment Housing (UAH)**

400 West 119th Street  
212.854.9313  
uah@columbia.edu

UAH maintains housing for postdocs on the Morningside campus. Its website ([www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/postdoc.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/postdoc.html)) provides access to the UAH housing application and up-to-date rent rates.

In order to apply for UAH housing, your department must provide a username and log-in in order to access the application. UAH receives all postdoc housing applications and then forwards them to the appropriate sponsoring department for review and approval. Housing assignments for postdocs on the Morningside campus are based on the date of receipt of your housing application and the availability of housing. Housing on the Morningside campus is limited and you must get approval from your department in order to qualify.

**Office of Housing Services**

Bard Hall, 50 Haven Avenue  
212.304.7000  
Noemi Bueno, *Manager* (nb141@columbia.edu)  
Maryam Isa, *Rental/Leasing Agent* (mi2200@columbia.edu)

The Office of Housing Services (www.cumc-housing.columbia.edu) facilitates housing for all postdocs working at the Medical Center. A random ordering of applications occurs each month and a lottery is then conducted to select assignees. The number of applicants selected is based on the number of housing units available each month. Successful applicants are eligible for assignment to University accommodations on either the Morningside or Medical Center campus and may continue to remain in University housing throughout the duration of their appointment or up to five years. However, in the event that the individual’s employment status changes to part-time or to a non-postdoc eligible title he/she will be required to leave University housing within three months from when his/her status changes.

The Office of Housing Services is also a resource for non-Columbia-owned housing and can put you in touch with Columbia approved management companies and brokers. Please contact Noemi Bueno directly for further information.
Moving to the Big Apple…

**Off-Campus Housing Assistance (OCHA)**
401 West 119th Street, Lower Level
212.854.2773
Susan Saar, Manager (ocha@columbia.edu)

OCHA helps postdocs in their search for rental housing in non-Columbia-owned buildings located in the metropolitan area. OCHA maintains a website (www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/ocha) and an online database of available housing. It also provides contact information for landlords and lower-or no-fee brokers; temporary housing resources; lease review; and information and advice for the metropolitan area. They do not operate as a real estate or rental agency and do not charge for their services. However, some of the apartments listed in the OCHA database may charge a referral fee.

In order to gain access to the OCHA housing site prior to your arrival at Columbia, please e-mail OPA (postdocaffairs@columbia.edu) for a temporary password.

*Please note: OCHA does not screen either owners or tenants; apartments are not inspected or “approved” by Columbia or its employees. Listing of accommodations does not constitute recommendation of such facilities, nor is the accuracy of the description verified.*

**Temporary Housing**
It may take one or two weeks to find an apartment once you arrive in New York. Unless you have family or friends who are willing to house you while you are looking, you may need to stay in a local hotel. Rates range depending on the hotel and time of year.

**Local Hotels**
Columbia has secured preferred rates at a number of local hotels. When making a reservation, please specify that you are calling from Columbia University and request the University rate. The preferred rate might not be available on certain dates in the year. Please inquire for those dates with the individual hotels. Rates are current as of March 2012.

**Flatotel**
135 West 52nd Street
New York, NY
800.352.8683
Jan 1 – Mar 31: $205
Apr 1 – Jun 26: $235
Jun 27 – Sept 2: $205
Sept 3 – Dec 31: $305
## Moving to the Big Apple…

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<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Rates</th>
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<td><strong>Hotel Newton</strong></td>
<td>2528 West 96th Street, New York, NY</td>
<td>Jan 1 – Mar 31: $115&lt;br&gt;Apr 1 – Aug 31: $170&lt;br&gt;Sept 1 – Dec 29: $200</td>
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Moving to the Big Apple…

**Institutional Guest Rooms within the Columbia Neighborhood**

Please note that most of the following have a maximum of seven nights stay. Room prices change seasonally so please call them directly for the most up-to-date rate information.

**International House**
500 Riverside Drive (at West 122nd Street)
New York, NY
212.316.8436
www.ihouse-nyc.org

**Teachers College – New Residence Hall**
1230 Amsterdam Avenue (at West 120th Street)
212.678.3235
housing@tc.edu

**Union Theological Seminary – Landmark Guest Rooms**
3041 Broadway (at West 121st Street)
212.280.1313
www.utsnyc.edu

**Business Cards**
You may acquire business cards through Columbia University Print Services. University approved templates are available for Morningside Campus, Columbia University Medical Center, Mailman School of Public Health, Harlem Hospital and Lamont-Doherty (including IRI). If your P.I. or department will be paying for your business cards you can place your order online through [http://printservices.columbia.edu/online-ordering](http://printservices.columbia.edu/online-ordering) (you will need to get the billing account number from your P.I. or Administrator in order to place your order online). If you will be paying for the business cards yourself you will need to go to Print Services and place the order in person (cannot order online). Please bring with you your Columbia ID and make sure to order the employee business card and not the student business card. You will need to pay by cash or debit card. Print Services is located in room 106 of the Journalism School on the Morningside campus [http://printservices.columbia.edu/contact-us](http://printservices.columbia.edu/contact-us).

**Cell Phones**
OPA strongly suggests getting a **local cell phone number** before you begin your apartment search. This will make you easy to reach and will maximize your chances of having your calls returned while looking for an apartment.
Columbia students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive discounts from the following phone carriers. The account must be in your name to qualify. For more information, go to www.worklife.columbia.edu/discounts.

There are two types of cell phone plans currently available in the United States:

**Long-term:** Purchase a phone; select a plan; and sign a (minimum) one year contract. Credit card and social security numbers are usually required. If you do not yet have a social security number, some carriers will accept an additional deposit.

- **AT&T Wireless**  
  www.wireless.att.com  
  800.331.0500
- **Sprint PCS**  
  www.sprint.com  
  888.253.1315
- **T-Mobile**  
  www.t-mobile.com  
  800.866.2453
- **Verizon Wireless**  
  www.verizonwireless.com  
  800.922.0204

**Short-term:** Purchase a pre-paid phone with no contract. You can then buy phone cards with a certain number of minutes and reload the phone as needed.

- **AT&T Wireless**  
  www.wireless.att.com  
  800.311.0500
- **Sprint PCS**  
  www.sprint.com  
  888.253.1315
- **T-Mobile**  
  www.t-mobile.com  
  800.866.2453
- **Verizon Wireless**  
  www.verizonwireless.com  
  800.922.0204
- **Trac Fone**  
  www.tracfone.com  
  800.867.7183

Trac Fone must be pre-paid in full and can be purchased at local Radio Shack and Rite Aid stores.

**Utilities** Typically, utilities included in rent are heat and hot/cold water. Electricity, gas, phone and cable services are not generally included in rent. You will have to contact the utility company yourself to activate them once you rent an apartment. Utilities usually cost between $50 – $100 total per month for a studio apartment; $75 – $125 for a one-bedroom; and $100 – $125 for a two/three bedroom. You will also need to arrange for phone (land line) and cable services if desired. Unfortunately, adequate television reception in New York City is not possible without cable.
Moving to the Big Apple…

**Electricity**  
**Con Edison**  
800.752.6633  
www.conedison.com  
Typically takes 2 – 3 days to schedule an appointment

**Phone**  
**AT&T**  
800.205.6268  
www.att.com

**Verizon**  
212.890.1550  
www.verizon.com

**Vonage** (Internet Phone Service)  
www.vonage.com

**Cable/High-Speed Internet**  
**Time Warner Cable**  
212.358.0900  
www.timewarnercable.com/nyandnj

**RCN Cable**  
888.922.2539  
www.connectmycabletv.com

**Banking**  
The banks listed below are close to campus. The best way to get information is to visit the website or walk over in person. In order to open a bank account, please make sure you bring your Columbia ID and an official form of identification. Some banks will do limited time special discounts for the Columbia community. Please be sure to inquire when setting up an account.

**Morningside Campus:**  
**Banco Popular**  
2852 Broadway (111th Street)  
212.749.4600  
Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Friday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Moving to the Big Apple…

Chase Manhattan
2875 Broadway (112th Street)
212.866.0293
Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Inquire about free checking for those who have direct deposit.
Chase Manhattan also has an ATM at Broadway and 113th Street.

Citibank (1)
Lerner Hall, 2nd Floor
Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Located in the back of Café (212) on the campus-entry level is a
Citibank Electronic Banking Center which is staffed with a Citibank
customer-service representative to assist you during regular business
hours. Inquire about free checking for those who have direct deposit.
There are two 24-hour ATMs.

