



Texas A&M University

# Texas A&M Postdoctoral Handbook

Office of Postdoctoral Affairs | Division of Research



# Howdy and Welcome to Texas A&M!

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Dear Postdocs,

You have joined a thriving community of postdoctoral scholars at one of the largest and most prestigious research universities in the United States, with first-rate research facilities and world-class faculty in fields ranging from veterinary medicine to engineering to the behavioral and social sciences.

The postdoctoral community is vital to our research enterprise. We recognize that postdoctoral research scholars require mentoring and training opportunities that are more specialized and otherwise different from those for undergraduate and graduate students, university staff, or faculty. To that end, this handbook was produced with you in mind.

We welcome you to the Aggie Network that extends around the world—and that starts with your membership in the Texas A&M Postdoctoral Association—and wish you a productive and enriching experience at this great university.

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# What is a Postdoctoral Scholar?

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Postdoctoral scholars are highly skilled individuals that contribute to the success of the research enterprise at Texas A&M. The definition of the postdoc position highlights the importance of mentored training in this steppingstone experience toward future careers.

[National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation \(2007\)](#) "An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and is engaged in a *temporary and defined* period of *mentored* advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue *his or her chosen career path*."

[National Postdoctoral Association](#) (2007) "A postdoctoral scholar ('postdoc') is an individual holding a doctoral degree who is engaged in a *temporary* period of *mentored* research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue *a career path of his or her choosing*."

[Association of American Medical Colleges](#) (2006) "Postdoctoral appointees typically join an institution to advance their training in a chosen discipline after recently obtaining their terminal degree (e.g., PhD, MD, DVM). This training, which should be for a *defined period of time*, is conducted under the supervision of one or more investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a *mentor*. In addition to the primary responsibility of conducting research, the postdoctoral appointee may also undertake leadership, service, and teaching activities that together provide a training experience essential for professional development and career advancement."

# New Postdoctoral Scholar Arrival Checklist

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During your first few days on campus, you will need to complete the following:

- Make arrangements to meet with your research advisor/Principal Investigator (PI). Similarly, try to meet your colleagues and locate your lab, office or other work area.
  
- **Meet with the Department Human Resources Administrator to:**
  - Complete employment paperwork, remembering to bring identification such as your, driver's license, passport or birth certificate, social security card.
  - Obtain your Texas A&M University (TAMU) identification number and your NetID (see below).
  - Complete forms needed to obtain keycard access to your building.
  - Select and enroll in the university benefits plans that are available to you. **This must be completed within 31 days (or earlier, for an earlier insurance start date) from the date you become eligible for postdoctoral research associates, or 7 days for postdoctoral fellows.** Registration is done online through Workday. Refer all questions to the Texas A&M University Benefits Office at [benefits@tamu.edu](mailto:benefits@tamu.edu) / (979) 862-1718/3128 or online at <https://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/index.html>. Ask about other department-specific procedures. You may also seek information from the appropriate Human Resources professional serving your department.
  
- **If you are an international postdoctoral scholar**, depending on your non-immigrant status, the following offices on campus can provide assistance and advice related to your status:
  - International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) for questions about F-1 OPT, F-1 STEM OPT, J-1 Academic Training, J-1 research scholar and J-2 dependent, <https://iss.tamu.edu/>
  - Immigration Affairs (IA) for questions about H-1B, TN, O-1 & Permanent Residency <https://isfs.tamu.edu/>
  
- **Obtain your NetID/ Email .**
  - Your Universal Identification Number (UIN) is used instead of your social security number on official forms and documents.
  - Your NetID is an electronic identifier used for various university resources. To activate your NetID, you must have University Identifier Number (UIN). Once you have one, go to [Aggie Account Gateway](#) and select "Claim NetID" to get started
  
- **Obtain your MyAggieCard ID at the Student Business Services**
  - Staff and faculty receive their UIN through their hiring department when the employee record is created in Budget/Payroll/Personnel (BPP). The UIN is used to claim a NetID for staff and faculty, along with being the username for the System's SSO/HRConnect sites.
  - To obtain an ID Card, your supervisor or HR Liaison must submit the ID Card Request Form on your behalf prior to you submitting your photo online. You will not be able to submit a

photo until this has been completed. The full details for your supervisor or HR Liason can be found on the [MyAggieCard](#) website.

- Once you are ready to submit a photo, visit the MyAggieCard website and open the Faculty/Staff/Retirees tab of the Online Photo Submission section.

□ **Review the Texas A&M's University Rules and SAPs.**

- University Rules and SAPs are used to communicate the responsibilities, procedures, and practices that guide the operations of Texas A&M units. To understand their significance, Rules and SAPs should be read in conjunction with their related System Policies and Regulations. See the "Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements" section near the bottom of each Rule and SAP to find the related Policy or Regulation.

□ **Review the Logistics regarding Transportation, and Parking website**, for complete information about Texas A&M bus schedules and routes, parking permits, maps, disability services, and more. See section **Housing and Transportation in the Bryan-College Station Area** for more information and resources.

