



## Welcome to Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health!

The Harvard Chan Postdoc Association would like to welcome you to the school, and provide what we hope will be useful information to help you to settle in and learn what's available to you during your time here.

### Membership

As a postdoc or research associate in the school, you're automatically a member of the Harvard Chan Postdoc Association (PDA). The PDA is here to represent your interests as a postdoc or research associate, both within the school, and within larger Boston-wide and nationwide postdoctoral associations. Our aim is to assist postdocs and research associates in developing their careers and accessing educational opportunities, social activities, and interesting forums to network and optimize your time here at Harvard.

### About the PDA

The Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) Postdoctoral Association (PDA), founded in 2007, serves and represents the approximately 300 postdoctoral fellows and 150 research associates at the School. We envision a community of productive, successful, and happy annual academic appointees at HSPH who advance the public's health through learning, discovery, and communication. The HSPH Postdoctoral Association is not a union and does not represent individuals for the purpose of collective bargaining with any organizations. All postdocs and research associates at the School are members of the PDA, as well as the National Postdoc Association and Boston Postdoc Association. All actions by the HSPH PDA are governed by its by-laws.

### Our Mission

1. promote the professional enrichment, development, and training of annual academic appointees at HSPH
2. raise awareness about appointees in the HSPH community,
3. represent the interests and needs of annual academic appointees to the administration and faculty of HSPH,
4. establish a formal forum for annual academic appointees to meet and discuss issues of importance to them at HSPH, and
5. promote interaction among appointees across the school, and to help new incoming annual academic appointees integrate into the HSPH community.

### Where to Find Us

- Website: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda/>
- Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/HarvardChanPDA/>
- Monthly meetings (all are welcome to attend, emails are sent to all postdocs approximately one week in advance!)
- Networking events (see website, or emails!)
- Or feel free to email us at [pda@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:pda@hsph.harvard.edu)



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## **PDA Initiatives, Events, and Opportunities**

**Postdoc Appreciation Week-** Postdoc Appreciation Week is a multi-day event celebrating the contributions of postdocs and research associates to the Harvard School of Public Health. We schedule a wide variety of activities, including professional development workshops, wellness activities, and an interdepartmental research symposium.

**Networking Events-** Our social chair(s) plan awesome events throughout the year to promote networking and friendship amongst postdocs and research associates. Events will be advertised on our website and facebook page, and via email.

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda/pda-activities/social-activities/>

**Peer Grant Network-** Are you applying for a grant and want to learn tips and tricks from people who have been SUCCESSFUL in getting that grant? OR, were you successful in gaining a grant, and are willing to share your wisdom with those applying in the current round? Join our peer grant network as a mentor or mentee.

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda/peer-grant-network/>

**Nanocourses-** Do you want to learn about a cool new topic in public health without committing to weekly lectures for a whole semester? OR, do you want to gain invaluable skills in course design, delivery, and postgraduate teaching? Attend or design a nanocourse (a course run over 2x 3 hour sessions, delivered by postdocs/research associates, with oversight from Harvard curriculum fellows). <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/publichealth101/>

**Travel Awards-** The PDA offers several awards for which all postdocs and research associates are eligible to apply. Six postdocs and two research associates are supported annually by \$1500 travel awards to attend a conference, and at least two postdocs / research associates are sponsored annually for a one-week international exchange program in Turkey (Kocaeli University).

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda/travel-awards/>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda/kocaeli-travelaward/>

Please don't hesitate to contact us for any further information, or just to say hi and introduce yourself. We look forward to meeting you soon!

**Your PDA**



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## The PDA's Top Tips for Incoming Postdocs!

### General info you may need to know about Harvard/Boston/USA

On our website, we have handy information about many topics related to starting your position and life at the school: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/pda>

Another useful website is the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Office of Postdoctoral Affairs: <http://www.postdoc.harvard.edu/>

We recommend you attend an orientation session conducted by the Office of Faculty Affairs, either in person, or via their live recording: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty-affairs/postdoctoral-research-fellows/new-postdocs/>

If you are an international postdoc, we can highly recommend becoming familiar with the Harvard International Office website. It is easy to navigate and covers essential information: <http://www.hio.harvard.edu/>