Citibank (2)
2861 Broadway (111th Street)
212.627.3999 (automated), 212.663.5500 (direct)
Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
This location has 24-hour ATMs.
Credit Cards

Citibank offers a Citi-Secured MasterCard (secured by an 18-month Certificate of Deposit) developed to meet the needs of individuals with no established credit or with little credit history, with or without either SSNs or ITINs. A postdoc can apply for the credit card the same day he/she opens a new account. In order to apply for a credit card you must be able to provide the following information:

1) SSN or ITIN (if applicable)
2) copy of a passport (that indicates country of issuance, passport #, issue and expiration date)
3) current and valid Columbia ID or employee verification
4) proof of address (phone bill, utility bill, bank statement or letter from school which provides your current address)
5) minimum $1000 on deposit, which means that postdoc has to have an account with Citibank.

Citibank also offers a Citi Card for Non-Permanent Resident Aliens. The underlying product is a Citi ThankYou℠ Card and is specifically designed to meet the needs of Non-Permanent Resident Alien customers. This is the regular credit card that does not require the security of a CD. In order to apply for a credit card you must be able to provide the following information:

1) At least one ID (SSN, ITIN, Passport, National ID Card, or U.S. Driver License)
2) Letter verifying employment stating applicant name, established home address, phone number, title/position, date of employment, and salary
3) In order for the customer to be approved for the Citi Card, customer must meet one of the following Banking Reference criteria:
   U.S. or non-U.S. Citibank or other U.S. personal bank account for at least 3 months with a current deposit balance of $1,000 or average balance of $1,000 for the past 3 months.
   OR
   Other non-U.S. personal bank account that has been open for at least 6 months with a current deposit balance of $2,000.

Please contact Tetyana Oliynyk (212.663.3956) or Earl Allen (212.663.2179) at Citibank to request additional information about the Citi-Secured MasterCard or the Citi Card for Non-Permanent Resident Aliens.
Benefits

Columbia University Human Resources
615 West 131st Street, MC 8703
Studebaker 4th Floor
New York, NY 10027
Phone: 212.851.7000
Fax: 212.851.7024
hrbenefits@columbia.edu

Medical Center Human Resources
650 West 168th Street
101 Black Building
New York, NY 10032
Phone: 212.851.7000
Fax: 212.305.5728

Lamont Human Resources
Administration Building, Room 205
Palisades, NY 10964
Phone: 845.365.8847

Health Coverage

Postdoc health benefits can be determined, in large part, by his/her title. A postdoctoral research scientist/scholar and postdoctoral clinical fellow (who is a full-time Assistant in Clinical Department), as an employee, has fringe benefit costs charged to his/her salary and is able to choose from among the various plans offered to all other officers at the University.

Columbia offers Aetna Choice POS II, Cigna POS, UHC POS, Cigna Modified Indemnity Plan, 2 HMOs (Aetna & Cigna). Specifics on each plan are available in the University’s “Benefits Highlights” (www.hr.columbia.edu/benefits).

A postdoctoral research fellow and any postdoctoral clinical fellow on a stipend is not considered an employee. He/she can enroll in a health plan as described at www.hr.columbia.edu/benefits/postdocs. The co-pays are higher than those of an employee, as no fringe rate is charged to the postdoc’s stipend. Postdoctoral research/clinical fellows appointed at the Medical Center are eligible to sign up for the Aetna Student Health insurance plan, a lower cost alternative although it is less robust in coverage options (www.cumc.columbia.edu/student/health/insurance/overview.html).

Please note: Postdocs in J-1 status and their dependents are required to have comprehensive medical coverage in order to fulfill U.S. government regulations governing the J Exchange Visitor status.
Benefits

**Student Health Insurance**

Some postdoctoral research/clinical fellows find that the Medical Center’s Student Health Services’ Aetna Health Plan (www.cumc.columbia.edu/student/health/insurance/overview.html) is a lower cost alternative although it is less robust in coverage options. **This is only available to postdocs who are appointed at the Medical Center.**

**Dental Coverage**

Postdocs are eligible for Columbia dental insurance regardless of their health care coverage.

**Aetna Columbia Dental Plan**

The Aetna Columbia Dental Plan is administered through Columbia Human Resources and all full-time postdocs are eligible to sign up for this plan. The cost for the plan will vary depending on your appointment as a salaried postdoc or a stipend postdoc. For more information please visit the HR Benefits website (www.hr.columbia.edu/benefits).

**Aetna Advantage Dental Plan**

Aetna Advantage Dental Plan is only available to Postdoctoral Fellows at the Medical Center Campus. The plan covers cleaning and semi-annual oral exams, x-rays, fluoride treatment, sealants, fillings, scaling and root planing, simple extractions and emergency treatment. Non-covered services are provided at a discount. For more information please visit the Aetna Student Health Services website (http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/student/health/insurance/dental.html)

**Columbia Student Dental Plan**

Columbia Student Dental Plan is offered through the School of Dental and Oral Surgery and is provided by dentists enrolled in a postgraduate fellowship program. It covers semi-annual oral cleanings and examinations, x-rays, and prophylaxis. There is a 25% discount on non-covered services. All postdocs are eligible to sign up for this plan. For more information please visit (http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/student/health/pdf/dental.pdf).
Benefits

**Time Off**
Postdoctoral research scientists/scholars and postdoctoral clinical fellows (who are full-time Assistants in Clinical Department), earn two days of vacation for each month of appointment, up to a maximum of twenty-three days. They are eligible for all University holidays. Periods of leave are excluded in determining vacation privileges. Vacation time may not be accumulated beyond June 30 of the year following the one in which it was earned. Unused vacation cannot be translated into monetary pay except upon termination of appointment.

Postdoctoral research and clinical fellows are entitled to the same rights to vacation as postdoctoral research scientists/scholars unless the provisions of the granting agency specify otherwise.

**Student Loan Deferral**
Currently only Postdoctoral Fellows at the Medical Center can bring their loan deferment forms to the Office of Faculty Affairs (Black Building, Room 126) for sign-off. However, please note that lending agencies may differ in their requirements and will make the final determination of eligibility.

**Libraries**
At your disposal is a fully integrated research library. Columbia’s Libraries, with 9.5 million volumes, 117,264 current serials, and an extensive collection of electronic resources, manuscripts, rare books, microforms and other nonprint formats, ranks it as one of the top ten academic library systems in the nation. Spouses and domestic partners of postdocs may use Columbia’s libraries.

**CU Arts Initiative**
Outside the University, your ID card is your passport to New York City and can help you take advantage of all the excitement the City has to offer through certain programs and discounts. Please visit the Arts Initiative at Columbia University website (www.cuarts.com/nyc_arts/passport_to_new_york.html) for the most up-to-date list of free museums and other cultural events.

**American Language Program**
All Post-docs are eligible for tuition exemption for one class per term through the American Language Program (excludes application fee, student tax, etc. beyond tuition). ALP course information can be found at www.ce.columbia.edu and tuition exemption instructions can be found at www.hr.columbia.edu/benefits.
Benefits

**Gym Facilities**  
All postdocs are eligible to use the exercise facilities on either campus for a nominal fee.

**Dodge Fitness Center – Morningside Campus**  
The Marcellus Hartley Dodge Physical Fitness Center is the most comprehensive wellness facility on the Upper West Side. It offers everything from yoga and kickboxing to kayaking and squash instruction. Dodge also has trained personal trainers on staff for individual sessions. Facilities include an indoor running track, 25-yard pool, Scandinavian sauna, multi-sport gymnasia, and a tri-level fitness center with the latest cardiovascular and strength training equipment. Children of all ages and interests can now enjoy a variety of sports camps and Cubs Camp programs offered throughout the entire year.

**Bard Athletic Center – Medical Center Campus**  
Bard Athletic Center is a comprehensive physical fitness facility that is handicapped accessible and includes a 15 yard pool, gymnasium, cardiovascular and strength/weight training equipment. Bard also has an aerobic studio, 3 squash courts and saunas.

The basic membership for employees, associates, scholars, alumni and neighbors includes the usage of a temporary locker and towel service. All members may also rent a locker for the duration of membership, bring guests, or have a spouse/domestic partner or child (ages 6-18) join as a member (additional fee required). For a spouse/domestic partner membership, proof of common residence or a marriage certificate is required. Guests and family members are provided with a temporary locker and towel service.
Getting Around New York

New York City is famous for having the best public transportation system in the country. It runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By using the extensive subway and bus system, you have access to almost every corner of New York City and the surrounding boroughs. It currently costs $2.25 a ride on a regular MetroCard, or $2.50 for a Single-Ride ticket, and you can save money by purchasing rides in bulk or by buying 7-or 30-day unlimited ride Metrocards ($29.00 and $104.00 respectively). Before you arrive on campus, it might be beneficial to familiarize yourself with the public transportation system (www.mta.info/nyct/maps). When looking at apartments, take into consideration how far it is from the subways (1/A/C) that will get you to the Columbia campuses.

