

University of Alberta Postdoctoral Scholars Onboarding

This document was prepared in collaboration with the Postdoctoral Fellows Association (PDFA) and the Postdoctoral Affairs Office, Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, as an initial recommended starting point for postdoctoral scholars (PDS) initiating their tenure at the University of Alberta.

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Post Doctoral Fellows Association

The PDFA is the union representing postdocs on the University of Alberta campus. This Association is responsible for negotiating the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, which governs the policies/procedures for postdoctoral employees - i.e. those paid by their supervisors' funds and who don't have their own external funding. However, it is important to note that even if you are categorized as a postdoc trainee or guest, you are still a member of the PDFA. We are here to help you!

Check out our [Postdoctoral Fellows Association \(PDFA\) Events](#)

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The collective bargaining agreement specifies the conditions of your work (e.g., hours per week), the compensation (e.g. salary) and benefits (sick days, vacation days, supplemental health and dental plan) of postdocs.

All postdoc employees are enrolled in the supplemental health and dental plan, and the premium is paid by the supervisor. This provides coverage to reduce the cost of items not covered by [Alberta Health Insurance](#), such as prescription drugs and dental visits.

More information about the Alberta Health Insurance Plan is available in the **Health and Wellness** section. A more detailed description of the supplemental health and benefits plan is available on the [Postdoctoral Fellows Human Resources, Health, Safety + Environment](#) site.

You are entitled to 20 vacation days and 5 sick days per year.
You are permitted to teach one course per semester.

If you have questions, require assistance, or are having a workplace issue, you can contact the PDFA at help@pdfa.ca and your inquiry will be responded to as soon as possible.

Contact Information

The PDFA can be reached at:
Phone: 780-989-9188/1.877-439-3111
Website: pdfa.ca
Email: help@pdfa.ca
1200 College Plaza, 8512 - 112 Street
Edmonton, AB T6G 2E1

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The Postdoctoral Affairs Office

The Postdoctoral Affairs Office is structured within the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at the University of Alberta. The Office and GPS provide services on lifecycle management, regulatory compliance, conflict resolution and mediation, scholar advocacy and support, stakeholder collaboration, professional development, and policy development for Postdoctoral Scholars at the University of Alberta. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) [website](#) contains information about workshops, funding opportunities, and policies/procedures specific to postdoctoral scholars.

Monthly Coffee Sessions

Hosted by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, in this informal setting, we will talk about anything you'd like to share — whether it's something you're excited about, a challenge you're facing or just a topic you'd love to discuss. No agenda, just good conversation and great company. Hope to see you there! Dates are shared in the weekly postdoc digest (electronic newsletter). You are also welcome to send thoughts and feedback to pdfo@ualberta.ca.

Contact Information

Office Services	General Inquiries	Contact via web portal
Dr. Cagri Ayranci	Director of Postdoctoral Affairs Office	pdfolead@ualberta.ca
Award Services	For inquiries related to GPS administered postdoctoral fellowships	Awards Specialist jnaidoo@ualberta.ca
Professional Development	Teaching, Leadership, Career Management	grad.pd@ualberta.ca

Postdoctoral Affairs Office

Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

University of Alberta

Triffo Hall, Killam Centre for Advanced Studies 2-29

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2E1

Postdoc Funding Opportunities

1. Postdoc Fellowship Funding Opportunities at GPS

Listed are the funding opportunities available to postdocs at the UofA. Some of the key awards on this site include the Killam and Notley Memorial Postdoctoral Fellowships applications, typically due in January and valued at \$50,000. Alberta Innovates Postdoctoral Fellowships are typically due in December and valued at \$70,000. The Tri-Council Canada Postdoctoral Research Awards are valued at \$70,000 and due in the fall. The Canada Impact+ Research Training Awards for Postdoctoral Scholars are typically due in March and are valued at \$70,000.