### Visa Issues

If you are coming from a country outside of the USA you will need to obtain a visa. The administrative staff of your department will provide you with the documentation required for your application. Be aware of the timing required for processing, and schedule an appointment at the US Embassy in your home country. The Harvard International Office (HIO) website provides a lot of information on the requirements and procedure: <http://hio.harvard.edu/>

When you arrive, you will need to attend the HIO in Cambridge to register and get a travel signature on your visa form. This signature will allow you to reenter the USA when you travel internationally whilst still in your visa period. The HIO advisor for Harvard Chan School is [Elizabeth Capuano](#) and she holds walk-in office hours at the School regularly. Appointments are not required and dates can be found on the HIO website: <http://hio.harvard.edu/office-hours>.

### Benefits

There are many benefits available to postdocs working at Harvard University. It is important to determine which of the three main categories of postdoctoral fellows you fall into, as this will determine your eligibility for benefits, including access to the Harvard employee health plans:

- a) Internal, "employee" postdoc on PI's funding and on Harvard payroll;
- b) Stipendee postdoc with individual fellowship or paid from a training grant, on Harvard payroll;
- c) External postdoc, receiving payment directly from outside funding source, not on Harvard payroll.

The Office of Faculty Affairs orientation session will provide information on benefits, and there is great information on their website: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty-affairs/postdoctoral-research-fellows/postdoc-benefits/>

You may also find more information on the following sites:

- Benefits office: <http://www.employment.harvard.edu/benefits/perks/>
- HMS/HSDM website: <http://postdoc.hms.harvard.edu/benefits/>



### Health Insurance

If you are paid through Harvard payroll (categories “a” and “b” above), a benefits package will be mailed to your home address within the first couple of weeks of your appointment, containing information on the different insurance plans and benefits available to you.

If you are an external postdoc (category “c” above), you will have to purchase health insurance through an alternative provider. External postdocs may purchase student health insurance from Harvard University Health Services at the affiliate rate. For information see: <http://hushp.harvard.edu/hushp-post-doc-affiliates>

If you are an international postdoc, it is a visa requirement that you have eligible insurance, more details can be found here on the HIO website: <http://hio.harvard.edu/j-visa-regulations-regarding-health-insurance-requirements>

The HIO may be able to suggest other affordable insurance plans for you to consider.

**IMPORTANT!** If your health coverage is not provided by an employer or other funding source, you are eligible for reimbursement up to \$2500 per year for the purchase of health insurance. Contact us (the PDA) for assistance!

### Housing

There are several options for postdocs looking for housing. The following websites provide useful information regarding housing:

- **Harvard University Housing:** <http://www.huhousing.harvard.edu/>
- **Harvard University Off Campus Listings:** <https://www.harvardhousingoffcampus.com/>
- **Harvard International Office:** <http://hio.harvard.edu/housing/>
- **Harvard Classifieds:** <https://harviesclassifieds.harvard.edu/Housing/List?page=3> (**Note-** you will need a Harvard log in to view these)
- **Craigslist Boston (lists rentals and roomshares)** <http://boston.craigslist.org/> (**Note-** beware of scams on this site. Never transfer money to a person remotely without seeing the property and meeting in person).
- **Facebook Housing Groups (lists rentals and roomshares)** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/226351684392432/> , <https://www.facebook.com/groups/673389662794979/> , and others (**Note-** beware of scams on this site. Never transfer money to a person remotely without seeing the property and meeting in person).

### Taxes

USA taxes must be filed by April 15 each year. Check with your account manager about the appropriate forms, and you may use an online tax system to file your taxes or seek an accountant. More information can be found here: <http://oc.finance.harvard.edu/services/taxes>

Some important things to note:

- The HMS/HSDM holds **postdoc tax information sessions** from time to time. Postdocs who have attended have highly recommended them.



- **Are you an international postdoc?** The Harvard International Office provides detailed information about taxes, and also allows international postdocs to access the Windstar Foreign National Tax Resource to assist with filing:  
<http://hio.harvard.edu/tax-filing-information>
- **Check your tax requirements carefully!** Some postdoctoral fellows do not have to pay social security, Medicare, or unemployment tax, and this could save you a significant amount of money each year. Below are some links for information on this; however, we recommend seeking advice from an accountant, or attending a tax advice session. If you have paid unnecessary taxes, you may be able to submit a form via Harvard for a refund.  
<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/?page=TaxIssues>  
<http://www.phds.org/nrsa-taxes/>

### Student Loans

**Are you a US citizen, national, or permanent resident, with student loans?** The NIH Loan Repayment Programs are open to eligible researchers in eligible fields of research who are committed to engaging in "NIH mission-relevant" research. We highly recommend that you check your eligibility for these programs, and the applicable due dates for applications here:  
<https://www.lrp.nih.gov/>

### Child Care

Postdocs may apply for a childcare subsidy through the university Office of Work and Family (site needs a Harvard login):  
[http://harvie.harvard.edu/Work\\_Life\\_Balance/Caring\\_for\\_Children/Scholarships\\_Affording\\_Child\\_Care](http://harvie.harvard.edu/Work_Life_Balance/Caring_for_Children/Scholarships_Affording_Child_Care)

For more information about child care, please see the following links:

- **Harvard HR:** <http://hr.harvard.edu/childcare/>
- **Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Office of Postdoctoral Affairs:**  
<http://postdoc.harvard.edu/child-care>

### Partners/Spouses

The HIO provides information about various partner/spouse groups and resources to help them settle into Boston as well:  
<http://hio.harvard.edu/spouses-partners-children>

### Public Transportation in Boston

**MBTA:** Boston/Cambridge has a good public transportation system run by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA: [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com)). If you are benefits eligible, you can purchase a discounted monthly pass through Harvard- sign up ASAP because it takes 2 months to process!

For those who are not benefits eligible, you can get a Charlie Card (a plastic card) and load value for single rides, or weekly or monthly passes. The card itself is free of charge and you can get one at certain stations:

[http://www.mbta.com/fares\\_and\\_passes/charlie/?id=5592](http://www.mbta.com/fares_and_passes/charlie/?id=5592)

**Shuttles:** Harvard University also operates a number of shuttle buses. For postdocs working in the Longwood Area, the M2 shuttle offers frequent service between the Longwood Campus



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and the main Harvard campus in Cambridge. The shuttle is free with your Harvard ID. You can download the Harvard app for smart phones for real-time schedule information, or visit this website:

<http://www.masco.org/lma-shuttles/m2-cambridge-hms>.

**Biking:** Boston is one of the few cities in the USA where bikes are being integrated in the road logistics. There are bike paths on some streets, which make it easier to commute by bike, but you still need to watch out!

**Bluebikes:** is a bike-share system in Boston and its neighboring cities, with bikes and docking stations all over the city. The stations do close down in bad weather over the winter months, and you need to provide your own helmet. Information is available here:

<https://www.bluebikes.com/how-it-works>.

Discounts are available to Harvard affiliates (including external postdocs):

<http://www.transportation.harvard.edu/commuterchoice/bike/blue-bikes-bike-share-program>

**Zipcar:** While not exactly public transport, Zipcar is a car-sharing alternative to rental cars. Cars are available to rent per hour or per day, and available at many locations around the city. You receive a membership card which allows you to book cars at any location. Harvard affiliates can receive a discount on yearly membership:

<https://www.zipcar.com/universities/harvard-university>

### **Business cards**

Postdocs can have business cards printed for a fee (about \$30 for 250 cards). Speak to your department administrator or the Office for Career Advancement for assistance.

### **Other perks!**

**Outings and Innings:** Are you feeling stressed out with the move and your new surroundings? Take a break and listen to the symphony, watch a Red Sox game or theatrical show, or visit one of Boston's great museums or art galleries at a major discount. Be sure to check if you can get a discounted price before booking tickets to a show or event around Boston! All Harvard postdocs can order discounted Harvard tickets online and pick up at the Outings and Innings Office in Cambridge, or when they visit the Longwood area on certain days throughout the year: <http://outingsandinnings.harvard.edu>

**Harvard museums:** Many Harvard museums are free of charge to Harvard affiliates and a guest: <http://hr.harvard.edu/employee-discounts>

**Much much more!** A range of other discounts are available to Harvard employees and affiliates (many also to external postdocs). These range from rental cars, banking products, computing equipment, flights, and so on.

<http://hr.harvard.edu/employee-discounts>

<http://travel.harvard.edu/personal-discounts>