A majority of postdocs live within a quick subway ride (or even walk) to campus. Biking is another popular way of getting around, especially around the Morningside campus. Bike riders should always wear a helmet while riding in City traffic and securely lock their bikes in recommended bike racks with a U-lock.

Owning a car is not recommended as it is very expensive to insure and parking is very difficult in New York City.

Columbia Shuttles

Columbia offers five free shuttle services for anyone with a valid Columbia ID. If the bus is not filled to capacity, it will typically take anyone else traveling between campuses. Shuttle locations should also be considered when searching for an apartment as they provide transportation for a route that may not be directly along a subway or bus line. Maps and shuttle routes can be found online (www.columbia.edu/cu/transportation/docs/shuttles).

Evening Shuttle: Provides service in the Morningside Heights area for safe and convenient travel. The evening shuttle offers a Riverside Drive route to the west of campus and a Morningside Drive route to the east of campus. After the evening shuttle hours, Columbia faculty, staff and students may request Late Night On-Call Service (212.854.SAFE (7233)) for door-to-door transportation.

George Washington Bridge Shuttle: Transports passengers between the Medical Center and the George Washington Bridge Port Authority Bus Terminal (179th Street and Fort Washington Avenue).

Intercampus Shuttle: Provides service between Morningside campus, the Medical Center, Manhattanville locations and Harlem Hospital. From the Medical Center you can then transfer to the GWB Shuttle.
Getting Around New York

**Lamont Shuttle:** Transports passengers between the Morningside campus and the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory campus in Palisades, New York.

**Studebaker Shuttle:** The shuttle has recently been discontinued and merged with the Intercampus shuttle.

**Safety and Security**

The University’s Office of Public Safety is responsible for maintaining campus security. Even though the precinct in which the Morningside Heights Campus is located has the second lowest crime rate in New York City, Public Safety works very hard to continually improve upon the ways in which they serve our community. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life for the entire Columbia community by maintaining a secure and open environment in which the safety of all is balanced with the rights of the individual.

You are welcome to visit their website (www.columbia.edu/cu/publicsafety) for more information. Their phone number is 212.854.2797.

**Emergency Notification**

To reach the Department of Public Safety for a security, fire or medical emergency dial:

**Morningside:** On campus - 99 / Off campus - 212.854.5555  
**Medical Center:** On campus - 7.7979 / Off campus - 212.305.8100

To contact the New York City Police/Fire Department or Ambulance service dial: 911

**Walking Alone**

The Department of Public Safety provides escorts within the University vicinity. During the academic year, the Department utilizes trained student escorts to assist with this service between the hours of 8 p.m. and 3 a.m. At all other times, Public Safety will dispatch a staff member to escort University affiliates within the designated surrounding area.

Morningside Campus: 212.854SAFE (4-SAFE).  
Medical Center Campus: 212.305.8100 (7-8100).
The Office of Work/Life at Columbia offers a variety of programs to help you keep both your family life and your career running smoothly. The office also offers adult care and child care resources, parenting resources, a housing referral service, health and wellness resources, and information about discounts and perks available to postdocs.

Carol Hoffman, Associate Provost & Director of Work Life
212.854.8019
www.worklife.columbia.edu

**Back-Up Care Advantage Program**
Provides care for anyone you have responsibility toward, when normal arrangements are disrupted and/or when you need to provide short-term care. The program provides you up to 100 hours per year of back-up care. $2/ hour co-pay per child for childcare facilities; $6/hour co-pay for first 50 hours of home care, $9/hour 50-100 hours (for up to 3 dependents).

For more information please visit www.worklife.columbia.edu/backup-care.

**Child Care Resources**
Each year, Columbia hosts a fair for representatives of University-affiliated child care centers and other local facilities to share information and answer questions from parents living in the University’s neighboring communities. The fair is generally held in early October in Lerner Hall. For further information e-mail communityaffairs@columbia.edu.

**University-Affiliated Child Care Centers:**
**Barnard Babysitting Agency**
Barnard College students offer a babysitting service. Parents must register with the program prior to posting a job.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Preregistration
**Fee(s):** $25 annual registration
**Phone:** 212.854.2035          **Fax:** 212.854.2412
**E-mail:** bbsitter@barnard.edu       **Website:** www.barnardbabysitting.com

**Columbia Greenhouse Nursery School**
The Columbia Greenhouse Nursery School provides early childhood programs.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Ages 2 to 5 years.
**Fee(s):** Tuition and application fees. Financial aid is available.
**Registration/Application Deadline:** Application deadline is December 1.
**Address:** 404 West 116th Street
**Phone:** 212.666.4796          **Fax:** 212.865.1294
**E-mail:** info@columbiagreenhouse.com
Getting Around New York

**Family Annex**
The Family Annex offers full-time and part-time enrollment for child care.

*Eligibility Requirements:* Ages 17 months to 4.5 years  
*Fee(s):* Tuition fee. Financial aid is available.  
*Registration/Application Deadline:* None, but students are generally admitted in September.  
*Address:* 560 West 113th Street  
*Phone:* 212.749.3271  
*Fax:* 212.749.3271  
*E-mail:* info@familyannex.org

**Medical Center Nursery School**
The Medical Center Nursery School provides early childhood education and child care services. The school is open to all Columbia University affiliates.

*Eligibility Requirements:* Ages 2 to 6 years  
*Fee(s):* Application fee and tuition  
*Registration/Application Deadline:* Applications are accepted beginning in September for the following year.  
*Address:* 60 Haven Avenue  
*Phone:* 212.304.7040  
*Fax:* 212.544.4243  
*E-mail:* information@mcns.org  
*Website:* www.mcns.org

**Presbyterian Hospital Infant and Child Care Center**
The infant and child center is open to the community and provides child care.

*Eligibility Requirements:* Ages 2 months to 5 years  
*Address:* 61 Haven Avenue  
*Phone:* 212.927.2723  
*Fax:* 212.740.7376  
*Website:* guyarts.com/presbykidscom/

**Red Balloon Day Care Center**
The center provides day care services.

*Eligibility Requirements:* Ages 2 to 5 years  
*Fee(s):* Tuition and participation/activity fees  
*Address:* 560 Riverside Drive  
*Phone:* 212.663.9006  
*Fax:* 212.932.0190  
*E-mail:* rbdcc@aol.com  
*Website:* www.redballoonlearningcenter.org
Getting Around New York

The Rita Gold Early Childhood Center, Teachers College
The Rita Gold Early Childhood Center, an infant, toddler and preschool early care and education research practicum site, provides childcare to children 2 months through 5 years.

Eligibility Requirements: Ages: 2 months to 5 years; only open to children of Teachers College, Columbia University and Barnard College faculty, staff or students.
Fee(s): Tuition fees vary depending on the child’s attendance. 25% non-refundable deposit, $75.00 application fee applies.
Registration/Application Deadline: Varies by year. Call for information.
Address: Teachers College, 525 W. 120th Street (Thorndike Hall, second floor)
Phone: 212.678.3013  Fax: 212.678.3048

Tompkins Hall Nursery School and Child Care Center
The Tompkins Hall Nursery School and Child Care Center provides day care services.

Eligibility Requirements: Ages 6 months to 2 years 8 months for child care center; 2 years 9 months to 4 years 8 months for preschool
Fee(s): Tuition, application fees, and a nonrefundable deposit upon meeting participation requirements. Financial aid is available.
Registration/Application Deadline: Before December 31 for nursery and before January 31 for day care for the following year
Address: 21 Claremont Avenue
Phone: 212.666.3340  Fax: 212.666.3340
E-mail: info@tompkinshall.org

School Search Service
The University’s School Search Service provides written materials and personal guidance to all members of the Columbia community to help explore educational opportunities within public, parochial, independent and special needs schools. The School Search Service arranges for individual consultations or individuals may independently use the Search Service’s web program to search for schools in any of the City’s boroughs or Westchester or Bergen Counties. Please visit their website (www.schoolsearch.columbia.edu) for additional details of their services and also an interactive map that will assist you in moving to an area that has strong schooling for your child, regardless of grade level.
International Scholars

The University has two offices that provide assistance to postdocs coming to Columbia from overseas. They work with more than six thousand students and scholars from more than 140 countries and are aware that adjusting to a new environment is neither easy nor the same for each person.

**International Affairs Office**

Black Building, 126B
Kathy McVeigh, *Director* (kcm1@columbia.edu)
Bonnie Garner, *Assistant Director* (blg12@columbia.edu)

The International Affairs Office (IAO) serves the immigration-related needs of students and scholars at the Medical Center. IAO staff members assist prospective and enrolled international scholars with initial and continuing visa documentation. Throughout the year, IAO sponsors informative programs and workshops. They broadcast monthly announcements updating scholars on immigration issues and inviting them to join programs, workshops and activities.

