

# Diversity Best Practices

## Postdoctoral Fellows

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[www.princeton.edu/reports/2013/diversity](http://www.princeton.edu/reports/2013/diversity)

Theme	Types of programs and initiatives
<i>Outreach and recruitment</i>	<p><b>Host visits, lectures, and conferences for promising advanced doctoral students</b> as potential postdocs and possibly future junior faculty members. These individuals should be invited to present their research in individual or group settings that provide them with the opportunity for contact with scholars in their field.</p> <p>These events are most effective when the invitations are targeted. Since postdoctoral work is generally tied to a specific faculty member, outreach from and substantive intellectual engagement with a potential mentor is especially important.</p> <p>During these visits, prospective postdocs should gain exposure to the wide range of academic and non-academic resources that Princeton offers. Such events should include contact with current postdocs and an opportunity to learn about social and family life in Princeton since those can be important factors to decision making.</p> <p><b>Identify potential postdocs</b> through targeted outreach and early tracking of strong doctoral students. At present, postdoc selection in the sciences and engineering is opportunistic and less focused on pool development than graduate student recruitment. Efforts are most effective when they are targeted based on a strong relationship between the intellectual interests of the prospective postdoc and the faculty mentor. Another important factor is the relationship between the student's doctoral supervisor and the Princeton faculty member.</p> <p>Strong postdoc candidates can be found by targeting individuals that have received selective fellowships and awards given by private organizations and government agencies. Departments should consider reaching out to their most talented former Princeton undergraduates and the top half of doctoral admits who declined our offer of admission to see if they would be willing to consider Princeton for their postdoc experience.</p> <p>Prospective postdocs may also be identified through relationships with key faculty members at research-intensive institutions beyond our usual feeder schools. In particular, departments should consider stronger relationships with flagship public (e.g., Penn State, Purdue, UT Austin), non-Ivy+ private (e.g., Georgia Tech, Emory, Carnegie Mellon), regional (e.g., Rutgers, CUNY), and foreign (e.g., India, Israel, France, Hong Kong) institutions. Faculty members are the most effective ambassadors for their departments; they may require incentives and support for participation. Advanced graduate students and staff members can also be effective recruiters.</p> <p>Once advanced doctoral students are identified, they must be tracked and actively engaged throughout the application process. This work can be staff-led and supported through new database technology.</p>

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	<p><b>Create an honorific, competitive postdoctoral position</b> to provide support for underrepresented scholars. These positions could be developed at the departmental level and/or or the University could create a central broad program for postdocs.</p> <p>A number of our peers have developed centrally-administered postdoc programs with the intention of eventually hiring some of these fellows as tenure-track faculty members. These peers include the University of California system (which has partnered with the University of Michigan), the University of Pennsylvania, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Harvard Medical School.</p> <p>Unlike most postdoc recruitment which occurs through individual faculty members, these programs are open competitions more akin to graduate school applications. Cross-disciplinary committees make selections based on a written application and finalist interviews. Candidates are expected to have the support of a department at the institution.</p> <p>Princeton’s own Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts serves as a successful model of a centrally-funded and administered postdoc program from which several individuals have been hired into tenure-track positions.</p>
<i>Retention and success</i>	<p><b>Offer departmental and university-wide programming</b> designed to support success and persistence including mentorship and sponsorship programs, assistance in accessing benefits and resources, family-friendly programs, skills workshops, and social integration.</p> <p>The right advice, support, and sponsorship from mentors can significantly advance a career. An ideal mentorship relationship involves a mentor who actively engages with the mentee’s research and advances his or her opportunities for publication and faculty positions. Mentorship should involve incentives and training for both mentor and mentee.</p> <p>Underrepresented postdocs can benefit from additional support in pursuing coveted faculty positions. This should focus on developing a strong research program, publishing in top peer-reviewed journals, attracting research funding, and improving teaching skills. Some of this programming should also focus on other skills that will contribute to future success including budgeting, communications, people management, negotiation, and fundraising. These skills will be especially valuable to those in the sciences and engineering who may be managing the staff and budgets of a laboratory. Other programming should focus on ensuring that postdocs and their families are socially integrated into campus life.</p>