

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM 4/20/2017 TOWN HALL

1. A number of postdocs are receiving poor or no mentorship from their PIs. It affects their career and productivity. Is OPA planning to do something about it?

From an individual perspective, it is extremely important for Postdocs to inform the OPA about poor mentoring. OPA is here to work with each postdoc to help them achieve their potential. From a broader perspective, the OPA will be working on guidelines for mentoring to be distributed to both PIs and Postdocs. In addition, Dr. George Huntley of the Ombuds Office is also available to the Postdoc community as an advocate.

2. Is it possible to create a Mount Sinai policy citing that the hosting lab has to pay for at least one conference if a postdoc or grad-student is presenting?

While travel support for Postdocs is encouraged, creating a policy in this instance does not appear feasible, as the budget for such conferences would necessarily come from the hosting PI's lab. Individual lab budgets may differ, and such budgets can also change over time. However, the OPA does offer 20 travel awards annually, which can help defray costs of travel for postdocs and their PIs.

3. It would be nice to have locker rooms and showers somewhere in Sinai so that people can go exercise before work or during a break & then go back to their lab.

This is certainly a very nice idea, and a consideration that affects multiple groups across the Mount Sinai Campus. These considerations have been raised as part of the long-term space planning at Mount Sinai.

4. Could PIs be made officially aware that postdocs are entitled to reserve part of their time for career development?

We plan to be posting policy in regard to postdoc professional development time on the OPA website by the end of May, 2017. This policy is consistent with NIH policy. Furthermore, we will send broadcast emails to faculty and postdocs in regard to this issue.

5. Many postdocs contribute substantial mentoring and/or teaching to their departments and labs. Why are postdocs ineligible to apply for these Grad School Awards?

We certainly appreciate all the contributions made by Mount Sinai's Postdocs. We are exploring additional awards to recognize the outstanding work by Postdocs, and adding an Award Event to Postdoc Day.

6. How does the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs plan to better advocate for the postdoc community?

The goal of the OPA is to advocate for all Postdocs in the Mount Sinai community. Consistent with this goal, the OPA is always available to work to promote our Postdoc's successes, as well as to resolve issues important to the Postdoc community. As a first step, the OPA is currently working to better publicize:

- a) issues important to postdocs
 - b) resources available to postdocs
 - c) our availability to listen to, guide, and intervene on the behalf of postdocs when appropriate
7. Are any improvements to the services provided from International Personnel planned?

International Personnel recognizes our robust global post doc population and will continue to expand programming, such as mock interviews at the consulate and round table discussions to better serve our stakeholders. We encourage postdocs to provide feedback as to what additional programs they feel they will benefit from.

8. MSK pays the broker fees for people moving out of their housing - would Sinai do the same to encourage turnover and help people who don't have \$1000s in savings

We agree that this would be wonderful. We hope to receive positive budget news from Mount Sinai's Strategic Plan so that programs like this could be considered.

9. Please stop putting up so many pictures of men in the atrium- include more women and make sure the people who write text for posters aren't sexist

Thank you for the comment. This appears to be an issue that would be better directed towards Mount Sinai Marketing.

10. The postdoc handbook in the website is from 2012 and outdated. When will it be updated or where can we consult up to date information about postdocs?

The Postdoc Handbook has been updated and we are waiting for final approval from Mount Sinai legal and administration. We hope to have it posted on the OPA website by the end of May, 2017.

11. Does the office plan to expand to include a full-time PhD to improve professional development programming for postdocs?

Within the Well-being report, we are requesting funding for additional staffing.

12. What kind of training do you provide to help learn about statistics and coding - skills I need for my project but my lab doesn't do?

In regard to statistics, brief seminars as well as formal classes are widely offered through the graduate school. Postdocs are encouraged to sit-in on apposite classes. Furthermore, for specific projects, it is always good to seek collaborators with statistical expertise. The Center for Biostatistics (<http://icahn.mssm.edu/about/departments/population-health/research/biostatistics>) offers Stat-Chat. Stat-chat is a free walk-in consultation service with statisticians in order to address quick questions. Stat-Chat is held every Monday 2-3 pm in Icahn L2-82 room.

13. Schools like NYU, Columbia have training programs for postdoc (writing and industry). Why doesn't Sinai do that? The postdoc group does lots but school doesn't.

We plan to have regular writing courses (1-2 times per year). This year, we have scheduled Judy Swan for a Scientific Writing course, and will continue to do so going forward pending feedback. Furthermore, OPA has recently initiated a new seminar series, "How I got here from there." This series will feature speakers discussing the twists and turns in their own career paths from multiple perspectives (e.g., industry, academic).

14. We also need opportunity to learn skills for consulting, science policy, budget management, government/legislative science work.

For these types of activities, we first recommend checking offerings from the community. This includes Mount Sinai Innovation Partners (MSIP), the Master of Public Health program, the Mount Sinai Science Policy Group (<http://icahn.mssm.edu/education/postdoc/careers/science-policy>), and the ISMMS Consulting Interest Group (<http://sinaicig.com/>). These groups have a broad array of offerings. We are also continually looking develop additional resources for postdocs. Additionally, for more advanced or specialized training, one should probably also peruse the course catalogues of New York City's universities, as well as seek specific internships. We are all on a journey of lifetime learning.

Postdocs can also contact; The Office of Career Services and Strategy <http://icahn.mssm.edu/education/graduate/office-career-services>

15. Postdoc parents need more affordable childcare resources. Are there any improvements planned?

While we recognize the value of additional childcare resources, this is difficult to accomplish without additional support. Currently, Mount Sinai donates the space for the current program, which results in the discounted rate. As one can imagine, space is limited and difficult and expensive to obtain. However, we are actively exploring an emergency backup daycare system that you can use at those times that your usual daycare doesn't work because of holidays or illness.

16. Are postdocs members of grad school? What grad school resources are available for postdocs? Are postdocs staff? How can we know which rules /policies apply?

Postdocs are trainees and belong to the Graduate School.

17. Why are postdocs and PhD students mixed up with secretaries in open space areas? These groups are not compatible (scientific work requires deep concentrations).

Work spaces often differ by lab and department. While space pressures are a constant, perhaps some of the problems could be resolved by requesting quiet hours.

18. I wonder whether there is a way to receive financial help for improving or developing skills such as tuition for MBA or data scientist degree.

Not at this time, but Postdocs can sit in on Graduate School courses. You can review the Graduate School courses @

<http://gradschool.mssm.edu/eforms/course-catalog/>