**International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)**

524 Riverside Drive, Suite 200 (just north of 122nd Street)
Sarah Taylor, *Associate Director* (sft1@columbia.edu)
Jane Acton Chung, *Assistant Director* (ja378@columbia.edu)

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) assists the Morningside and Lamont campuses and offers full advisory services every day. In addition to providing immigration support, they also host workshops, programs, and social and cultural events. International students and scholars with questions or requests concerning visas, immigration, travel, employment, and/or other matters related to their stay at Columbia are welcome to walk in to speak to a Program Officer.

**Mailing Address:**
International Students and Scholars Office
Columbia University
2960 Broadway, MC: 5724
New York, NY 10027
www.columbia.edu/cu/isso

All candidates for postdoctoral appointments who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents must obtain a visa prior to starting their appointment at the University. Therefore, visa issues **must** be addressed
International Scholars

prior to the issuance of a letter of appointment or an offer of extension of an appointment.

ISSO and IAO assist international students and scholars with, among other things, documentation matters. ISSO’s website contains a wealth of information for international postdoctoral applicants. All non-U.S. citizen postdocs should visit its site (www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/incoming/) and follow the link to “Coming to Columbia: Essential Information for Scholars” or to “Immigration Overview for Scholars”.

Immigration documentation is handled by ISSO and IAO. If you are here on a J-1 visa with Columbia sponsorship, the name and address of the appropriate University office is on your Form DS-2019 (issued by the Department of Homeland Security/SEVIS) provided with your visa information.

Although some requests for documentation submitted to ISSO and IAO may be filled on the spot, it is prudent to allow at least five business days for processing. Please bring your passport and all relevant immigration documentation (including your Form DS-2019) with you when you go to ISSO or IAO for information or document processing.

Each postdoc is responsible for maintaining his or her appropriate status with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and knowing and following pertinent regulations. Postdocs should familiarize themselves with their obligations to DHS by visiting the DHS website (www.dhs.gov). If you hold a J-1 visa, you may also visit the ISSO website (www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/visa/scholar/J_scholar_maintain_status).

If you are uncertain about your status, check with ISSO or IAO immediately. Also, consult with ISSO or IAO before visiting the District Office of the U.S. Immigration Service.

Visas

It is very important to become familiar with the following terms, as they are mentioned frequently throughout an international postdocs time in the United States.

Passport – All postdocs must keep their passports valid at least six months into the future at all times. Extensions can be obtained through the nearest consulate or embassy of your country. The ISSO or the IAO will provide any appropriate documents that various government may require.
Entry Visa – The entry visa is a machine-readable stamp in your passport issued by a U.S. consul abroad. It authorizes postdocs to apply for admission into the United States at a port of entry. All international scholars (with the exception of Canadian nationals) are required to have a valid entry visa in their passport at the time of entry into the United States. Your visa specifies the type of immigration status you will hold (H-1, J-1, etc.), the date until which you may enter the United States, and the number of entries you may make before you must apply for a new entry visa. The length of validity of each visa type is determined by an agreement between your home country and the U.S. government and is not necessarily tied to the length of your program of study.

Application for a new entry visa must be made in person at a US consulate outside the United States. The validity period of your entry visa does not determine the length of time you may remain in the United States after you enter. Your length of stay is determined by the completion date on your DS-2019 or your Form I-94 (see below) expiration date, whichever is earlier.

Form I-94 – This is a record of your nonimmigrant status and permission to stay in the United States. The I-94 card is the most important immigration document as it establishes a postdoc’s J-1, H-1 or O-1 immigration status. The I-94 card also notes the date and port of arrival in the United States and the expiration date of the visa. The notation “D/S,” indicating “Duration of Status,” refers to the completion date on the certificate of eligibility (the DS-2019) given to those who wish to enter the United States in J-1 status. Those in H-1 or O status have a specific date by which they must either (1) leave the United States, (2) extend their status, or (3) change to another status. The Form I-94 is also called the Arrival/Departure form because each time you enter the United States you receive a new form, and each time you leave the country you surrender your I-94. Only in the case of short trips of fewer than thirty days to Canada, Mexico, and parts of the Caribbean do you keep this form. The I-94 is an important form and it is difficult to replace; we recommend that you make a photocopy of both sides of the form to keep separately in case you need to replace it.

Immigration Status – This status, e.g. H-1, J-1 or O-1, is determined at the time of entry into the United States by an immigration official and is noted on the Form I-94. Unlike your entry visa, your immigration status may be changed in the United States.
International Scholars

**H-1** This visa classification applies to persons in a specialty occupation that requires the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge requiring completion of a specific course of higher education. The H-1 requires a labor attestation issued by the Secretary of Labor and also applies to government-to-government research and development, or co-production projects administered by the Department of Defense. Those in H-1 status are allowed to stay a total of six years in H status, but will only be approved for a maximum of three years at a time, at that point the postdoc will have to reapply to renew his/her H-1 visa status.

**J-1** This visa is given to individuals who take part in a wide range of exchange visitor programs sponsored by schools, businesses, and a variety of organizations and institutions. A majority of postdocs at Columbia University are on J-1 visas. A postdoc is allowed to stay for up to three consecutive years with a J-1. Postdocs and any dependents with this visa status are not allowed to return to the United States in J-1 status for twelve months if the postdoc has been in the United States for more than six months in any J-1 status category within the last year and is not “extending” his/her status or “transferring” from one program to another based on the Exchange Visitor Program’s definition of “extending” or “transferring.”

**O-1** This visa classification applies to persons who have extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics, or extraordinary achievements in the motion picture and television field. O status can initially be granted for three years and can be renewed indefinitely in one-year increments by application to Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Those entering the United States to work should request the appropriate status (H-1, O-1) at the border once an I-797 approval notice has been received from DHS. Otherwise, you will be in Tourist (B-2) status and cannot be employed at Columbia. Canadians must have an I-94 card to confirm current H-1 or O-1 status, which is given by an immigration official at the time of entry into the United States. Applicants for an H-1 or O-1 visa will need their country’s passport and the original Form I-797 approval notice or a cable sent to the consulate stating that the requested status has been approved.
The staffs of ISSO, IAO and OPA are neither qualified nor permitted to answer individual questions from international scholars or postdoc fellows regarding their tax liabilities. They strongly suggest that you seek outside, professional advice when filing your tax forms.

International Scholars

During the tax year, January 1 to December 31, individuals who are employed in the United States have taxes withheld from their earnings by their employer. By April 15th of the following year, each individual has to file an “income tax return” with the federal tax authorities and also with the tax authorities in the state(s) in which he/she was employed. A tax return reports your income and either requests a refund if more tax was withheld than is required or may require you to pay additional taxes that are owed. The Internal Revenue Service is the US government agency responsible for the collection of federal income taxes.

All non-immigrant scholars in J-1 status (both the principal and all dependents) who are considered “nonresidents for tax purposes” are required to file an individual income tax form – even if they had no U.S.-source income of any kind – if they were in the United States for any part of the tax year. Generally, scholars in J-1 status are considered nonresidents for tax purposes for a period of two “tax years” and become residents for tax purposes after any parts of 2 years. If your visa status changes before July 3 in a given year you are considered a dual status taxpayer and must file a dual status return (Regarding dual status – if you were a resident last year and leave the country this year, the period before you leave you continue to be a resident for any time period in the US. You become a non-resident with no taxable income after you leave).

A resident alien for tax purposes is someone who is a permanent resident in the United States, i.e., has a “green card”, or someone who was “substantially present” in the United States. Substantial presence is based on the number of days the person is in the United States over a period of several years.

If you do not have U.S.-source income – A J-1 scholar who is a nonresident for tax purposes with no U.S.-source income (and no dependents) must file federal Form 8843 (Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition) only. Interest earned on bank accounts is NOT considered income for this purpose. Scholars complete Part I (General Information) and Part II (Teachers and Trainees) of the form.
Taxes

If you have U.S.-source income – If you are a nonresident for tax purposes with U.S.-source income, you must file federal Form 1040NR or 1040NR-EZ (U.S. Nonresident Alien Income Tax Return) and Form 8843 (Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition). Depending on the amount of income, you may also need to file a state return. The corresponding New York State forms for nonresidents are the IT-203, the IT-203B and the IT-2. NY may consider you a resident for tax purposes and require you to file form IT-201 regardless of your federal tax status. NJ does not recognize tax treaties and considers you a resident if you live there.