□ **Attend the New Postdoctoral Orientation.** The New Postdoctoral Orientation takes place twice a year, once each in the fall and spring semesters. This orientation is designed to help you jumpstart your career at Texas A&M by providing an overview of the university resources available to postdoctoral scholars. As a participant, you will be able to explore the resources and professional development opportunities at Texas A&M. If you have questions, contact the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs at opa@tamu.edu

# Texas A&M Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

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The [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) (OPA) was established January 12, 2022 to serve as a resource for postdoctoral scholars, faculty, and administrators. It is located within and supported by the Division of Research. The Office is dedicated to serve as a central resource by providing coordinated, collaborative, and comprehensive support for postdocs, thus, enhancing the outstanding scientific training available to postdoctoral scholars at Texas A&M.

As a land-, sea- and space-grant institution with first-rate research facilities and world-class faculty in fields ranging from veterinary medicine to engineering to the behavioral and social sciences, Texas A&M attracts a diverse group of postdoctoral scholars with a diverse set of educational and training needs. We appreciate and value the contribution that postdocs make to our learning and research community and are committed to excellence in the educational and training experiences our postdocs receive. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs addresses these needs.

Our primary mission is to be an advocate for postdoctoral researchers and postdoctoral specific interests, to provide professional development training and create career development opportunities for postdoctoral researchers, and to be a central resource for the postdoctoral community.

Who are we: The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs sits within the Division of Research and serves under the leadership of the Associate Vice President for Research responsible for Research Development Services.

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs is managed by a Faculty Fellow/Director assisted by an administrative assistant. The Director meets monthly with the Executive Committee of the Texas A&M Postdoctoral Association, comprised solely of postdocs, to organize professional development workshops and other training opportunities or improve the quality of life for postdoctoral scholars.

To contact us, please email to [opa@tamu.edu](mailto:opa@tamu.edu)

## **Texas A&M Postdoctoral Listserv**

The Listserv Email service is curated by Texas A&M OPA to keep postdocs updated on upcoming events and general information that is pertinent to postdocs at Texas A&M. Click [here](#) if you would like to sign-up for the listserv.

## **Texas A&M Postdoctoral Calendar**

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs maintains an online [calendar](#) to keep postdocs up to date on upcoming professional and social events.

# Texas A&M Postdoctoral Association

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The [Texas A&M University Postdoctoral Association](#) (PDA) is a postdoc-led organization with the goal of providing support and representation to all postdoctoral trainees from Texas A&M. The Texas A&M PDA is supported by the Texas A&M Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

The mission of the Texas A&M PDA shall be to foster a sense of community among the postdoctoral scholars, to be an advocate and a representative voice of the postdoctoral scholars at Texas A&M, and to improve the quality of the postdoctoral experience at Texas A&M.

All postdocs at Texas A&M are automatically members of the Texas A&M PDA. There is no registration procedure, but you should subscribe to the listserv to keep updated on events and news, and also visit the on-line postdoctoral calendar.

The Texas A&M PDA works together with Texas A&M OPA to enhance the postdoctoral experience and promote the continued success of postdoctoral fellows by:

- Promoting personal and professional development through seminars and workshops;
- Providing opportunities for networking among postdocs;
- Advocating for postdoc-friendly university policies by creating awareness within the administration regarding issues and/or problems common to all postdocs;
- Fostering a sense of community among postdocs.

The Texas A&M PDA is [led](#) by the Executive Committee (EC) that meets monthly with, and reports to, the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. Individuals in the positions named to the EC can be found on the website. The EC PDA also meets monthly to organize community events, social activities and other networking opportunities led by the EC. If you want to participate and contribute to the association, please send an email to [pda@tamu.edu](mailto:pda@tamu.edu) or follow us on [Facebook](#).

## **Postdoctoral Association General Assembly meeting**

These meetings include the annual activity report from the Executive Committee to the postdoctoral community at large. All association members are encouraged to attend and present ideas and topics for ongoing and future PDA activities.

## **National Postdoctoral Association**

Texas A&M is a sustaining member of the [National Postdoctoral Association \(NPA\)](#). This allows all graduate students, postdocs, faculty, and staff at Texas A&M free affiliate memberships.

[Affiliate members](#) have access to members-only NPA website content, NPA member groups for networking with fellow NPA members, reduced registration fees to the NPA annual meeting, eligibility for the NPA travel award program, and national representation on postdoctoral issues. The members-only website content includes useful resources as: career-planning, mentoring plans, a responsible conduct of research toolkit, etc.



# Compensation and Benefits

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## Postdoctoral Scholar Classifications based on financial support

Postdoctoral Scholars fall into one of two categories depending upon the type of the financial support. This is important because the type of funding determines the benefits eligibility, and the mode of taxation.

**Postdoctoral research associate or Postdoctoral researcher** (Texas A&M employee receiving a salary through the **Workday** payroll system)

Postdoctoral research associates are Texas A&M employees and receive payment for services rendered through the payroll system. This arrangement generally occurs when the individual's training is accomplished through meeting a work obligation and providing service to a sponsored contract, e.g., NIH research grant. The appointments of such individuals will show an appropriate percentage of effort and a "salary payment." State and federal payroll taxes are withheld from monthly compensation.

**Postdoctoral fellow** (NOT a Texas A&M employee receiving a stipend through a fellowship).

Postdoctoral fellows are individuals who are paid a stipend, regardless of the funding source, and effort is solely devoted to research activities. Such stipends may be charged to institutional or individual training grants, external fellowships, or other university training funds. Payroll taxes are not withheld from monthly compensation, but this income may be subject to state and federal taxes. For answers on benefit questions, please contact Benefit Services at [benefits@tamu.edu](mailto:benefits@tamu.edu). Fellowship questions can be directed to your fellowship advisor.

