

**Beyond the Ph.D. Workshop | Sept. 26, 2018**

<b>Questions from Postdocs</b>	<b>Answers from the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs</b>
How do I find a postdoctoral position in my research field?	The best way to find a postdoc position in your field is to directly contact a researcher who is working in a field of your interest or who applies new techniques you would like to learn. On occasion, postdoc positions are also advertised in <i>Science</i> or on university websites.
How do we compete for postdoctoral positions in high ranked universities?	Make what you will be bringing to the lab plausible, e.g. in new techniques or ideas. Why are you interested in joining the lab and uniquely qualified to do so? Coming in with your own funding is a great benefit.
How can I become a postdoc? What are the criteria to obtain a position?	The main criteria to become a postdoc is to have received your Ph.D., and to find a position for which either your faculty advisor has funding, or for which you have obtained a fellowship.
Why are no funds available from FAU for outstanding graduates as postdoctoral researchers - since any research outputs will benefit FAU?	Most postdocs are paid through extramural grants. As FAU is increasing its extramural grant portfolio, an increasing number of postdoc positions will become available. In the meantime, late-stage doctoral students and early stage postdoctoral fellows are strongly encouraged to apply for postdoctoral fellowships. The Research Development unit within the Division of Research is available to assist with such applications.
Is it mandatory to do a postdoc in order to obtain an academic position?	It is not mandatory to do a postdoc, though several STEM fields view the postdoc experience as part of the education toward becoming a successful researcher. Typically, the postdoc time is used to hone in on a research field of interest and/or learn new techniques that will make the candidate a successful, independent researcher him/herself.
What are the criteria for a postdoctoral position selection?	In many STEM fields, the advisor will look at the publication record and insure that the topic area and expertise of the candidate fits that of his/her research. In addition, funding needs to be available for the postdoc.
Where are the best places to find listings of postdoctoral jobs as well as industry and governmental positions?	The National Postdoc Association has a "Career Center", but postdoc positions are often also listed on typical job sites, such as indeed, or on Science Jobs.
Is it important to do your postdoc outside the state where you earned your Ph.D.? I'm told this is necessary.	It is not mandatory to do your postdoc outside the state of your Ph.D., but some places like to see flexibility in moving around and obtaining experience from various places.
What is the expected publication frequency at the postdoc level? One paper per year?	Publication frequency is largely dependent on the discipline and also your research area. One publication per year could be roughly taken as an average for the most common STEM fields.
When is the appropriate time to apply for my postdoc position?	A few months before finishing up your Ph.D. You will be interviewing for the position, but also need to have your Ph.D. credential to be formally employed as a postdoc.
What suggestions do you have for managing the transition from graduate school to a postdoctoral career?	Since the postdoctoral fellowship is not a program any longer, you have to be quite proactive in finding the best fit for yourself and making yourself "interesting" to your potential advisor. Bringing your own fellowship funding will also be helpful. In choosing your postdoc environment, be sure to pick a postdoc advisor that matches your long-term career choice and provides additional educational opportunities.

Can I follow my own research interests or do I need to work on existing projects? What should I do now to prepare?	Postdoctoral fellows will be working under an advisor, so the research project will typically be a discussion with the advisor and fit into his/her research portfolio. It is not uncommon, though, for the postdoc to spin out part of that project and develop it toward his/her own research as an independent researcher.
How difficult is it to find a postdoc in Florida? And specifically for marine sciences? Are there many educational postdocs available?	The availability of postdoctoral positions fluctuates and is largely dependent on availability of funds.
What is the application process for the postdoctoral program?	There is no formal application process or program for postdoctoral fellows. The application procedure follows the normal application for a job, i.e. you would apply with a cover letter and CV to individual positions.
I want to know about opportunities for a postdoc in Computer Science at FAU and other universities and how to apply, how to be selected.	No formal postdoctoral program exists. Postdoctoral positions are available on a 1:1 basis, and when funding for such positions becomes available, usually through extramural grant support. The best way to obtain a position is to work with your selected advisor and if s/he agrees to take you on as a postdoc, to select a fellowship that you can apply for, to support your fellowship. The Research Development unit within the Division of Research is available to assist with fellowship applications.
How likely is it to secure sustainable postdoctoral work here at FAU? What are some concrete steps that PhD candidates can take to do this?	See answer immediately above.
If a Ph.D. chooses to do a postdoctoral study, can he easily work as a teacher in that university?	Postdoctoral positions are typically entirely focused on research. As the next career step, however, the individuals often obtain assistant professor positions that require a certain amount of teaching. If a postdoc at FAU would like to gain teaching experience, please contact the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs. In agreement with the postdoc advisor, and working with the Provost's Office, we will assist in obtaining such teaching experience.
What is the step by step procedures to secure a postdoctoral position in a renowned lab?	See answers above.
What sets a candidate above others for a postdoctoral spot?	See answers above.
What is the process for funding from industry?	Postdoctoral funding is unlikely to come from industry, but in most cases more focused on an academic career that is funded through extramural grant support from major federal sponsors
How important is a postdoc if you wish to pursue a career in the federal government (CDC) or industry?	Postdoctoral experience is primarily viewed as important if the individual wants to pursue a career as an independent researcher, either in academia or one of the national labs. Industry positions are less likely to require postdoc positions, though a discussion with your selected employer would be good to have.
What is the best way to prepare myself as a Ph.D. student for a career in industry as opposed to academia?	Early internships with the company of your choice are typically advantageous in securing a position. Also, a discussion on their requirements for entry in their workforce will be good.
Does the postdoc position in Nursing offer sponsorship to apply for green card to international students graduated from FAU?	FAU cannot actively support green card applications.
How do you negotiate salary?	Since postdoctoral positions are in most cases sponsored by the federal government, salary offered is mostly non-negotiable.