Dependents – Spouses of F-1 and J-1 scholars in F-2 and J-2 status must file Form 8843 (Statement for Exempt Individuals and Individuals with a Medical Condition) in all cases whether the scholar has U.S. income or not. J-2 dependents complete Part I only. A very few countries allow you to claim dependents as a non-resident including your spouse.

Withholding – is the term used to describe a portion of your pay check amount that an employer is required to pay directly to federal, state, and city taxation authorities in anticipation of your annual income tax obligations. The check you receive, therefore, is for less than you earned during the pay period. The amounts withheld are credited toward your tax bill so that most taxpayers will have to pay relatively little additional money at annual tax filing time and many will qualify for a refund of money over-withheld.

Tax treaties – Currently the United States has tax treaties or agreements with roughly 55 countries and territories under which their citizens may be exempt from all or part of U.S. income tax. To see if your country is among these and how a treaty may affect your tax status, see IRS publication #901 U.S. Tax Treaties at www.irs.gov or pick up a copy at the ISSO. However, note that when you use the web-based nonresident tax preparation system CINTAX (described elsewhere), it will determine tax treaty eligibility and applicability according to your nationality and source of income. Also, you may qualify for Tax Treaty benefits even if you are a US resident for tax purposes and if you are exempt from US taxes by treaty, you may be required to file a return with your home country. This is the definite case with Germany! Lastly, some but not all states recognize Tax Treaty benefits. Neither NJ nor Connecticut recognizes tax treaties.
Taxes

Tax Submission Deadline April 15
The last day to file an annual tax return with the IRS. Your tax return must be postmarked by this date.

FICA – A separate tax issue is Social Security tax, also known as FICA. Recent changes in tax regulations make holders of J-1 Visa subject to FICA tax withholding if they are “residents for tax purposes”. In general, J-1 holders become “residents for tax purposes” after two years. H-1 and O-1 holders are always subject to FICA withholding.

If FICA has been withheld in error, the employer must provide a refund. The employer applies for reimbursement by filing a claim on Form 941C with IRS. If you are unable to obtain a refund in this way, you can file a claim on Form 843 and Form 8316. Send your claim to: Internal Revenue Service Center, Austin, TX 73301-0215.

CINTAX
Columbia University offers the use of CINTAX, an international tax software program, to all its students and scholars. You can log-in using your UNI and password through the ISSO website (www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/tax).

Students and Scholars who are Residents for Tax Purposes
If you have been in the United States for more than five years as a student or two years as a scholar, you no longer qualify as a nonresident alien and may be required to file taxes as a resident alien. If so, CINTAX will let you know that you are considered a resident for tax purposes and will not complete the nonresident forms. However, you may be able to use software designed for residents for tax purposes. (In this case you may want to refer to a tax preparation site such as TurboTax or www.taxact.com).

Postdoctoral Fellows
Estimated Tax Payments
Many postdoc research and clinical fellows are paid through a stipend that goes directly to the postdoc [rather than to the University]. Often these stipends do not have taxes taken out before payment. Fellowships without automatic tax withholding are still subject to the IRS requirement that income tax be paid on a regular basis throughout the tax year, and not all at once at the end of the year. Thus, postdocs without withholding should make estimated tax payments each quarter.
Taxes

in order to avoid a penalty. Use IRS Form 1040ES (http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040es.pdf) for estimated federal tax calculations and payments, and find the equivalent form for estimated state taxes (where applicable).

Postdoc Fellow Tax Filing and Imputed Income
Postdocs on fellowships must also file a tax return between January 15 and April at for the previous tax year. Postdoc research and clinical fellows may receive a W-2 or 1099-MISC form reporting their total fellowship income, or they may receive no summary form at all. In any case, a tax return must be filed and the fellowship stipend amount should be reported as gross income. Also, please be aware that if your health and/or dental benefits are being paid for by your department or via a P.I. grant account, the amount that’s going towards your health and/or dental benefits is considered taxable income (imputed income) per IRS regulations and will be included on your W-2 or 1099-MISC.

FICA
Stipends are not treated as wages or self-employment income and, therefore, are not subject to FICA taxes, i.e. social security and Medicare. Also, special rules regarding taxation and withholding apply to postdoctoral fellows who are in the United States as nonresident aliens.

Please note: We encourage you to consult with a personal accountant or tax advisor regarding the potential tax consequences from their receipt of stipends since Columbia and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs cannot provide individual tax advice.
Research Offices at Columbia University

There are a number of administrative offices and divisions at Columbia that offer support for research.

Executive Vice President for Research

The Office of the Executive President for Research has overall responsibility for the University’s research enterprise. It is responsible for establishing and maintaining University-wide policies related to research. The Office also assists investigators seeking research funding, encourages interdisciplinary research, provides seed money for early-state investigations, and generally helps provide the intellectual and physical environment to maintain a high quality of research and maximize productivity.

Phone: 212.854.1656
www.evpr.columbia.edu

Clinical Trials Office (CTO)

The mission of the Clinical Trials Office is to facilitate and enhance the timely execution of quality clinical research at the Medical Center by providing support services to investigators in connection with federal and foundation grants, industry-supported clinical trials and internally developed investigator-initiated trials. The CTO supports the effective, efficient, and reliable evaluation of new pharmaceuticals and medical devices in collaboration with sponsored organizations. Services include: expediting study placement through trial feasibility analysis; facilitating IRB and other regulator services; comprehensive study budget preparation and contract negotiation; assistance with recruitment efforts; and providing training initiatives to ensure expert study coordination.

The CTO offers training and education designed to keep investigators and their research staffs abreast of current trends in the conduct of clinical trials with the goal of providing the relevant knowledge and skills that individuals need to conduct compliant and efficient clinical trials.

The CTO website contains an on-line submission tool, a portal for viewing the progress of pre-award negotiations and post award receipts, and other useful links.

Phone: 212.305.3360
www.columbiaclinicaltrials.org
Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S)

Environmental Health & Safety provides a broad range of services to promote the health and safety of all University personnel, the community and the environment in which we live and work. Through cooperative relationships, EH&S actively engages the University community to ensure a safe work environment and compliance with University policies and applicable regulations. Personnel conducting laboratory research using potentially infectious materials, hazardous chemicals, recombinant DNA, and/or radioactive materials must attend the relevant EH&S sponsored safety training(s). Columbia’s Institutional Biosafety Committee must approve the use of recombinant DNA, and Columbia’s Radiation Safety Committee must approve the use of radioactive materials. The EH&S website contains laboratory safety information as well as safety training schedules. Refresher safety training is also available through RASCAL.

Medical Center: 212.305.6780
Morningside: 212.854.8749
www.ehs.columbia.edu

Institute of Comparative Medicine (ICM)

If you plan to conduct research with animals, your animals must be ordered through, and managed and cared for by the Institute of Comparative Medicine. The mission of the ICM is to ensure that humane care of animals is used in approved research and to support medical research teams working to develop treatments for life-threatening conditions. The ICM has certified veterinary specialists who direct the care and manage the health and welfare of research animals at Columbia. The ICM conducts a training program for veterinary specialists, as well as training courses in animal care and handling for research personnel.

Phone: 212.305.3837
www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/icm

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

If you plan to conduct animal-based research, your protocol must first be approved by the University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee for your campus. Composed of scientists, non-scientists, veterinarians and community representatives, IACUC reviews all animal research proposals to ensure humane care and use of animals in all activities related to research, and to ensure compliance with all federal and state regulations. IACUC also determines what training researchers must undergo before research involving animals can begin. There are
separate committees for the Morningside and Medical Center campuses, with one central administrative office. Animal protocols are prepared and administered online. *All personnel listed on a protocol must complete an occupational health status review, species-specific training and certification course on compliance with regulations and the basic principles underlying the humane care and use of laboratory animals.*

Phone: 212.305.2404
http://cumc.columbia.edu/dept/iacuc

**Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)**

If you plan to conduct research that involves human subjects, including behavioral research (e.g. surveys) and/or biomedical investigations, one of Columbia’s four Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) will help ensure that your study complies with all applicable ethical and regulatory requirements. The University’s IRBs are responsible for protecting human subjects in research and are made up of faculty and community members. The IRBs are administered centrally, with offices on the Morningside and Medical Center campuses. *All human subjects' research conducted by Columbia faculty, staff and students must be approved by a Columbia IRB.*

The IRBs offer a number of education and training opportunities, including: IRB 101, a comprehensive introductory course that provides background on the regulations that govern human subjects research and offers tips on drafting consent forms and other IRB requirements; Monthly Investigator Meetings, at which research issues are discussed; annual educational conferences; and web-based training.

The IRB websites contain useful links and information on education and training opportunities.

