**Postdoctoral Scholar Frequently Asked Questions**

Please visit our website for additional information: https://research.vcu.edu/resources/postdoctoral-services/

**Is there an option for getting lower cost health insurance for family members?**

Postdocs may find lower cost family coverage through one of the health exchanges. Visit this website to learn more about your options and eligibility. <https://www.healthcare.gov/families/>

**How do I find low cost childcare in the area?**

VCU [Work/Life Resources](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/wellness.html) (828-1533, [worklife@vcu.edu](mailto:worklife@vcu.edu)) provides information about child care options in the surrounding area and across the country. The Virginia Department of Social Services also has a website that allows you to search for childcare facilities in the area. <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/search/cc.cgi> Depending on your income, you may be eligible for childcare assistance from the Department of Social Services: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/assistance.cgi>

**Are there career services available to postdocs, especially for positions outside of academia?**

Postdoctoral Services and the PDA offer periodic sessions on career opportunities and career development topics. Postdocs are also invited (and often given priority) to attend sessions at the VCU Biotech Park. Announcements of these programs are done through the postdoc listserv. As a postdoc, you have access to services from the VCU Career Center

**How do I find out about research funding opportunities?**

The best place to start is on the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation resources for researchers’ webpage. https://research.vcu.edu/resources/research-development/Also, read the postdoc listserv for announcements of workshops focused on research proposal development and grant funding.

The OPS and PDA have internal grant program, the Postdoctoral Independent Research Award (PIRA) exclusively for postdocs. For application details, visit: https://research.vcu.edu/resources/postdoctoral-services/professional-development/

**What is the PDA?**

The PDA is the VCU Postdoctoral Association. It is an organization composed of all VCU postdocs whose mission is to support and advocate on behalf of postdoctoral scholars. To learn more about the organization, visit https://research.vcu.edu/resources/postdoctoral-services/professional-development/You should also join the PDA listserv to stay informed about activities sponsored by the PDA throughout the year. To join the list, please email [vcupostdocs1@gmail.com](mailto:vcupostdocs1@gmail.com) to enroll.

VCU is also a member of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). You can learn more about the NPA and the resources available to all VCU postdocs at: https://research.vcu.edu/resources/postdoctoral-services/professional-development/

**Are there funds to help pay for travel expenses to present my research at professional conferences?**

Yes, the VCU Postdoctoral Association (PDA), has a travel grant program. Watch for the call for awards announcement, which will include instructions.

Calls for travel award abstracts are sent via the PDA listserv.

**Is there any neutral and confidential place at VCU where I can seek assistance if I have a problem within my lab or with my mentor?**

The university ombudsman is available to all postdocs. He provides assistance to help manage and resolve disputes, manage conflicts, and learn more productive ways of communicating.  For more information: <http://www.ombudsperson.vcu.edu/>

**Why do postdocs have to pay for using the recreational sports facilities (i.e., the gyms on campus) when students can use them for free?**

Students actually pay for use of the facilities through their mandatory university fee. For more information about student fees go to: <https://accounting.vcu.edu/tuition/>

Postdocs are eligible for membership to the facilities at the faculty/staff rate. For membership information: <http://www.recsports.vcu.edu/membership/>