2. Postdoctoral Scholar Travel Award

This award from GPS supports travel to academic conferences to present work that was completed at the University of Alberta.

- \$2000 maximum
- You must be a current postdoc at the UofA to apply.
- You can only apply once during your tenure as a postdoc at the UofA
- There are four application periods per year (approximately April, June, August, and December)
- The number of awards depends on the funds available from the University.

3. PDFa Travel Award

- The PDFa funds conference travel for current postdocs up to \$500.
- You can only apply once during your tenure as a postdoc at the UofA.
- There are three application periods per year (January 1 - April 15, May 1 - August 15, and and September 1 - December 15)

4. Canada Postdoctoral Research Award program

- The Canada Postdoctoral Research Award program (CPRA) postdoc program is now open to international applicants who already hold a postdoc position in Canada.
- The CPRA postdoc program covers all three tri-council agencies - NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council), CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health Research), and SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council)
- To be eligible, you must not have completed your PhD more than three years before the application deadline.
- Application deadlines are in the Fall, but vary by Tri-agency

Required Training

Mandatory Safety Training

There are two mandatory training modules that you must complete within 30 days of your start date.

- Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention (Module 1)
- Working Safely

Two other popular courses for people who will supervise others are

- Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention (Module 1 & 2)
- Supervising Safely

Other mandatory training depends on the type of work that you are doing. Please consult with your supervisor for details.

Campus Resources

Where to get your oneCard?

This is your official University of Alberta identification card. You will need this identification card to gain access to many resources on campus like taking a book out of the library and or going to the gym, and you can also add funds to it. It will also contain information such as your employee number.

What is a CCID?

Your main credential is used to access your email, computer login, BearTracks access, parking, and more.

Employee Self-Service

A resource that will help you navigate a variety of issues, such as “How do I update personal information in Bear Tracks? How do I enroll in benefits?”

Bear Tracks

This portal provides access to your personal information (i.e., payroll and direct deposit information) and the employee self-service portal. You will also have access to your tax information in this portal.

Digests

Postdocs will receive the following electronic newsletters weekly - an employee digest with training, events, and campus-wide updates, and a shorter postdoctoral scholars digest with information tailored directly to you.

Social Insurance Number (SIN)

Your SIN is a 9-digit number required to work in Canada, file taxes, and access government programs. To be eligible, you must be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, temporary worker, or student with a work permit. There is no fee.

How to apply:

- Online: through the [Service Canada website](#)
- In-person: at a Service Canada Centre (bring passport/PR card/study/work permit).
- By mail (if you cannot apply in person).

Tax Returns

Anyone who is employed in Canada must report their income to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). If you have earned income, want to claim benefits (CCB, GST credit), or have had taxes withheld at source.

How to file

1. Gather documents: T4 (employment), T2202 (tuition), receipts, etc.
2. Choose a method:
 - Online using certified tax software (e.g., TurboTax, Wealthsimple Tax, UFile).
 - Paper return (mail to CRA).
 - Through a tax clinic (free for low-income) or other service providers
3. Deadline: **April 30** each year (June 15 if self-employed, but tax owing must be paid by April 30). If you are getting money back, there is no deadline.

Healthcare

1. Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan

The Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan is a public health plan for eligible Alberta residents with full coverage for medically necessary physician services, and some dental and oral surgical health services. It does not cover vision, dental, or prescriptions. To be eligible, you must be a resident of Alberta, Alberta must be your permanent home, and you need to be in Canada legally.

To enroll, you must fill out the following form: [Application for Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan](#) and bring it to a participating Alberta Registry Office. You will need to provide proof of identity, proof of residency, a letter of employment, and any relevant immigration documents.

One registry close to the University of Alberta is the Strathcona Registry, located at 10375-78 Avenue NW.

2. Health Insurance from the University of Alberta (Individual vs. Family Coverage)

There are many other coverages provided by the employer benefit service that help cover healthcare expenses not covered by AHCIP (prescriptions, dental, vision, physio, etc.) and [are outlined in this guide](#).