**Medical Center:** 212.305.5883
www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/irb

**Morningside:** 212.851.7040
www.columbia.edu/cu/irb
Research Offices at Columbia University

**Office of Research Compliance and Training (ORCT)**
The Office of Research Compliance and Training helps ensure that Columbia faculty and staff are in compliance with the complex web of regulatory requirements that govern research. ORCT collaborates with other offices to foster an integrated research compliance program. ORCT administers the University’s Research Conflict of Interest review process, serves as a resource for international research compliance issues, and administers Columbia’s Standing Committee on the Conduct of Research, which addresses issues of research misconduct. ORCT works to integrate compliance education across the University and to develop new educational programming that promotes understanding of compliance issues throughout the research enterprise. The ORCT website contains useful information about compliance topics, provides links to resources and lists available trainings for researchers, postdocs and others involved in research.

Phone: 212.854.4261  
[www.researchcompliance.columbia.edu](http://www.researchcompliance.columbia.edu)

**Office of Research Initiatives (RI)**
The Office of Research Initiatives works across disciplines, schools and campuses to foster interdisciplinary research collaboration and supports efforts to secure funding for such collaborations. It identifies opportunities and strategies for enhancing Columbia’s research presence and its status as a prominent research institution. It also administers Columbia’s internal review and nomination processes for those funding opportunities that limit the number of proposals that any one institution is permitted to submit and works to improve Columbia’s success rate in securing such awards.

Phone: 212.854.7836  
[www.researchinitiatives.columbia.edu](http://www.researchinitiatives.columbia.edu)

**Columbia Technology Ventures (CTV)**
Columbia University’s technology transfer organization, Columbia Technology Ventures, serves as a bridge between Columbia’s researchers and the business community. CTV’s core objective is to facilitate the transfer of inventions from academic research to outside organizations for the benefit of society on a local, national and global basis. As such, CTV’s primary mission is to identify, evaluate, protect, and license or spin out Columbia’s intellectual property. CTV also strives to increase private sector funding for ongoing research and development in Columbia’s labs.
If you believe that you have an invention or discovery that may be patentable or of interest to industry or venture capital, please contact CTV for guidance before any public disclosure. CTV also can assist researchers on material transfer agreements that may be required to send or receive certain reagents. For fastest response, email techventures@columbia.edu.

Medical Center: 212.305.5198
Morningside: 212.854.8444
www.techventures.columbia.edu

Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)  
Sponsored Projects Administration is the University’s primary support office for sponsored research grants and contracts. SPA provides assistance in proposal review and submission, award acceptance, account setup, subcontract issuance, sponsor communications and non-financial award closeout. SPA is responsible for assuring compliance with regulators and other requirements that govern the grant application process and for assisting with the non-financial requirements that govern awards. Each department is served by a dedicated project officer for the pre-award process and a financial analyst for account setups and other post-award matters.

The SPA website contains a directory of these officers, information about InfoEd (the grants management IT system) and other helpful topics.

Medical Center: 212.305.4191
Morningside: 212.854.6851
www.spa.columbia.edu

Sponsored Projects Finance (SPF)  
Sponsored Projects Finance is responsible for the financial administration and reporting of all sponsored research awards, and for ensuring compliance with the regulatory and other requirements that govern the financial management of those awards.

Phone: 212.854.46864
http://finance.columbia.edu/controller/spf
Research Offices at Columbia University

**Sponsored Projects Handbook**

Many of the University’s sponsored projects policies and procedures have been compiled in the Sponsored Projects Handbook, a searchable, web-based resource. Researchers are encouraged to review this resource.

www.sponsoredprojectshandbook.columbia.edu

**RASCAL**

RASCAL is a web-based suite of IT modules that was developed to simplify the University’s research compliance and administration processes. It was designed internally to help investigators and administrators manage ongoing research projects and related compliance activities at the University. You may access RASCAL at: https://www.rascal.columbia.edu
University Policies

The following is a partial list of policies set by Columbia University that are applicable to postdocs. When relevant, contact information follows the policy. Please contact the appropriate office directly for clarification or questions.

Rules of University Conduct

The University has adopted a special set of Rules of University Conduct to govern demonstrations, rallies, picketing and the circulation of petitions. These Rules, which have been incorporated into the University Statutes, protect the rights of free expression on campus while ensuring that the University continues to function properly and that all members of the Columbia community can freely use its facilities and programs. The Rules apply to all personnel at the University.

All University faculty, employees and students are responsible for compliance with the Rules of University Conduct. The Rules are available in Essential Policies for the Columbia Community and at facets.columbia.edu. Copies may be obtained from the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Administration who serves as the Rules Administrator.

Office of the Provost
Columbia University in the City of New York
310 Low Memorial Library
212.854.2254
provost@columbia.edu

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

As an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer, the University does not discriminate against or permit harassment of employees or applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, pregnancy, religion, creed, national origin, age, alienage and citizenship, status as a perceived or actual victim of domestic violence, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, partnership status, genetic predisposition or carrier status, arrest record, or any other legally protected status. In the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other University-administered programs, it does not discriminate against any person or permit the harassment of any individual or applicant on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, pregnancy, religion, creed, marital status, partnership status, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, military status, or any other legally protected status. All members of the University community are expected to adhere to the applicable policies and to cooperate with the procedures for responding to complaints of discrimination.
University Policies

Postdocs may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/eoaa) to inquire about their rights under the University's Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures on Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment and Sexual Harassment (“Equal Opportunity Policies”), request mediation or counseling, or seek information about the application of the policies to specific situations. Complaints against employees and students are governed by the Equal Opportunity Policies. All employees are protected from retaliation for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under Columbia's Equal Opportunity Policies.

All members of the University community are expected to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures on Discrimination, Discriminatory Harassment and Sexual Harassment described in Chapter I of the Faculty Handbook.

Susan Rieger, Associate Provost
103 Low Library
212.854.5511
sr534@columbia.edu

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment destroys the trust needed to maintain an academic environment conducive to learning and the free exchange of ideas, threatens the security and sense of well-being of individuals who are harassed, and violates the law. University policy prohibits sexual harassment against any member of the Columbia community and provides for disciplinary action against anyone who violates this prohibition. You can view full text of the university policy at www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/eoaa/docs/discrim_sexharass.html.

Persons who believe they are being sexually harassed may obtain help and counseling from various offices and individuals within the University. They may take their problem to a member of the University Panel on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, the Ombuds Officer, or to the Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. They may also file a grievance under the applicable University grievance procedures. Anyone who knows of individuals who are victims of sexual harassment should encourage them to seek help from one of these sources.
The University Panel on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment is composed of trained, experienced and accessible members of the Columbia community. Members of the Panel will provide a confidential, impartial and non-adversarial setting in which problems can be addressed through confidential counseling or mediation.

Any individual may approach any panelist to discuss his or her concerns and seek advice. A panelist may also meet with persons other than the complainant to ascertain facts relevant to appropriate resolution of the complaint or to seek an informal resolution to situations in which there are allegations of discrimination or sexual harassment.

### Assignment of Rights

As part of its procedures for implementing its intellectual property policy and to comply with federal laws, the University requires certain categories of faculty and officers of research, including full-time postdocs, to sign an Assignment Agreement that provides that they will assign to the University their rights to any patentable invention or discovery conceived of or reduced to practice in the course of conducting research at the University. Information on the purpose of the agreement and who must complete it may be obtained from Columbia Technology Ventures (CTV), which can be reached at www.techventures.columbia.edu.

You can also contact the Assistant Provost for Academic Appointments in the Office of the Provost for Morningside appointments or the Office of Faculty Affairs in the Office of the Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences for Medical Center appointments. For a copy of the Assignment Agreement form, please visit www.srv.columbia.edu.

### Protecting Intellectual Property

Postdocs are responsible for reporting any discoveries or inventions that may have commercial value and any work that seems likely to produce such discoveries or inventions to CTV as early as possible. In addition, postdocs should be aware that dissemination of information about an innovation outside of the University could jeopardize or limit its patentability.

If you believe that you have an invention or discovery that is or may be patentable, contact CTV for guidance on filing the appropriate forms and to learn more about technology transfer at Columbia, CTV serves
University Policies

as a bridge between Columbia’s researchers and the business community, in order to transfer inventions from academic research to outside organizations for the benefit of society on a local, national and global basis.

Columbia University is considered to have one of the most experienced and successful technology transfer offices in the world, with more than 300 invention disclosures from faculty; 70 license deals, 100 industry sponsored research agreements, and 12 new start-ups each year. CTV can also assist researchers on material transfer agreements or confidentiality agreements as needed.

