

The following boilerplate language is for assisting in grant proposal preparation. Faculty Members and Postdoctoral Researchers are advised to tailor boilerplate language to reflect their research project's specific aims. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs strongly recommends that researchers directly contact the department/office/program in question when seeking a more in-depth resource description, mainly if a specific resource is integral to the research proposal.

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

Committed to advancing the University's mission to conduct cutting-edge research and advanced training, the universitywide [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) (OPA) supports postdoctoral researchers and their faculty mentors by providing a central hub for career and professional development opportunities, knowledge sharing, and community building. The [OPA staff](#) are dedicated to the growth and success of our postdocs. In addition to guidance from the [Executive Steering Committee](#), the office relies on a strong partnerships with the [Postdoctoral Advisory Council](#) (PAC), [Postdoctoral Association](#), and [several units](#) across Rutgers.

Each month, the OPA hosts career development workshops and events—all dedicated to helping the growing community of over 700 postdocs to make the most of their time at Rutgers and prepare them for the next stage of their careers. The OPA raises awareness of internal and external resources available to postdocs for their training and career success.

At the start of their appointment at Rutgers, postdocs are encouraged to attend a **Welcome and Information Session** hosted by the Office, which provides information on career development opportunities, and campus resources. Postdocs also receive the OPA's weekly newsletter, which contains a listing of upcoming events, professional opportunities, and valuable resources shared by our campus and external partners.

Career Development

The **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs** hosts monthly career development seminars/workshops on **grant writing, project management, time management, career challenges, science communication, networking and interviewing, academic careers, and teaching**. The OPA staff is experienced at providing Individual Career Advising Sessions suited to STEM, Biomedical, Social Science, and Humanities PhDs who want to pursue either an academic or non-academic career.

In addition to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, Rutgers University offers non-academic career exploration programs such as [iJOBS Program in the School of Graduate Studies\(SGS\)](#), funded by the National Institutes of Health.

As part of the [Big Ten Academic Alliance](#), postdoctoral researchers at Rutgers have access to resources from the **National Research Mentoring Network-CIC Academic Network (NRMN-CAN)**. The NRMN-CAN is a collaborative Big Ten NIH grant that offers **professional development, grantsmanship coaching, and mentor skills training** to postdocs in the biological, clinical, environmental, and social/behavioral sciences.

The **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs** also offers a career preparation program open to all postdocs. The Proactive, Reflection, Empowered, Planning (**PREP**) program provides the infrastructure, training, and facilitation to increase self-awareness of the pillars of career satisfaction (Strengths, Values, Preferred Skills, Personality) and as a result, increases the understanding of what a career fit looks like. Postdocs in the **STEM, Biomed, Humanities, and Social Sciences**—who need clarity in defining a career fit or path and need guidance in identifying their unique professional value and formulating the next steps for a career plan—are encouraged to apply.

Grant Writing

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs currently offers **Postdoctoral Grant Writing Skills Workshops** and **Grant Writing Support Groups** to bring together a small group of postdocs to apply a focused set of rules to improve their grant-writing skills. A faculty, an experienced grant-writer, serves as a moderator of the group and schedules meetings to work on writing. Usually, by the fifth session, the group has discussed all the grant material.

Teaching Skills

Postdoctoral researchers at Rutgers have opportunities to develop their teaching skills and prepare for a faculty job through the INSPIRE fellowship program and Bio Links program. The [INSPIRE Research and Educational Postdoctoral Training Program](#) is one of 20 NIH-funded IRACDA Programs. INSPIRE trains postdoctoral fellows in scientific teaching and enhances the professional development of other trainees at Rutgers who participate in INSPIRE activities such as scientific writing workshops, courses on scientific teaching, etc.

[BIO Links](#) is a teaching K-12 outreach program that allows graduate students and postdocs to volunteer in local public schools. BIO Links volunteers are paired with a science teacher from a local school and commit to visiting one class per week for nine weeks. Some past volunteers have decided to continue visiting the classrooms well beyond the nine-week commitment.

In collaboration with the [Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research](#) (CTAAR), the [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) also offers workshops tailored for academic career seekers. These workshops cover topics such as teaching portfolio, teaching statement, faculty job applications, and faculty job interviews, etc.

Responsible Conduct of Research Training

Rutgers University School of Graduate Studies offers an annual Ethical Scientific Conduct course (<http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/education/gsbs/current/ethics.html>) for Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training that is compliant with NIH requirements. The course duration is for one semester, and participants are required to attend a minimum of eleven, one-hour weekly meetings. The subject matter of the course addresses the following topics: Mentor-Mentee Responsibilities and Relationships; Plagiarism, Academic Rules, and Copyright; Data Acquisition and Laboratory Tools: management, sharing and ownership; Research Misconduct and Policies for Handling Misconduct; Responsible Authorship and Publication; Conflict of Interest - personal, professional, and financial; Scientist as Responsible Member of Society; Collaborative Research in Academia and Industry; Peer Review; Policies for Animal Subjects in Research; Policies for Human Subjects in Research; Contemporary Ethical Issues in Biomedical Research and the Environmental and Societal Impacts of Scientific Research; Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer.