Sun Life is the service provider used by the University that will cover most of your expenses, and you can apply for individual coverage (one person) or family coverage (household members) through this [university portal](#).

The [Employee and Family Assistance Program \(EFAP\)](#) connects staff and eligible dependents to registered psychologists. The Students' Union building houses the [University Health Centre](#) if you or your family needs to see a physician. You will need to show your one card and your Alberta Health Care card.

Teaching

According to the Postdoctoral Scholars Policy, postdoctoral scholars can undertake teaching responsibilities, with prior agreement from supervising faculty, of up to one full course per term. Postdocs may want to seek out less time-intensive teaching opportunities, such as guest lecturing or participating in campus teaching events.

Graduate Teaching and Learning program (GTL)

Postdoctoral scholars are encouraged to participate in the multi-tiered [Graduate Teaching and Learning program \(GTL\)](#) where they can receive a completion letter for each level achieved. If you've completed similar training before your fellowship, contact grad.pd@ualberta.ca to discuss which entry point would be appropriate.

Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The [Centre for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#) provides teaching support for the entire university community. If you are teaching a course and need assistance with any aspect of the course design to assessment, experts are here to consult with you.

Professional Development

Postdoctoral scholars sit in a unique space on campus where their interests and roles intersect with faculty, graduate students, and employees. Therefore training available to postdocs can fall into the **staff/faculty category**, **postdoc unique sessions**, and overlapping interests of **graduate students**. Check out the numerous opportunities from these sources, as well as ones advertised in the weekly digests (e-newsletter).

Get a Driver's License (Alberta)

This government issued ID allows you to legally drive in Alberta. To be eligible, you must be an Alberta resident, have proof of legal presence in Canada, and have at least a Class 5. If you do not have a Class 5 license, you will first need to apply for a Class 7 Learner's Licence. If you hold a valid driver's licence from another country, you may be able to exchange it without testing.

How to apply

1. Visit a **registry agent office** in Alberta and bring identification (passport/PR card/work permit, proof of Alberta address).
2. For Class 7 (learner's): pass a written knowledge test + vision test. One year before you can drive by yourself.
3. For higher classes: a road test required.
4. Fees apply for each stage and you will need to renew your licence every 5 years.

Child Care Expense and Benefits

Most people who have children under the age of 12 use licensed or unlicensed care for children while they are at their places of employment. This can include daycares, family day homes, preschools, and before/after-school care.

Childcare in Alberta

- The Government of Alberta has terminated its income-based child care subsidy program
- Instead, the Government now provides an Affordability Grant to eligible licensed childcare providers.
- The childcare centres directly receive funding from the Government if they have signed an Affordability Grant agreement
- If your child is kindergarten age or younger and attends a licensed daycare or family day home that receives affordability funding, you will pay a flat parent fee:
 - \$326.25 per month for full-time care (100 or more hours per month)
 - \$230 per month for part-time care (50 to 99 hours per month)

- Families are not eligible for the flat parent fee if:
 - their program does not receive affordability funding;
 - their child is registered for less than 50 hours per month; or
 - their child attends full-time kindergarten or is older than kindergarten age.
- Childcare providers may offer optional services for an additional fee.

Canada Child Benefit (CCB) & Alberta Child and Family Benefit (ACFB)

There are taxable benefits available to families from the federal and provincial governments, where the recipient of the benefit must be the primary caregiver and the child must be under the age 18, must live with them, and be a Canadian resident (PR, citizen, or temporary residents).

- **CCB**: Federal tax-free **monthly** payment to help with child-rearing costs.
- **ACFB**: Provincial benefit for low- and middle-income families paid quarterly (August, November, February, May)

How to apply

1. Apply online through **CRA My Account** or when registering the birth of a child.
2. Provide child's birth certificate and parent's SIN.
3. CRA calculates benefits based on annual family income (from tax return).