Columbia Technology Ventures (CTV)
www.techventures.columbia.edu

Morningside Office: 212.854.8444
Medical Center Office: 212.305.5198
www.techventures.columbia.edu

Misconduct in Research

Columbia University is committed to assuring the integrity of research conducted under its auspices and has put in place policies and procedures that define misconduct, outline the process for making and investigating allegations, and explain the consequences of committing misconduct. The University’s Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research may be found at www.columbia.edu/research/policy_misconduct.pdf.

The University defines research misconduct as any fabrication, falsification or plagiarism in proposing, performing or reviewing research or in the reporting of research results. Fabrication means the making up of data or results and the recording or reporting thereof. Falsification means the manipulation of research materials, equipment or processes, or the change or omission of data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. Plagiarism means the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit.

Research misconduct does not include honest error; differences of opinion; authorship disputes that do not involve plagiarism, such as who to list as first author on a publication; or violations of other University policies, such as the sexual harassment policy.

Office of Research Compliance and Training
212.851.1997
http://www.researchcompliance.columbia.edu
Use of the University’s Name

Columbia’s name and reputation are assets of both academic and economic value. The University, therefore, has a compelling interest in ensuring that its name; insignias, such as the Columbia Crown and Columbia Shield; and the emblems of individual schools are used in a manner that furthers its mission and is consistent with its institutional interests. No officer should use the official title of the University, or any of its parts, except in connection with legitimate University purposes. The name of the University, its insignias, and the emblems of its schools may not be used to advertise or recommend commercial products and services, to promote the activities of outside organizations, or to further social or political causes. Exceptions require the prior approval of the Provost. These policies also apply to the use of the University name and insignias in any electronic media, including Internet addresses, websites, and domain names. In connection with their outside activities, faculty, and other officers may identify themselves as holding appointments at Columbia by listing their University titles. They should, however, be careful not to imply that the University supports, sponsors, or endorses those activities.

Health Policies

Smoking

In recognition of the health risks associated with smoking, and in compliance with the New York City law, the University has adopted a policy that restricts the right to smoke on its premises. Smoking is not permitted in any outdoor area, outdoor eating area, and any other area with signs prohibiting smoking. This policy applies to all enclosed work areas, including private offices. There are limited exceptions to these restrictions in certain areas that are enumerated in the University’s Smoking Policy. That policy can be found in the Administrative Policy Library at www.columbia.edu/cu/administration/policylibrary/.

Drugs and Alcohol

It is a violation of University policy to unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use a controlled substance in a University workplace. Postdocs may not report to work, or remain at work, while under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol.

Any postdoc who has been convicted of an offense under any criminal drug statute must so notify the Vice President for Human Resources in writing within five days of the conviction. Within 30 days of notification, the University will determine if disciplinary action is warranted. Such action may include termination or the requirement that the individual participate in a drug assistance or rehabilitation program.
Compliance  Environmental Health & Radiation Safety

Various hazardous chemicals and biological agents are routinely used in laboratories, research facilities, and hospitals. Over the past decade, increased scrutiny of occupational risks has taken place. Biological, chemical and radiological agents have become targets of prevention programs in response to both scientific advancements and regulatory developments.

The University maintains a comprehensive health and safety program to protect the health of students, faculty and staff as well as protect the environment. Goals of the health and safety program include:

- Minimizing risk of exposure to hazardous biological, chemical, physical or radiological agents;
- Minimizing risk of work related injury and illness;
- Attaining these goals with a minimum burden on education, research and patient care activities.

All laboratory personnel are required by the University to attend various training sessions as mandated by applicable federal, state and city regulations.

Education and safety training sessions for laboratory personnel include:

- New personnel welcome and orientation: required for all new personnel within 30 days of start of employment.
- Laboratory Safety and Chemical Hygiene training provides an introduction and overview of laboratory safety, a summary of the OSHA Laboratory Standards and the University’s policies regarding laboratory safety and chemical hygiene, and the management of hazardous chemical waste and proper disposal: required for all new personnel within 30 days of start of employment.
- Bloodborne Pathogen Protection training: required for all personnel working with biological and/or bloodborne pathogens within 30 days of start of employment and on an annual basis. Refresher training is available online via RASCAL.
- Formaldehyde and Xylene training: required for all personnel working with formaldehyde and/or xylene within 30 days of start of employment and on an annual basis. Refresher training is available online via RASCAL.
University Policies

- Radiation Safety training: required for all personnel using radioactive materials in their research prior to start of use of radiation:

- Contact the Radiation Safety Officer to obtain an “Authorization Form” to use radioactive materials (RAM);

- After approval by the Radiation Safety Committee, Radiation Safety Training is required either in person (preferred) or on line via RASCAL; and

- Before the new employee or user starts actual work the laboratory must have been posted for RAM and a radiation film badge (if required) issued to the new employee or user.

Environmental Health & Safety
Morningside Campus: 212.854.8749
Medical Center Campus: 212.305.6780
www.ehs.columbia.edu

Human Subjects
Postdocs may not conduct human subjects research without the prior approval of the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Additionally, individuals conducting research with human subjects are required to undertake mandatory educational on-line training (via RASCAL) and to prove competency before IRB approval will be granted. Moreover, no one may work with patient records or protected health information without completing the University’s HIPAA training. Anyone at the Medical Center who is present in patient care settings is subject to the University’s Medical Surveillance Policies and Procedures for the applicable campus and if such patients are at New York Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH), the NYPH Medical Surveillance Policies and Procedures.

Institutional Review Board
Morningside Campus
212.851.7040
www.columbia.edu/cu/irb

Medical Center Campus
212.305.5883
www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/irb
University Policies

Research Involving Animal Subjects
Research involving animal subjects is required to be reviewed and approved by the Medical Center or Morningside Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to initiation. IACUC is a federally mandated Committee responsible for the oversight and evaluation of the institution's animal program, procedures, and facilities to ensure that they are consistent with the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, the Animal Welfare Regulations and the Public Health Service Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.

The written animal protocol describes the research activities and all personnel performing those activities. Research personnel are required to be enrolled in the University's medical surveillance program and to attend a species-specific lecture or orientation session and a species-specific wet lab. Personnel who have little or no prior experience with a particular species and/or techniques to be used in a protocol must receive wet lab training before they can perform experiments on animals. Individuals also have the option of taking part in the wet lab if they feel that they would benefit from receiving additional training.

IACUC acknowledges the extensive medical advancements that are the direct result of animal research. The Committee fully accepts its responsibilities to ensure the humane care and use of animals in all activities related to research testing and education. Research is conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, guidelines and policies governing the use of animals in research.

For detailed information on Columbia University policies pertaining to animal research, refer to the IACUC website.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
212.305.2404
www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/iacuc

Institute of Comparative Medicine (ICM)
212.305.3837
www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/icm

PI Waiver
In order to maintain academic standards and in recognition of the University's assumption of liabilities under sponsored projects, the University limits the eligibility of persons who can serve as PIs.
A PI normally must have a full-time appointment and must be an: Officer of Instruction in the rank of: Professor; Associate Professor; Assistant Professor or Instructor. They may also be an Officer of Research in the rank of: Senior Research Scientist/Scholar or Research Scientist/Scholar.

Persons with appointments carrying other instructional or research titles, including those in a visiting or adjunct grade, may act as co-PIs with officers in one of the instructional or research grades cited above. However, individuals who do not meet the above criteria may not serve as the sole PI without the approval of their department chair, director, dean or vice president and the Provost.

The Provost has delegated the authority to make such exceptions as follows:

- For officers at CUMC, the Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences;
- For those holding appointments at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, the Director; and
- For those holding appointments elsewhere in the University, the EVPR.

Officers seeking an exception to this policy should submit a request through SPA. Approval may be requested on a project-by-project basis or for all projects of the officer. The request must be countersigned by the appropriate chair or director and dean or vice president in order to acknowledge the financial responsibility of the department or school for the proposed project or projects. In addition, the request must include the individual's curriculum vitae and, if it relates to a specific project, an abstract of the project.

The Ombuds Officer serves as an informal, confidential resource for assisting members of the University community with conflict resolution. The Ombuds Officers provides information, counseling, and, if so requested, information communications and mediation to postdocs with concerns about any matter relating to their lives at the University. The Ombuds officer does not arbitrate or adjudicate disputes and does not participate in any formal University grievance proceedings. As the need arises, he or she reports patterns of concern
to the appropriate academic or administrative officers and makes recommendations on matters of University policy and life that need improvement. In order to maintain the independence and impartiality of the office, the Ombuds Officer reports directly to the President.

Office hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
E-mail: ombuds@columbia.edu

**Morningside:** 660 Schermerhorn Extension
Tel: 212.854.1234
Fax: 212.854.6046

**Medical Center:** 101 Bard Hall, 50 Haven Avenue

**Grievance Procedures**
Postdocs, with certain exceptions for Postdoctoral Residency Fellows, have several avenues of redress if they feel they have been treated unfairly. Postdocs who experience problems with their appointment, compensation, or working conditions should talk first to their principal investigator. If the problems cannot be resolved in this manner or if they feel uncomfortable approaching their principal investigator, they may seek redress from their department chair or institute or center director, and then from the appropriate dean of vice president.

Postdocs may seek information and advice from the University Ombuds Officer, who will provide information and counseling on a confidential basis. With the consent of both parties, the Ombuds Officer will also attempt to mediate an information resolution to their disagreement. Postdocs who feel they have been a victim of sexual harassment or discrimination may also contact a member of the University Panel on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment for advice. These officers are not authorized to conduct formal investigations.

Postdocs dissatisfied with the outcome of the efforts within their department, school, institute or center to resolve their complaints may seek a further evaluation by the Provost. The mechanism of the Provost uses to conduct that review depends on the nature of the complaint.

With the exception of salary disputes, postdocs may ask the Provost for a formal hearing by a grievance committee. Any such request must be submitted in writing. Before convening a grievance committee, the Provost will have the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Administration attempt to mediate a solution. If that effort fails and the Provost
concludes that there is a sufficient evidence to justify a formal hearing, he or she will establish a three-member committee to investigate the postdoc’s grievance. The postdoc and the department chair, director, dean or vice president of the unit in which the officer is serving may each give the Provost nominations for one member of the committee. The Provost, on the recommendation of the first two members, selects the third, who serves as the committee’s chair. Any tenured faculty or full time officer of research in the rank of senior research scientist/scholar or research scientist/scholar may serve as a member of a grievance committee.

The committee will have access to the records relevant to the grievance. It will interview both the complainant and the individual against whom the complaint is directed and may, at its discretion, ask other witnesses to appear before it. The committee is expected to complete its investigation as expeditiously as possible and to report its findings in writing to the Provost, who will then reach a decision on the grievance. While a grievance is under investigation, the postdoc normally retains a full-time appointment and normally continues to be paid his or her full base salary. The Provost may authorize exceptions to these requirements.

The Provost’s decision is final and binding on all parties. It is communicated in writing, together with a copy of the report of the grievance committee, to the postdoc, the principal investigator and the appropriate vice president, dean, department chair or director within 15 working days after the grievance committee has completed its investigation. The Provost may extend that period on determining that additional time is necessary to reach a reasoned judgment of the postdoc’s grievance.

An alternative mechanism exists for officers who believe that they have been the victim of discrimination or sexual harassment. This alternative is available online at www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/eoaa/docs/nondispol.html.

The grievance mechanisms described above are available to postdoctoral residency fellows as well as other officers of research when their complaints involve an action by someone within the University. If they wish to dispute a decision by the hospital or institute at which they are training, they must utilize the grievance procedures rather than those of the University.
Leaves of Absence/Terminations

Leaves of Absence

Full-time postdoc research scientists/scholars are eligible for leaves of absence for medical reasons, infant care, military service or personal leaves to care for an ill family member. Full-time postdoctoral research and clinical fellows receiving stipends are not covered by either the University’s salary continuation plan or its long-term disability insurance. While the University grants medical leaves to these officers when they experience a disabling illness or injury, the continuation of the fellowship stipend depends on the rules of the granting agency. If these rules permit, the University will continue the stipend for as long as the granting agency permits.

A leave is generally given with the expectation that the individual will return for at least one year to full-time service on its completion. However, no one is guaranteed an appointment beyond the stated term of service as a result of taking a leave, with the exception of officers who have been granted leaves for medical reasons (in which case the leave will be extended for as long as a physician indicates that the individual cannot work), child care or military service, or personal leave to care for an ill family member.

Full-time postdoc research scientists/scholars are entitled to leaves of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 if they have been employed and paid by the University for at least 12 months immediately preceding the leave and have worked for at least 1,250 hours during that period. Any compensated employment – regardless of title and including periods on the casual payroll – counts in determining if an officer meets these requirements. Postdoctoral research and clinical fellows who receive stipends as well as postdoctoral residency fellows are not eligible for this type of leave.

All leaves for postdocs must be approved by the postdoc’s primary investigator; the appropriate chair of a department or director of an institute or center; the appropriate vice president or dean; and the Provost prior to the individual going on leave.

Postdocs are not entitled to leaves of absence in order to participate in research at another academic or research institution. They may, however, resign their appointments and be reappointed, at the University’s discretion, once they are ready to resume their responsibilities.

Postdocs should request leaves of absence well in advance of their start so that their principal investigator and chair, director, dean, or vice president can plan for their replacement. Leaves require the necessary approvals before they can begin.
Complete information on Leaves of Absence can be found in the Faculty Handbook (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/handbook/research.html#leaves_of_absence)

**Terminations**
Appointments as postdocs may end as a result of any of the following actions: a decision not to reappoint, resignation, layoff or dismissal.

A primary investigator who wishes to terminate a postdoctoral research scientist/scholar prior to the end of his/her stated term of appointment must consult with the appropriate chair of a department or director of an institute or center, the appropriate dean or vice president and the Provost before taking any action or notifying the postdoc. Once the department has received the Provost’s approval to proceed with the termination, it should consult with ISSO or IAO if the postdoc is not a U.S. citizen. Federal law requires that the Department of Homeland Security be notified of the termination of a foreign postdoc and such termination may have significant immigration consequences.

Postdocs are guaranteed appointments for the duration of their stated terms, with certain exceptions for postdoc fellows. The University reserves the right to terminate the appointments of postdoc residency fellows if they cease to be enrolled in a training program at an affiliated hospital or institute or if the affiliation agreement between the University and the hospital or institute or if the affiliation agreement between the University and the hospital or institute at which they are training ends. Similarly, the University retains the option of terminating the postdoc research and clinical fellows if they lose their fellowships. In addition, these postdocs, as well as all other officers of research, may be dismissed “for cause,” as described below.

**Notice of Nonrenewal**
Postdoctoral appointments are not made for more than a year at a time and postdocs are not entitled to a minimum period of notice of nonrenewal. However, principal investigators are responsible for informing them in advance of a decision not to renew their appointments. The Provost may require that an appointment be extended in the absence of a compelling reason for giving less than three months’ notice.

Notice of nonrenewal must be given in writing. The Provost may require a department, school, institute or center to extend a research appointment if this obligation is not met.
Resignation
A resignation is defined as a voluntary separation from employment. If a postdoc wishes to resign he/she should discuss this with his/her adviser as soon as possible. In any event, a postdoc research scientist/scholar should give notice in writing to his/her adviser as early as possible, but in no event less than three months before the resignation will be effective. Postdoc research fellows must comply with the terms and conditions of the awards under which they are being supported.

Dismissal
Dismissal for cause is permitted only when there is clear evidence of failure to perform professional responsibilities or personal misconduct, according to the procedures described below. Postdoctoral research scientists/scholars also may be dismissed for a violation of the “Rules of University Conduct” concerning demonstrations, rallies and picketing, following a separate set of procedures (see www.columbia.edu/cu/senate/committees/conduct_rules/main.html).

A principal investigator is expected to attempt to resolve problems with the performance or behavior of a postdoc before initiating any action to suspend or dismiss. The principal investigator should meet with the postdoc to discuss the problems and ways of addressing them. If the postdoc’s performance or behavior does not improve, he/she should be given an oral warning and then a letter that clearly describes the problems, details the actions the postdoc must take to remedy them, and warns that disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, will be taken if they are not corrected within a specified period of time. Before taking any of these steps, the principal investigator should contact the office of the applicable dean or vice president, or the Provost.

To ensure that postdocs are not subjected to arbitrary or discriminatory procedures, all terminations before the end of the stated term of appointment must be approved by the appropriate chair of a department or director of an institute or center, the appropriate dean or vice president and the Provost before the postdoc is notified, except in the case of postdoc residency fellows. The Provost has delegated responsibility for reviewing requests to terminate for cause to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Administration. A postdoc may grieve a decision of dismissal. Postdocs who elect that option may not be terminated until the investigation of their complaint is completed, and the Provost concludes that the decision to dismiss is justified. They normally continue to receive salary until the Provost reaches a decision.
University Policies

In most instances, disciplinary action against postdoctoral residency fellows is initiated by the hospital or institute at which they are training. Since these fellows may be terminated only after the procedures of the hospital or institute have been followed, the University’s policies on termination and its grievance procedures do not apply to them. The University's policies with respect to dismissal are applicable only when the action is initiated by one of its departments.