Are postdoc positions only available in the Fall or are they available year round? Do you need a specific research idea prior to applying for a postdoc?	Postdoc openings do not follow specific dates or semester, they are available year-round. The research project is typically developed in discussion with the advisor and may be following the grant that supports the position. If the postdoc is applying for his/her own fellowship, s/he is typically able to more develop his/her own idea.
Would you think that enrolling in a postdoctoral program makes it easier to find a position (tenure track)?	For positions in typical STEM areas, having done a postdoc will make it easier to obtain a tenure-track position.
Does age matters to get a postdoctoral position?	Age is not a factor, though most postdocs require you to be within 6 years of your terminal degree, unless a reason exists for a break in education.
Is it necessary to do postdoc in the same field as that of Ph.D. or can one switch areas of research?	You are able to switch areas of research, though you would need to justify this change. When starting a postdoc position, this is often the best and likely last time to completely switch topics before settling into an academic career.
How well did your graduate studies prepare you for your job? What can I do concretely to prepare myself for success in such a wide field?	Publish your research findings, go to conferences and network with as many labs as possible, so you get a sense for where you want to go.
Is a postdoc necessary for a future career in academia? If not, in what scenarios can a recent PhD graduate expect to find a tenure-track position?	See answer above.
During my Ph.D., when should I start searching for postdoctoral position?	See answer above.
What are some questions a postdoctoral scholar applicant should ask during postdoc interviews?	Get a feel for the atmosphere in the lab, and learn about expectations on the side of your new advisor. Determine the timeframe of funding, whether you will be required to bring in your own funding after a certain period of time. Determine how much of your own idea(s) you will be able to incorporate into the research project. Determine how much of the research project your advisor will allow you to take with you as you become an independent researcher.
What are the different skills that can be acquired as part of postdoc experience? Is a postdoc mandatory to get faculty position in a well reputed university?	See answer above.
What is the average duration of a postdoc?	The average duration of a postdoc is largely dependent on the field and can average from 2 to 6 years.
What are the pre-reqs in the selection process for a postdoc in addition to the number of publications?	Your fit with the remainder of the lab and your research interests will be determining factors, as well as your ability to articulate how you are uniquely positioned to enter this position.
Which is more important for postdoc training: mentorship or funded lab/project?	Both are equally important.
Is it advisable to seek a postdoc in the same field or area of interest I had my Ph.D. in or is it better to diversify?	See answer above.
Can you advise how I can navigate to a new (but related) area of interest and still competitively present myself during a postdoc position application?	You will need to develop a logical reason for wanting to make that change and be able to justify it in your application. If your Ph.D. experience can still bring new aspects or techniques to the position you are applying for, that will be viewed as advantageous.
How do international students get involved in postdoc opportunities?	International students typically receive a J1 visa when starting a postdoc position in the U.S.

Which is better after a Ph.D.? Job or postdoc?	That largely depends on your career choice.
When applying for a postdoc, do we refer to supervisors with whom we want to work/study under our applications?	Applications are made directly to a potential advisor. There is no program for postdoctoral fellows.
Why doesn't FAU's administration designate funds for postdoctoral positions in certain areas that support the pillars to keep their outstanding students?	As FAU is increasing its research, we are hoping to eventually have sufficient funds available to provide such fellowships.
What is the highest salary that can be given to a postdoctoral fellow? Is it regulated or governed?	There is no official limit to the postdoc salary, but, since most are extramurally funded, the federal agencies typically have limits on the salary. In many cases, postdoctoral fellowships follow the payline published by NIH.
What are the steps/procedures that FAU is taking to help their Ph.D. students get postdoctoral positions?	FAU is offering grant writing assistance to obtain fellowships. We are currently in the process of developing mock interviews. The Office for Postdoctoral Affairs had originally also created a seminar series to assist with improving interview presentations, which was poorly attended. Please contact the office if you would like to see this initiative continue.
Under what conditions can you stay in the same lab for a postdoc?	Primarily, if funding is available. In many cases, a change is encouraged to obtain additional insight into your research area.
Is it important to do a postdoc outside the state you earned your Ph.D. to show you are capable of being an independent investigator for a reputable university?	See answer above.