## Benefits enrollment for Postdoctoral Research Associates

Texas A&M University's Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) leads and supports the Texas A&M community through premier Human Resource services that cultivate a great work environment and enhance organization success.

At Texas A&M University, postdoctoral research associates receive appointments that are provided to individuals who have received a terminal degree, and who are receiving advanced training while participating in research or scholarly activities. The duration of the appointment is at the discretion of the hiring department, program, or other appointing unit, and is generally based on the employee's job performance, conduct, scientific progress and/or the availability or funding, if applicable. However, all nonfaculty employees of Texas A&M University are "at will", meaning that any nonfaculty employee may be dismissed from employment with or without cause. Any such dismissal must be in compliance with federal and state law.

The most complete listing and detailed descriptions of the benefits to postdoctoral research associates is included in the [Benefits Guide](#). Compensation information may be found at [Research Title Matrix](#).

Postdoctoral Research Associates working 50% effort or more for 4.5 months or longer are eligible for benefits through their employment at Texas A&M University. Benefits through the Texas A&M University

System include medical, dental, vision, life, dependent life, accidental death and dismemberment, long term disability, and two flexible spending accounts. All newly benefit eligible employees have a 60 day waiting period before their employer contribution begins. Employees may choose an earlier insurance start date, but must choose and be complete with onboarding in Workday within the following timeframes:

Time Period to Enroll	Coverage Start Date
7 days from date of hire/initial eligibility date	Date of hire/initial eligibility
End of the month in which you are hired/initially eligible	First of the month following date of hire/initial eligibility
31 days from date of hire/initial eligibility	Employer contribution eligibility date (first of the month after your 60th day of employment)

Postdoctoral Research Associates working 100% effort qualify for the Optional Retirement Program and must choose between the Teacher’s Retirement System and Optional Retirement Program within 90 days of their hire or eligibility date.

Resources:

Retirement Booklet: <https://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/benefits/pdf/RPB.pdf>

Benefits Guide: <https://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/benefits/website/BenefitsGuide.pdf>

## Leave and Time Off

Eligible Texas A&M employees may use various types of paid and unpaid leave. Leave eligibility and approval will vary, depending on the employee's circumstances and needs. Please visit the [HR Website](#) for full information.

**Holidays:** A leave-eligible employee in a position of 50% (excluding employees in a position requiring student status) effort or above must work or be in a paid leave status any portion of the last scheduled working day before a holiday and be in a paid leave status (or work) for any portion of the next scheduled day after a holiday to be eligible for holiday pay. Exception: an employee will be paid for the designated December holidays if they are in a paid status or working for any portion of the last scheduled workday before the holiday period begins. The employee will be paid for a designated January 1 holiday if they return to work (or are in a paid leave status) for a portion of the next scheduled work day following the holiday. A portion of a scheduled work day, for holiday pay eligibility purposes, is defined to be at least 15 minutes.

**University Holidays:** No minimum appointment is required. There are eight holidays observed by the university: New Year’s Day, MLK Day, Spring break (1-2 days in spring, vary by year), Memorial Day, Juneteenth, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. In addition, the university generally observes as holidays what are termed season days—

the four weekdays that fall between Christmas Day and New Year's Day. All university holidays observed during the appointment period are paid days off for postdoctoral research associate.

**Vacation:** Eligible employees are entitled to paid vacation leave each year. The amount of vacation leave each employee receives is determined by length of state service. Eligible employees may begin to use vacation accruals after six months of continuous state employment; additionally:

- Previous faculty, staff, student, and wage employment with the state will count toward this requirement;
- State employees are required to satisfy the continuous six month requirement only once in his/her employment career with the state;
- Employees may begin to use vacation leave on their true continuous six month anniversary.

**Example:** an employee who begins state employment on January 15 may begin to use his/her available vacation leave on July 15.

Accrued vacation leave is earned based on years of total state employment; you may review vacation accrual rates [here](#).

**Sick Leave:** Eligible employees are entitled to use sick leave. Employees may begin to use their sick leave accruals immediately upon hire with no waiting period. Sick leave accruals are earned at a rate of eight (8) hours per month for a full-time employee and earned proportionally down to 50% effort (a 50%-effort employee will earn four (4) sick leave hours per month).

**Parental & Maternity Leave:** Texas A&M University employees (faculty, budgeted, student, wage) on maternity or paternity leave are, if eligible, entitled to benefits under the provisions of [The Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#). Employees who have not worked for the State of Texas for at least 12 months or who have worked fewer than 1,250 hours during the 12-month period preceding the needed leave qualify for maternal/paternal leave under the state's Parental Leave Act (PLA). Maternal/paternal leave under the FMLA and PLA includes the natural birth of a child and the placement of a child for adoption or state-certified foster care.

See Section 31 of the [System Policy and Regulation Library](#) for full details on the time off and the leaves.

## **Benefits Enrollment for Postdoctoral Fellows**

**NOTE: This process pertains to Postdoctoral Fellows who are NOT benefits-eligible employees and NOT currently paid as employees through Texas A&M University. In addition, if the Fellowship is affiliated with the Texas A&M College of Engineering ([engrbenefits@tamu.edu](mailto:engrbenefits@tamu.edu)) or College of Agriculture and Life Sciences ([agrilifebenefits@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:agrilifebenefits@ag.tamu.edu)), please contact their respective HR offices for Fellow enrollment procedures.**

According to Section 1601.1021 of the Texas Insurance Code, postdoctoral fellows are eligible to participate in the Texas A&M University System insurance programs (<https://employees.tamu.edu/benefits/postdoc-fellow.html>).

To qualify for Texas A&M University group insurance, you must hold a postdoctoral fellowship(s) and currently receive a stipend from an applicable fellowship. Your eligibility will continue as long as you hold the fellowship.

For instructions on the process for Insurance Enrollment, visit [this website](#) for more information. The initial insurance enrollment period for individuals eligible to participate in the Texas A&M University group insurance plan as an eligible Fellow will be **7-days** from the fellowship effective date that generates the benefits eligibility. Coverage can start the 1<sup>st</sup> of month following the fellowship start date if fellowship certification form is complete and submitted within the month the fellowship begins. The **certification form** can be found [here](#) and must be completed by department and Office of Vice President for Research. The Certification Form must be completed and returned timely by the appropriate office to ensure compliance with the **7-day enrollment window**. TAMU Postdoctoral Fellows can submit the form to [benefits@tamu.edu](mailto:benefits@tamu.edu)

Time Period to Enroll	Coverage Start Date
7 days from date of hire/initial eligibility date	Date of hire/initial eligibility
End of the month in which you are hired/initially eligible	First of the month following date of hire/initial eligibility

All postdoctoral fellows may enroll themselves and their dependents in one of the group health plans. The plans and services available, as well as the premiums and co-pay rates, may vary from year to year so it is important to read through what is offered before enrolling. Prescription drug coverage is included with enrollment in any university health plan.

Additional benefits available to postdoctoral fellows may include dental insurance, vision insurance, and basic life insurance depending upon status as a Fellow. The most complete listing and detailed descriptions of the benefits to postdoctoral fellows is included [here](#).

Fellows enrolling in benefits will have a profile created in Workday to house their enrollment information. Once enrolled, the fellow will pay monthly premiums through the System Billing Office and, if applicable, submit reimbursement requests to their fellowship. Automatic Bank Drafts can be set up using the [Bank Draft Authorization form](#).

Postdoctoral fellows are considered to have 'student status as a requirement for employment', thus, are not eligible for vacation or sick leave accrual. See TAMUS regulations <https://policies.tamus.edu/31-03-02.pdf> and <https://policies.tamus.edu/31-03-02.pdf>.

Texas A&M University, Texas A&M AgriLife, and Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station provide supplements for the NIH NRSA awards through the [Part-time Employment Program \(TPEP\)](#) (also see page 14 - Internal Funding Opportunities).

# Resources

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## Professional Development Resources

Establishing an institutional resource for comprehensive professional development activities for postdocs is a useful tool to attract and train talent to Texas A&M. First, the professional development program constitutes an excellent recruiting tool for postdocs and new faculty. Second, this program can contribute to enhance funding success of new institutional training grants and individual postdoctoral fellowships as well as supports existing awards. Lastly, enhancing postdoctoral professional competencies supports postdocs research productivity and helps them attain their career goals.

### Professional Development Workshop Series

These workshops are organized by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and feature strategic topics for the professional development of postdoctoral scholars. Most of the workshops are organized as hybrid events, face-to-face with zoom participation for distant campuses.

- Career Development Series—Focused on topics relevant to building a career in an academic or non-academic environment.
- Teaching Workshop Series—Focused on topics relevant to building a career in teaching.
- Mentoring Workshop Series— Evidence-based workshops to help postdoctoral scholars learn the skills necessary to be productive mentees and also mentors to undergraduate and graduate students in their labs.
- Postdoc Affairs Series— Focused on the needs of postdoctoral fellows (wellness, visas, etc.).

## Career Funding Opportunities

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs curates annually a list of funding opportunities for postdocs. Visit this [website](#) to learn more about internal and external funding opportunities for postdoctoral scholars.

### **Pivot**

Pivot allows researchers to search and track the right research funding opportunities — quickly and easily. It provides global and local connections that strengthen research by exploring new avenues for funding and collaboration.

### External Research Funding Opportunities

The funding opportunities listed on the website address postdoctoral funding. This list is not exhaustive. The links are reviewed and updated annually.

### Internal Research Funding Opportunities

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Services Awards (NRSA) offers a unique opportunity to recruit postdoctoral fellows through these highly competitive and prestigious NIH awards to Texas A&M University, Texas A&M AgriLife, and the Texas A&M Engineering

Experiment Station. Texas A&M provide supplements for the NRSA awards through the [Part-time Employment Program \(TPEP\)](#). See the linked website for more information.

### **Travel Awards**

The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA) organizes two travel award competitions every year in spring and fall semesters - up to five travel awards of \$500 each per semester. Applications are reviewed by a group of faculty and postdoctoral scholars on a holistic basis, considering merit and attendance to professional development postdoctoral events.

Please visit the weblink above for other external travel award opportunities.

## **Other resources**

### **Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CIRTL)**

Each semester CIRTL hosts a learning community, or a series of workshops tailored specifically for [postdocs](#). These events allow postdocs to discuss topics relevant to teaching in the college classroom with current TAMU faculty members.

### **Center for Teaching and Learning**

Teaching, Learning and Culture (TLAC) encompasses students, faculty and staff whose efforts and interests center on the many different aspects of academics, teaching and classroom education. TLAC's mission is to create experiences that advance teaching, research and service through the application of knowledge in the preparation and development of quality educators, placing high value on collaboration, diversity, critical thinking, creativity, democratic governance and global leadership.

### **Additional Resources for English as a Second Language**

The Center for Teaching Excellence's English Language Proficiency Program serves Texas A&M University instructors of all ranks (teaching assistant to professor) by providing instruction in oral English proficiency. Conversation Circle for English Language Proficiency is held weekly on campus. Register here with your NetID: <https://ers.tamu.edu/>

### **Blinn College English as Second Language (ESL) Program**

ESL activities and instruction are designed to support English Language Learners in achieving competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of English that leads transition to postsecondary education and training or employment, or to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent if needed.

### **LinkedIn Learning**

Access 13,000 courses you can view on your computer or mobile device. Postdocs should follow instructions for TAMU staff for signing-in using single sign-on credentials (TAMU Net ID).

### **National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity**

The NCFDD focuses on key areas that help you improve writing and research productivity while maintaining a full and healthy life off campus. Instructions for how to access as an institutional member using your @tamu.edu address are [here](#).

## **Scholars@TAMU**

Profile system that hosts searchable expertise for faculty and TAMU organizations by gathering data from institution-level/enterprise systems, publicly available research data (e.g., grants and publications), and other authoritative sources. The data is compiled into a profile that you can edit to best represent your scholarship and expertise. This service is available to postdocs upon request. If interested to have your own profile in Scholars database, please email a copy of your CV to Ethel Mejia at the Texas A&M Library ([ethel@library.tamu.edu](mailto:ethel@library.tamu.edu)).

## **Responsible Conduct of Research**

Texas A&M is committed to supporting responsible and ethical conduct of research and scholarship among its faculty, staff, and students. As such, the university follows federal, state, and university guidelines regarding Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). A campus-wide environment pertaining to responsible conduct of research requires researchers to have the knowledge, skills and tools to allow them to be responsible for their research conduct. Knowledge areas depending on research focus may include topics such as authorship, plagiarism, peer review, human subject protections, animal welfare, clinical practice, data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership, conflict of interest, collaborative research, export controls, research expenditures, and research misconduct, among others.

## **Research Misconduct**

Texas A&M University is committed to promoting and ensuring the highest standards of research integrity. promoting and ensuring the highest standards of research integrity. Research misconduct is a violation of research integrity that undermines trust among colleagues, trust in our stewardship of public funds, and impedes the advancement of knowledge that impacts the well-being of society. As such, all Texas A&M employees are required to report concerns about the possible fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research. You can discuss any concern about possible research misconduct by contacting the University Research Integrity Officer, Gerianne Alexander, PhD, by email ([galexander@tamu.edu](mailto:galexander@tamu.edu)), phone (979.845.8585), or in person (Division of Research, Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Building, 301 Old Main Drive, Suite 3104).

## **Export Control**

It is the policy of Texas A&M to comply with United States export control laws and regulations including, without limitation, those implemented by the Department of Commerce through its Export Administration Regulations (EAR) and the Department of State through its International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), as well as those imposed by the Treasury Department through its Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

The [Export Control Compliance Program Manual](#) is designed to assist Texas A&M faculty, staff, and students with export control compliance. It serves as the university's guiding framework to assure university compliance with federal export control laws and regulations.

## **International Student and Scholar Services**

The ISSS office at Texas A&M oversees numerous functions essential to the international postdocs:

- Assisting and pro-actively advising J-1 program participants to facilitate successful completion of their program at Texas A&M University.

- Acting as the liaison between the university, foreign nationals, and the US Department of State and Department of Homeland Security
- Ensuring institutional compliance with the federal regulations
- Supporting international scholars and their dependents for non-immigrant related questions such as orientation for *new* international scholars (immigration documents validation, rules and regulations), program extensions, transfer, employment, international travel, benefits they can apply for in the US such as SSN, TX Driver's License, banking, etc.



## **Work-Related and Personal Issues**

HROE provides strategic human resources management and support to academic and administrative departments within the University to ensure compliance with all Federal, State, local and all University rules, regulations and procedures. For more information please contact:

[Employee-Relations@tamu.edu](mailto:Employee-Relations@tamu.edu) or (979) 862-4027.

### **Disability Resources**

The Americans with Disabilities Act emphasizes individual abilities rather than disabilities, as well as protects the employment and access rights of impaired individuals. Individuals with disabilities should be given the same considerations and courtesies that are afforded to other employees. An employee who requires a reasonable accommodation should inform their supervisor.

### **Title IX**

[Title IX](#) of the Educational Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at federally funded institutions. Title IX protects students, faculty, staff and visitors from all forms of sex discrimination.

### **Sexual Assault Resource Center**

The Sexual Assault Resource Center's (SARC) mission is to end the cycle of sexual violence in the Brazos Valley, TX through education, empowerment, and advocacy.

### **Step In. Stand Up.**

Step In Stand Up is a great reminder that as active bystanders, we can Step In to prevent acts of violence and harassment, and we can Stand Up for survivors. We can protect ourselves and one another with steps like planning ahead, using the buddy system and asking for consent. Throughout our history, Aggies have stepped up to serve, achieving remarkable things. We can continue that tradition of service with safe practices, bystander intervention and survivor support – and we can do it, because we're Aggies.

## **Health and Well-Being**

**Living Well at Texas A&M** is a wellness program that helps employees grow and thrive by focusing on overall wellness and work/life integration.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Work/Life Solutions Program by GuidanceResources® offers a variety of services including mental and emotional concerns consultations with clinicians for anxiety, depression, stress, grief, loss, life adjustments, relationship challenges, marital conflicts, etc. They also provide assistance with finding referrals for resources for things such as child and elder care, hiring movers or home repair contractors, locating pet care, etc. Also, they offer legal guidance for divorce, adoption, family law, wills, and trusts. Visit the [Resources](#) page for more information.

### **Recreational Sports**

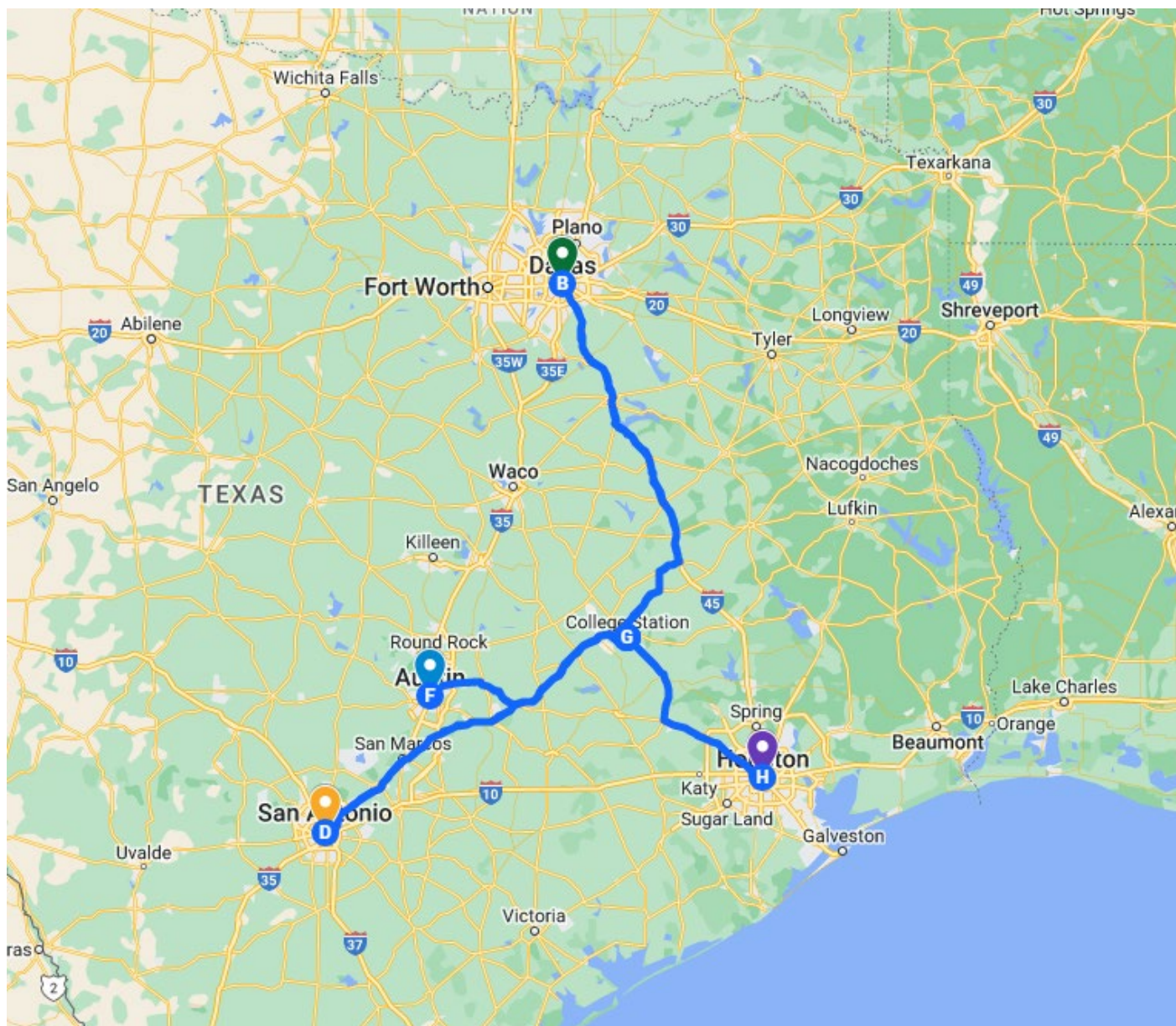
Postdoctoral scholars are eligible to purchase discounted membership for access to the University's sporting and recreational facilities. Full and part-time TAMU employees can purchase an affiliate membership starting at \$190 for one semester. Rates vary depending on employment status and length of membership.

# Living in Bryan-College Station

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Rich in history and college tradition, Bryan-College Station (BCS), often referred to as 'Aggieland,' is the home of the flagship campus of Texas A&M University. The twin cities are served by Easterwood Airport (CLL) located next to Texas A&M Campus. You will find that the BCS are ethnically diverse with a small town charm appealing to families, professionals, staff, and students.

Bryan-College Station is conveniently located within the metropolitan triangle in Texas. There are 4 large metropolitan areas within just a few hours from campus: Austin- 2 hours; Houston- 1.5 hours; Dallas- 3 hours; San Antonio- 3-3.5 hours. The information that follows will assist in your relocation and orientation to Bryan-College Station.





## Housing and Transportation in the Bryan-College Station Area

Bryan/College Station is a growing area with many opportunities for its residents. In 2019, census data estimated approximately 210,000 people live in Aggieland. Both the University and the city have a variety of sites that will provide information about available housing options and locations.

### **Texas A&M University Campus**

The Official Texas A&M **Aggie Map** is a tool made for students, staff, faculty, and visitors for finding administration and classroom buildings, parking lots, etc.



### **University Bus Routes**

Website with all on- and off-campus bus routes. This is updated daily with different routes on Game Days.

### **Texas A&M Parking**

Transportation Services at Texas A&M University offers resources to help you get around the campus and surrounding city. Information on parking passes, garages, events, modes of transportation, and visitors can be found on the website.

### **Carpool**

CARPOOL is a student-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the Bryan/College Station community with free rides home every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night from 10:00 pm to 3:00 am during the Spring and Fall semesters at Texas A&M University. It does not matter if you are a student or not, Aggie or not, or even intoxicated or not.

### **VEORIDE Bikeshare Program**

Veoride is a bikeshare program that allows anyone to use bikes and scooters for transportation around the A&M campus. Riders pay per ride through the app. Download the app off the App Store or Google Play Store.

### **Aggie Bike Surplus Sales**

If you are in need of a cheap bike, the Surplus Property Office will have an annual bike sale located at the Surplus Property Office on Agronomy Road. The sale site is located behind the building. All bikes are sold as-is for \$30. The bike sales occur as inventory allows in either late September or early October.

## **Off-campus**

### **Brazos Transit District Buses**

This website provides information on the public bus system for the greater Bryan-College Station area. Passes and tickets are available to purchase through the site, as well as information on routes and transit options.

### **Uber and Lyft**

The surrounding area of Texas A&M offer great services for rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft. These are phone apps that allow people to pay for car rides to and from anywhere in town. If in need to make some extra money, Uber and Lyft offer those who own cars the opportunity to drive and work for the company as rideshare drivers.

### **Faculty / Staff / Post Doc Apartments**

Texas A&M Faculty, Staff Members, and Postdocs are welcome to apply to live at the Gardens Apartments on monthly or 12-month contracts at local market rate prices. No security deposit or background checks.

### **Off-Campus Housing**

The twin cities have a substantial number of apartment structures and rental homes. The University maintains a website to assist with locating housing for a variety of needs - **AggieSearch**. Other resources available on the site include maps, roommate search, and ways to list your own property for rent.

## **College Station**

### **Visit College Station**

Welcome to College Station - Home of Texas A&M University! Come experience the vibrancy, tradition, and spirit that makes College Station such a special place. Resource for discovering what the city offers.

### **College Station City Map**

City map(s) of the area.

### **City of College Station Residents & Neighborhoods**

This site offers information on living in College Station, as well as resources to get to know the city.

## **Bryan**

### **Destination Bryan**

Born of converging cultures and built on deep Texas roots, Bryan is a community filled with authentic stories, people, and places – our legends. Take time to discover our legends and create some incredible memories this year as you explore all the wonderful activities Bryan, Texas has to offer. We've put together a list of 28 must-do activities for your 2022 Bryan Bucket List.

### **Downtown Bryan**

In Historic Downtown Bryan, the legendary stories of our past converge with a thriving arts scene, top-rated restaurants, signature events, and eclectic boutiques & antique shops to form the ever-evolving cultural hub of the Brazos Valley. This recognized Texas Cultural District is the heart & soul of our community, home to the highest concentration of unique & locally owned shops and restaurants in Bryan-College Station.

### **City of Bryan City Services**

At the City of Bryan, we want to offer our residents the easiest and most efficient way to find information they need. In keeping with this initiative, you'll find a list below of services the city provides, including services available online. We hope this list will help you quickly find information about the services you're seeking.

## For Partners, Spouses, and Families

### School Districts

The Bryan College Station Area has a diverse selection of primary and secondary education institutions. Choose from public, private, chartered, religious, or academies:

- [Allen Academy](#)
- [Brazos Christian School](#)
- [Bryan Independent School District](#)
- [College Station Independent School District](#)
- [Harmony Science Academy](#)
- [International Leadership of Texas College Station K-8](#)
- [St. Joseph Catholic School](#)

### Parks and Recreation

#### **Aggie Park**

This beautification project transformed 20 acres in the heart of campus into enhanced outdoor spaces for study and relaxation, tailgating, entertainment and recreation for students and visitors. The project, which is envisioned as “an outdoor MSC,” includes additional and enhanced tailgating space, water features, an outdoor amphitheater, a performance pavilion, public Wi-Fi, dedicated media utilities for national broadcasts, permanent Distinguished Alumni recognition, and improved infrastructure. A new building operated by The Association of Former Students will be programmed for year-round use, providing flexible and functional space for Aggie Ring Day and other events.

#### **The Gardens at Texas A&M**

The Gardens is a beautiful public garden and green space nestled on Texas A&M University's West Campus. Beginning with 27-acres, The Gardens strives to restore, preserve and develop the area and surrounding green space into a variety of themed spaces used for teaching, research, and extension programming, as well as engaging with the community. The first phase of development, seven acres called the Leach Teaching Gardens features 21 themed gardens. Currently, the design team is finalizing its plans for the second phase of development. The Gardens is a unique, vibrant part of campus that allows visitors and students alike to enjoy and learn from the nature that surrounds them.

#### **City of College Station and City of Bryan Parks and Recreation**

Our Parks & Recreation departments offer a variety of learning, recreation, and leisure activities for all ages! Our parks system covers 56 properties totaling more than 2,400 acres and continues to expand with new green space development. Relax by one of the pools, jog through the nature trails, or get involved in one of the sports or community programs. There is something for everyone!

#### **Veterans Park & Athletic Complex**

Veterans Park & Athletic Complex is both a premier athletic facility and a memorial in College Station. This complex was built to honor veterans of the Brazos Valley and serves the community well by hosting sports events and tournaments. This space is ideal for sports including baseball, football, lacrosse, soccer, softball, ultimate Frisbee and rugby.



### **Wolf Pen Creek Park & Amphitheater**

This 63-acre park has a beautiful paved 2.7-mile trail system that has become a popular place to enjoy the fresh air and get much-needed exercise. The park boasts a 10-acre open festival site that is perfect for throwing a frisbee, flying a kite, or a large-scale event. Other amenities include an open amphitheater with lawn seating for 7,000, a disc golf course, playground, multiple restrooms, and a rentable 2,000 square-foot Green Room. The Green room includes a meeting room, three dressing rooms, space for formal catering preparations, and a balcony overlooking Wolf Pen Creek Park.

## **Arts and Entertainment**

A diverse cultural life thrives in Bryan-College Station. Venues both on and off campus contribute to the BCS artistic life.

### **Campus Attractions**

Texas A&M is home to the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in addition to several other museums and art galleries. More than 1,200 public events are hosted through our university each year, including Broadway shows, concerts, ceremonies, and athletic events.

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As the 13th presidential library, the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum promotes an understanding of the American presidency, examines the specific time in history during which President Bush served, and provides access to official records and artifacts from the George W. Bush Administration.

### **Opera and Performing Arts Society (OPAS)**

Founded in 1972, OPAS at Texas A&M University presents professional productions of theatre, music and dance programs that enlighten, entertain, and inspire audiences of the Brazos Valley. OPAS programs are funded entirely by revenue generated from ticket sales and contributions.

### **Brazos Valley Orchestra**

The Brazos Valley Symphony is a non-profit performing arts organization with the mission to maintain a symphony of high artistic standards, and to promote the musical arts for cultural and education purposes in the Brazos Valley.

### **Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History**

The Brazos Valley Museum hosts tours, lectures, and classes. The Museum strives to stimulate understanding of the dynamic relationships between the people and their natural environment and to encourage responsible stewardship of all natural resources. The focus of the Museum is science and natural and cultural history. Galleries include fossil exhibits, sculptures, antique farming and survey equipment, a discovery room with more than fifteen varieties of live animals, dozens of taxidermy mounts, educational resources, and several rotating exhibits. Through activities at the Museum and

through outreach to schools and other community organizations, the Museum teaches respect and appreciation for the region's natural and cultural history.

### **Bryan-College Station Public Library System**

Welcome to the Bryan & College Station Public Library System. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve the Brazos Valley in a variety of ways. From in-person assistance at our libraries, to community outreach, to virtual entertainment and educational programs, our dedication to the community shines through in our efforts.

### **Bryan Theatres**

Bryan hosts two different local theatre companies in town. Find out more about them at their respective websites listed below:

- [The Theatre Company of BCS](#)
- [Stagecenter Community Theatre](#)

### **Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley**

The Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley in Bryan, Texas provides a child-centered, hands-on interactive environment for learning and discovery! It is our commitment to create a space for children to innovate, create and play through new educational opportunities. Our exhibits, programs, camps and field trips opens a world of discovery to children through STEAM.

# Appendices

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## Appendix A: Individual Development Plan for the postdoctoral scholar

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) provides a planning process that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. The IDP is different from the annual evaluation required by the University. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs provides an IDP workshop every summer.

### Goals of the IDP

- Identify long-term career options and set goals
- Identify the necessary tools to reach the career goals
- Identify short-term needs for improving current performance to reach the career goals

### How to write an IDP

- **Step 1: Self-Assessment.** What skills and competencies do you need to develop? Take a realistic look at your current abilities and outline your long-term career goals. [MyIDP](#) is a useful tool that provides postdocs the opportunity to assess their own skills, strengths, and values.
- **Step 2: Career exploration.** What are my professional skills and interests? How do my interests and skills translate into potential career? Which careers have I not considered? Identify the job families and/or career titles that match your skills and interests. Then, set strategic goals and find the resources needed to guide you through the process.
- **Step 3: Writing an IDP Action Plan.** The IDP is a road map that will provide the general path you want to take and helps match skills and strengths to your career choices. This road map may change in time, since needs and goals will evolve during your postdoctoral training. This is an iterative process. The aim is to build upon current strengths and skills by identifying areas for development and providing a way to address these. Use SMARTER goal format when you write your IDP. SMARTER goals are specific, measurable, action oriented, realistic, and timely so that you can evaluate and readjust as needed.
- **Step 4: Implement your Plan.** Revise and modify the plan as necessary but remain flexible and open to change.

### Benefits of the IDP for the postdoctoral scholar as a mentee

- Assists in developing long-term goals
- Defines expectations and sets milestones along the way to achieve specific goals
- Provides a communication tool between the postdoc and research advisor

### Benefits of the IDP for the research advisor as a mentor

- Focuses postdoc interests on personal development by enhancing individual professional growth and productivity in the lab through milestones setting.
- Enlists an active IDP program for the postdocs in the annual grant report as applicable
- Improves the professional growth at the department and college level.

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