

**Topic:** Postdoc Rights & Benefits

**Date:** February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Invited Speakers:**

- Laura Hamilton, HR Manager
- Amy Tolman, HR Manager
- Jennifer Mabey, Assistant Dean, Office for Postdoctoral Affairs

**Summary:**

We had a comprehensive overview of a rights and benefits for all postdoctoral researchers working at the University of Utah. Benefits list dependent on the job code can be found here: <https://www.hr.utah.edu/forms/lib/5-308.Matrix.pdf>

Highlights from the discussion are provided below:

- Postdocs are academic non faculty.
- A postdoc's job code determines eligible benefits. Postdocs are under one of eight job codes. For some who receive paychecks through University of Utah payroll, the code will be on the paycheck. For others, they will need to contact HR to find out their job code.
- Job codes may change throughout a postdoc's career because of specifications of the grants used to pay postdocs. For example, some grants allow for retirement, and others do not. Contact your OSP to find out what benefits a postdoc qualifies for.
- The minimum salary required by the United States to avoid overtime pay is about 23k a year for full-time work. Postdocs who make less than that should track their hours for overtime pay. Postdocs who make over 23k a year do not get overtime pay. As postdocs we are salaried and should expect to work overtime from time to time. The amount of overtime be required of you is dependent on the PI.
- You do not get to keep your prior postdoc salary if you move to a new postdoc or grant. Some salary increases specified by grants are allowed, but may need authorization from someone like the VP of research.
- The UCARD does more than get you on the bus. HR for the U and HR for medical campus both list additional benefits that postdocs receive from their card. These include a discount at The Pie, cell phone bills, and Disneyland tickets. To check your discounts login to <https://pulse.utah.edu/>
- Postdocs have no maternity leave. If a postdoc is working full time, they can apply to FEMA, which is unpaid leave from work. Supposedly this is protection from employer repercussions. A postdoc is guaranteed their job back, but the projects the postdoc was working on may be reassigned to someone else.
- Postdocs have 15 days of vacation, but it may be less if specified by grant or funds sponsoring you. FEMA allows up to 12 weeks additional leave time. Only one family member can use FEMA at a time for maternity care. Other sicknesses or operations may allow both the sick and caregiver to take FEMA. It's easier to apply for FEMA before the

leave needs to be taken, but FEMA can be applied to after as well. FEMA does not extend contracts or grant support.

- Postdoc vacation days are tracked manually. Postdocs cannot use sick days as vacation days. Sick days accrue from year to year, vacation days do not. 10 vacation days roll over to the next year.
- Work from home days are PI dependent as to whether or not they are considered sick days.
- In terms of which health insurance to choose, "Advantage" plan is always better option.
- A postdoc can switch to spouse's insurance when the postdoc ends, or at any life change.
- Postdocs qualify for Cobra.
- Postdocs do not have to do anything to stay on insurance. HAS (Health spending accounts) are different. It has to be spent each year, or it is lost. Also, a postdoc would have to sign up for this every year as part of the high deductible health care plan.
- Visa issues are best handled by the legal department (ISSS <https://internationalcenter.utah.edu> or the Office of General Counsel <https://legal.utah.edu>).
- PIs often contact HR about postdoc benefits. Talk to PI about expectations.
- Important: find your HR representative to get specifics on a postdoc's benefits.
- PI-Postdoc conflicts are handled through the administration rather than HR. If you have any conflicts, please contact Jennifer Mabey from the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.