The course format is weekly meetings conducted as a large group lecture for 25 min, followed by a small group (~10 students/group) discussion of cases for 25 min. Faculty participation includes both the large group lecture conducted by an expert in the field who is affiliated with Rutgers University and the small groups facilitated by Rutgers faculty actively conducting research that represent each of our nine joint graduate programs. The large lectures can have assistance as necessary from regulatory experts from the schools and are video captured to allow for review. Graduate students register and receive one credit for completion of the requirements. To allow for additional frequency of instruction, fellows and others are provided a certificate of completion after attendance at a minimum of eleven meetings. F33 and K award

recipients at Rutgers can either take the class themselves and/or lead small group sessions. Initial training is required for all first-year graduate students and postdoctoral fellows on training grants who have not completed a course in RCR in graduate school. RCR training is required at least once per education stage and no less than once every 4 years. To this end, refresher training is required for all fifth-year graduate students and postdoctoral fellows on training grants who have completed a course in RCR in graduate school. Refresher training consists of 8 hours of small group case discussion lead by faculty.

Scientific Rigor and Reproducibility

To address the new NIH requirements concerning scientific rigor and reproducibility (NOT-OD-16-011), Rutgers' School of Graduate Studies has piloted a series of webinars that are funded by an NIH R25 grant (PI: DiCicco-Bloom) and developed in collaboration with the Society for Neuroscience (Promoting Awareness and Knowledge to Enhance Scientific Rigor in Neuroscience). The Rutgers School of Graduate Studies is also offering 3 new biostatistics courses which are available to biomedical PhD students and postdoctoral fellows as of September 2016: "Statistics in Biomedical Science", "Interdisciplinary Biostatistics Research Training for Molecular and Cellular Sciences: Enhancing Rigor and Reproducibility" funded by the supplement to a T32 Biotech Training grant, and "Statistical Theory for Research Workers". These are 3 credit courses and cover the following topics: Determining Power, Defining Endpoints. Randomization, Blinding, Assay Expertise Level, Data Management / Analysis, Data Inclusion / Exclusion, Bias, Reproducibility, Statistical Theory, Statistical Methodology.

Research and Career Mentoring

Research Mentoring

The [National Research Mentoring Network-CIC Academic Network \(NRMN-CAN\)](#) is a collaborative Big Ten NIH grant that offers **mentoring skills training** to postdocs in the biological, clinical, environmental, and social/behavioral sciences. All Rutgers postdocs are eligible to participate in [Big Ten Academic Alliance](#) resources such as NRMN's research mentor and mentee training workshops which are designed to help maximize the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. This evidence-based, interactive approach engages mentors in collective problem solving and connects them with resources to optimize their mentoring practices. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs offers workshops on "Mentoring-up and Mentoring" geared to improve Rutgers postdoctoral researchers' mentoring skills using the NRMN evidence-based mentoring training workshops' materials.

During the spring semester, the **School of Graduate Studies** runs **Mentoring Undergraduate Workshops**. These workshops use techniques and case studies from the National Research Mentoring Network (NRMN) to teach PhD students and Postdoctoral Researchers tools and skills to mentor undergraduate students in a laboratory setting better. Attendees also reflect upon approaches they would use to mentor trainees and employees when running a lab or research group in the future. Topics and interactive case studies led by Drs Janet Alder, Evelyn Erenrich, and Xenia Morin include *Managing Student Projects*, *Aligning Expectations*, *Assessing Understanding*, *Cultural Sensitivity*, *Dealing with Anxiety*, *Promoting Motivation*, among others. A Badge in Mentoring Undergraduates certification process is available to those who attend these workshops and follow up with online activities and assignments.

Career Mentoring

Designed to increase engagement, skills, and productivity, [the Rutgers Connection Network Mentoring Program](#) (RCN) is a mentoring resource for faculty and postdocs, where they participate in a year-long mentoring partnership. The RCN Mentoring Program provides the infrastructure, training, and facilitation to participate in effective and collaborative mentoring partnerships beyond the departmental level. A small cohort of postdocs is chosen each year to participate in this program. The postdocs are paired with faculty mentors outside of their departments, and they meet monthly to discuss personal and professional goals. All mentoring partners participate in activities to **network**, **build mentoring skills**, and receive tips and **best practice resources to facilitate effective and collaborative mentoring**.

Rutgers Individual Development Plan

The individual development plan (IDP) is a mentoring and career development tool that helps postdocs be more intentional and take ownership of their career goals and success. The **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs**, with the support of its [Executive Steering Committee](#) leadership and [Postdoctoral Advisory Council](#), **strongly encourages** postdoctoral researchers to complete an IDP with their faculty mentors once a year. With that in mind, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs has created a Rutgers IDP form for postdocs and a [website](#) companion with additional mentoring and career management tools that can help advance the postdoc's career in a focused and strategic way.

Mental Health & Wellness

The **Office of Postdoctoral Affairs** staff cares tremendously about the mental health and overall wellbeing of postdoctoral researchers. So in March 2020, the OPA launched the [Mental Health](#)

[& Wellness Webpage](#). This page provides general tips and *internal and external resources available to all postdoctoral researchers at Rutgers*. You will also find helpful resources to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic.