USC University of Southern California

Postdoc Handbook

Prepared by the Keck Postdoctoral Association
Revised 05-30-2013

Welcome from the USC Postdoctoral Association Executive Council

The USC Postdoctoral Association (PDA) Executive Council has great pleasure in welcoming you to the University of Southern California (USC). We hope that your time at USC is productive and that your experience here helps you land the career you want. Being a postdoc is challenging, but we believe that learning about your new workplace should not be an added difficulty!

To make your transition to life at USC a little smoother, we have developed this handbook, which contains information relevant for current and incoming postdocs. This information has been compiled, some of it verbatim, from various websites and USC documents to provide a quick reference guide. Additional information can also be obtained in the International Students and Scholars Handbook and *SCampus*, the USC Handbook. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs also has a listing of some common questions.

We encourage you to attend the professional development and networking events organized throughout the year by the USC PDA. This will assist you to become part of the postdoc community at USC. In addition, the USC PDA publishes a quarterly newsletter with important news and announcements (see latest issue in the Appendix). Events and announcements are distributed via the Postdoc Listserve. To be included on this email list, send your email address to uscpda@usc.edu.

The KSOM Office of Research Advancement and the USC Office of the Provost provides funding and administrative support for the activities of our PDA. We are very grateful to these offices for their continued sponsorship of our events.

If you need further help, have questions, or comments on improving the handbook, please email us at uscpda@usc.edu or visit http://uscpda.wordpress.com/
We wish you all the best for your research work at USC and in your future!

Sincerely,
Members of the Executive Council
USC Postdoctoral Association

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Getting settled in the Los Angeles area

Upon arriving in Los Angeles, if not beforehand, you will want to consider these things. International postdocs will have a few extra tasks to take care of than those that have been in the U.S. for a while. In this section, you will find information about things relative to transportation, money and housing.

Transportation

Transport to and from Los Angeles Airport (LAX)

Since taxis are quite pricy, shuttles offering a group rate are often a better option to go to or from LAX. The fare is around $20 for one way trip, which is quite reasonable. Reservations can be made online or you can call them at the airport (look for the overhead signs that say "Shuttle Service"). The following shuttle services are used regularly by USC postdocs:
- Prime Time: 1(800)733-8267 or www.primetimeshuttle.com
- Super Shuttle: 1(800)258-3826 or www.supershuttle.com
- Shuttle to LAX: http://shuttletolax.com/

A cheaper option is the FlyAway bus system that runs 24/7 between LAX and Union Station (800 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012), every 30-60 minutes. Fares are $7 each way and the trip takes approximately 30-50 minutes, depending on traffic. From Union Station you can take a shuttle to campus or buses or trains to where you live. All FlyAway buses drop off passengers on the Upper/Departures Level of each terminal at LAX. Passengers board buses on the Lower/Arrivals Level in front of each terminal under the green "FlyAway, Buses and Long Distance Vans" signs. Each bus is marked with its service location (Union Station, Van Nuys, Westwood, Irvine). The Union Station LAX FlyAway service operates from Bus Stop 9 at the Patsaouras Transit Plaza at Union Station. Passengers should enter on the Vignes Street side of Union Station. For further information see http://www.lawa.org/flyaway/

Metro

The Los Angeles area has a set of overlapping transit agencies that provide train and bus service. While the service is extensive, it may or may not be convenient for the places you actually want to go. Therefore, be sure to plan ahead, leave a little extra time for your trip, and take along some reading material. On the plus side, mass transit in Los Angeles is generally very affordable relative to other urban areas in North America. Additionally, tickets and passes can be purchased at a reduced rate from the USC Transportation office.

The largest provider is the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, or Metro (www.metro.net). Metro has a wide service of buses and trains (below and above ground). The regular fare at the current time (October 2011) is $1.50, but it can be higher for express services. Go to the website to check out the maps and timetables of Metro service (http://www.metro.net/around/maps/), a trip planner (http://socaltransport.org/tm_pub_start.php), and additional information.

Another public transport provider is the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, or LADOT (http://www.ladottransit.com/). LADOT has a variety of bus services. A handy one for short distances within the city is DASH, which has a fare of $0.35 (October 2011).

A large number of other providers are generally associated with particular areas of the large Los Angeles metropolitan area. Some examples are:
• Santa Monica (www.bigbluebus.com)

• Orange County (www.octa.net)
• Santa Clarita (www.santaclaritatransit.com)
• Gardena (www.ci.gardena.ca.us)
Metrolink (http://www.metrolinktrains.com/) provides commuter options from cities further from the central LA area.

If you want to find the best public transit route or you want to drive, the Google maps' "get directions" service usually gives the best options (http://maps.google.com/maps).

Identification and Financial Information

Social Security Number
A Social Security Number (SSN) is a nine digit number issued by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA; www.ssa.gov). A SSN may be obtained at the Social Security Office without fee by any person, whether or not he or she is a U.S. citizen. Anyone who works regularly must obtain one for identification purposes in filing federal and state income tax returns. The SSN is also used to check credit histories and identities, as well as to determine the amount of security deposits for housing and phone plans, or it may be requested by financial institutions to set up bank accounts, credit cards and to obtain loans.

To apply for the SSN, you will have to go to a SSA office at least 10 days after U.S. entry. Do not go earlier because the SSA needs to receive an update of its database first. You will need the following documents:

   - Application for SS-5 (available at the SSA office or online)
   - Passport with visa stamp
   - DS-2019
   - A valid I-94 card (a small white Arrival/Departure card stapled to your passport)
   - Proof of employment eligibility, such as an offer letter or Employment Authorization Document (EAD). The offer letter should be on sponsor letterhead with an original signature that authorizes your employment.
   - Social Security letter from the OIS at USC

All documents must be originals. A SSN and card will be issued within 2 weeks, but you may request your number in person at the SSA office the next day after your application. Keep your SSN confidential because it can be used in identity theft incidents.

Banking
You will find it necessary to have a local bank for easy deposits and withdrawals, as well as ATM access. You can also have your paychecks directly deposited into your bank account. There are a number of different banks from which to choose, including large national banks, local California banks, and a number of different credit unions and co-ops. Regardless of which type of bank you choose, you will want to set up a local checking account from which you can pay bills and make deposits. In addition, some businesses accept personal checks only from in-state banks.

USC Credit Union (www.usccreditunion.org)
USC has its own federally insured credit union at which you can set up a checking and/or savings account. This is a convenient banking option for many students and postdocs with branch offices on both the HSC and UPC campuses. Free ATMs are located on both campuses, as well as several federal co-op credit unions throughout LA (http://usccreditunion.locatorsearch.com/).

Banks
Other national and regional banks located in the LA area are:
> Bank of the West (www.bankofthewest.com)
> Bank of America (www.bankofamerica.com)
> Chase (www.chase.com)
> US Bank (www.usbank.com)
> Wells Fargo (www.wellsfargo.com)

Getting a Credit Card
Credit cards are popular in the U.S., and they can make purchasing more convenient and help to "build your credit history." Many individuals who come to the U.S. from another country have difficulty getting a credit card. This is because people from another country do not have 'credit history' in the U.S, and the credit card companies cannot judge whether or not these people will be good customers for a credit card. There are some things you can do to get a credit card more easily. First, you can get a bank account at the USC Credit Union and ask them to apply for a credit card. If you explain that you work at USC, the USC Credit Union will be more likely to give you a credit card than many other banks. Additionally, if you have an American Express card in your home country, you can usually transfer to a U.S. American Express card easily by contacting American Express Global Transfer. Try also talking to your bank and asking them what you can do to get a credit card more easily.

Other options to help build credit:
Apply for a secured credit card. This type of account requires you to open and maintain a savings account as security for your line of credit. You are then given a line of credit as a percentage of the amount you put into savings, typically ranging from 50-100%. A secured credit card is easier to get than an unsecured credit card; however the annual percentage rate on a secured card is often higher than an unsecured card. Obtain a charge card through a major department store (e.g. Macy's). As a foreign national, these cards are easier to obtain than credit cards. Although, you will only be able to use these charge cards at the individual department store, this can be a quick and inexpensive means to establish a credit history in the U.S., and can make it easier for you to obtain other types of credit (e.g. vehicle loan, traditional credit card).

California Driver's License
www.dmv.ca.gov/dl/dl.htm
Once you become a California resident (i.e. have an address here), the DMV requires you to get a California driver's license within 10 days.

In order to obtain a California driver's license, you must pass a written test and driving skills test. To apply for an original driver's license, you will need to do the following:
> - Visit a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office (make an appointment online for faster service)
> - Complete application form DL 44 (available in the DMV office)
> - Provide your Social Security Number
> - Present your DS-2019, passport and I-94 card
> - Pass a traffic laws and sign test

If you have a license from another country, you will be required to take a driving test. If you have a license from another state, the driving test can be waived. To take your driving test, you will need to:
> - Make a driving test appointment (driving tests are not given without an appointment)
> - Provide proof of financial responsibility by showing that your car is properly insured (e.g., through the rental car company)

You can also request a California identification card to use for identification purposes.

If you are only a visitor in California and have a valid driver's license from your home state or country, you may drive in this state without getting a California driver's license as long as your home country license remains valid. You will need to have a copy of your driver's license from your home country with you when you drive. However, if you are pulled over, the police officer may request a translation in English from you. Also, some car insurance and rental companies do not accept international driver's licenses.

Housing and Other Necessities

Most people find it best to rent when they first move to LA. Depending on where you will be working, there are a number of different communities that people often choose to live.

Places to live near HSC:

a. Alhambra - www.cityofalhambra.org
- Approximately 6 miles from campus
- Rent = moderate
- Safety = moderate to safe
- Ethnically diverse
- Convenient bus transportation

b. Pasadena - www.ci.pasadena.ca.us
- Approximately 10 miles from campus
- Rent = moderate to high
- Safety = moderate to safe
- Ethnically diverse
- Convenient bus / train transportation
- Attractions: Old Town (shopping, bars & restaurants, theaters), Rose Bowl, Pasadena Playhouse, close to many hiking trails

c. South Pasadena - www.ci.south-pasadena.ca.us
- Approximately 6 miles from campus
- Rent = high
- Safety = safe
- Convenient bus transportation
- Quiet and beautiful area
- Good school district

d. Downtown Los Angeles - www.lacity.org/index.htm
- Approximately 4 miles from campus
- Rent = moderate to high
- Safety = moderate
- Ethnically diverse
- Convenient bus / train transportation
- Attractions: Restaurants & bars, a number of shopping areas, City Hall, theaters & concert halls

e. Monterey Park - www.ci.monterey-park.ca.us
- Approximately 7 miles from campus
- Rent = moderate
- Safety = moderate to safe
- Large Chinese community
- Convenient bus transportation

f. Arcadia - www.ci.arcadia.ca.us
- Approximately 7 miles from campus
- Rent = moderate to high
- Safety = moderate to safe
- Large Chinese community

- Family area, schools with good reputation

Places to live near UPC:
    a.   North of campus near S. Hoover St and W. Adams Blvd - http://web-app.usc.edu/maps/
    - Approximately 1 mile from UPC
    - Rent = moderate
    - Safety = low to moderate
    - Number of campus housing and apartment buildings for USC students and postdocs
b. Downtown Los Angeles - www.lacity.org/index.htm
    - Approximately 5 miles from UPC
    See above
c. Koreatown - http://discoverlosangeles.com/play/activities-and-recreation/activities/koreatown-los-angeles-guide.html
    - Approximately 3 miles from UPC
    - Rent = moderate
    - Safety = moderate
    - Convenient bus transportation
    - Attractions: Wilshire Center, cultural restaurants and attractions
d. Culver City - www.culvercity.org
    - Approximately 8 miles from UPC
    - Rent = moderate
    - Safety = moderate
    - Ethnically diverse
    - Convenient bus transportation
    - Attractions: Many cultural activities, parks, restaurants & bars
e. La Brea
    - Approximately 7.5 miles from UPC
    - Rent = moderate
    - Safety = moderate
    - Ethnically diverse
    - Convenient bus transportation
    - Attractions: Many cultural activities, tar pits, restaurants & bars

Places to live near CHLA:
a. Downtown Los Angeles - www.lacity.org/index.htm
    - Approximately 5 miles from CHLA
      See above
b. Los Feliz - www.losfeliz.com/online/index.htm
    - Approximately 1 mile from CHLA
    - Rent = moderate
    - Safety = moderate to safe
    - Convenient bus transportation
    - Attractions: Griffith Park and Observatory, convenient shopping, near Downtown
c. Silver Lake - www.thesilverlakenews.com
    - Approximately 2 miles from CHLA
    - Rent = moderate to high
    - Safety = moderate to safe
    - Convenient bus transportation
    - Attractions: Many cultural activities, parks, restaurants & bars
d. Hollywood
    - Approximately 2.5 miles from CHLA
    - Rent = moderate to high
    - Safety = moderate
    - Ethnically diverse

- Convenient bus transportation
- Entertainment capital of LA - tourist center, cultural activities, theaters, playhouses, concert halls, shopping, restaurants & bars

Places to live near House Research Institute:
a. Downtown Los Angeles - www.lacity.org/index.htm
   - Approximately 2.5 miles from HEI
   See above
b. Silver Lake - www.thesilverlakenews.com
   - Approximately 2.5 miles from HEI
   See above
c. Echo Park - www.historicechopark.org
   - Approximately 2.5 miles from HEI
   - Rent = moderate to high
   - Safety = moderate
   - Ethnically diverse
   - Convenient bus transportation
   - Attractions: Echo Park, Dodgers Stadium, restaurants & bars

About Leasing
There are a number of leasing options in the LA area. First, decide what type of housing you are interested in (apartment, condo, townhouse, single family house, a room in a multifamily house, furnished vs. unfurnished, housing amenities, allows pets, etc.). Depending on the type of housing and who the landlord is (company verses independent owner), terms of the lease may vary. Regardless of where and from whom you are renting, all renters have specified legal rights as defined by the state of California (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/california/renting/tenantrights & http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/sec-deposit.shtml).
Some general lease terms are listed below.

Length of lease:
a. Month-to-month – lease may be terminated at any time with a specified notification period (often 2-4 weeks). Monthly rent payments may be higher than those for longer lease periods and rent is subject to increase at the landlord's discretion with a specified notification period (often 4 weeks). This type of lease is good if you are not familiar with the LA area prior to moving here and are not sure where you want to live.
b. 6 months – rent is generally less than month-to-month and the rent amount cannot be increased for the length of the 6 month lease. There may be a penalty if the renter tries to move before the completion of the lease. This lease is a good option if you are not familiar with the LA area, but want slightly lower rent until you decide where you want to live longer term.
c. 1 year – rent is generally lower than the previous two leases and rent is locked for 12 months. There may be a penalty if the renter tries to move before the 12 month lease is complete. This lease is a good option if you are familiar with the LA area and want controlled rent for a year.

Security deposit:
A security deposit is usually required when renting, regardless of lease length. The deposit is often equivalent to the first month's rent and is due when the lease is signed. When signing the lease, the renter may be asked to pay the security deposit and first month's rent regardless of when they actually move in. The security deposit is used to pay for any damages or excess cleaning charges that may be incurred when the renter moves out (see websites listed above). No security deposit in the state of CA can be stated as "nonrefundable." An additional security deposit may be required for pets.

Payment options and late fees:
The lease will also include acceptable forms of payment for rent (personal check, money order, electronic transfer, or credit cards) and when the rent is due each month. If rent is not paid on time, an extra late fee may be applied. The amount of the late fee will vary depending on who you are renting from and your monthly rent payment, but will be written in the lease.

Additional lease terms:
The landlord may assign additional terms and conditions to a lease, including pet policy, the number of occupants allowed to live at the residence, utilities agreement (who will pay what utilities), property maintenance and policies (what may or may not be done to alter the premises, noise restrictions, and parking agreements). Each lease should also include termination conditions by which either the renter or landlord can terminate the lease.

Suggested housing websites
ApartmentList.com: http://www.apartmentlist.com/
     - Capable of searching specific neighborhoods in Los Angeles
     - You will need to provide your name and email to check availability
Apartmentguide.com: www.apartmentguide.com
     - Good for searching rental properties within specific price range and location
     - You will need to provide your name and email to check availability
Craigslist: http://losangeles.craigslist.org
     - Good place to look for apartments, roommates, used furniture, cars, and services
ForRent.com: www.forrent.com
     - Good for searching rental properties within specific price range and location
     - You will need to provide your name and email to check availability
Rent.com: www.rent.com
     - Good for searching rental properties within specific price range and location
     - You will need to provide your name and email to check availability

Telephone
Cell phones:
Almost everyone has a cell phone in LA. A number of different cell phone companies offer different phones and packages depending on your needs. Almost all of these companies have national coverage and several offer international coverage for an additional cost. The most common cell phone companies used in the LA area are listed below:
AT&T (www.att.com)
     - Good 'fastest' national coverage, smart phone options, and international coverage plans.
     - Offers a USC discount, enter your e-mail at http://www.wireless.att.com/businesscenter/premier/
     - Home phone, digital TV, DSL and wireless internet options also available.
Sprint (www.sprint.com)
     - National coverage with limited dead zones, smart phone options and international coverage plans.
     - Wireless internet options available.
T-Mobile (www.t-mobile.com)
     - National coverage with limited dead zones, smart phone options, and international coverage plans.
     - Wireless internet options available.
Verizon (www.verizonwireless.com)
     -'Best' national coverage, smart phone options, but limited international coverage.
     - Digital TV and DSL and wireless internet options also available.

Several companies offer track phones with pay-per-minute plans. This option affords the flexibility of not being locked into a contract, but the options available are limited, and are only advantageous for those

planning limited cell phone usage. Unlike in many other countries you will be charged for both incoming and outgoing calls and text messages on your U.S. cell phone plan.

Home phone:
Though not absolutely necessary, many people also choose to have a home phone (or landline) at their residence. Often you can combine this phone bill in a home package including digital TV and internet. Landlines also provide 911 with a direct address in an emergency. Some home phone company options are listed below:
AT&T (www.att.com)
Comcast (http://shop.comcast.com)
Verizon (http://www22.verizon.com/?lid=//global//residential)
Vonage (www.vonage.com)

Purchasing or Leasing a Car

Though there are several public transportation options throughout LA, depending on where you live and what your schedule is, they may not always be convenient. Many people choose to lease or buy a car while living in LA. Leasing can be slightly cheaper than buying, depending on the car you are interested in but has set terms of length of lease and number of miles. You will be responsible for any damage repair or cleaning costs at the end of the lease. Many people choose to purchase either new or used vehicles depending on their needs. Websites for buying new or used cars are listed below.

Autotrader (www.autotrader.com) – number of different makes and models of used vehicles.
Carmax (www.carmax.com/) – number of different makes and models of new and used vehicles.
Craigslist (http://losangeles.craigslist.org) – number of different used vehicles.

Some popular car brands in the U.S.:

Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Hyundai, Ford, and Chevrolet

Before buying or leasing any vehicle it is best to do a little research about prices and reviews of different makes and models. Two professional sites include:

Edmunds.com (www.edmunds.com)
Kelly Blue Book (www.kbb.com)

Many people also post flyers around campus for vehicles that they are interested in selling, so always check your bulletin boards at work.

Things to keep in mind when purchasing or leasing a vehicle:
Price: Keep the vehicle payments in your budget; many dealerships try to draw you in with low APRs or cash back bonuses. Always do the calculations and make sure the monthly bills fit into your finances. The Kelley Blue Book will give a good indication of the expected car price.
New vs. used: Payments will generally be higher for new cars, but new cars often come with warranties. Used cars can get expensive in repairs if you don't know the car's history; you can get a limited vehicle history from Carfax (www.carfax.com)
Insurance: All vehicles driven in CA must have minimum insurance coverage. Rates for insurance depend on a variety of factors including level of coverage, year and model of car, number of miles driven annually, and accident and ticket history of the driver. Most Insurance companies will not include accident-free history from foreign countries.
Lease terms: Be aware of how long your lease length is and of any penalty fees for breaking your lease. Also know how many miles you are allowed in your lease agreement and fees that may be applied if you exceed the set number of miles. Other fees and penalties for damage or cleaning may also apply. Read your complete lease agreement before signing.

Getting Started at USC

This section includes what to do when you first arrive at USC and all the information about USC itself including the different campuses and institutes affiliated with USC.

What to do once you arrive at USC

Staff orientation (if you are a Postdoctoral Research Associate)
There is a monthly pair of orientation sessions for new staff at USC. One provides an overview of USC, and the other gives an overview of the benefit plans. *Do not miss them!* Ask your home department contact about the orientation sessions and look them up online. Your home department contact usually needs to register you for the sessions.

USC Identification (ID) card
All USC staff and students must carry the USC ID card at all times on campus. It is proof of employment at USC and provides access to a number of facilities. Once a new postdoc has registered with their hiring department, the postdoc will be given a 10-digit university ID number. Then the postdoc can get their USC ID at the One Stop Express in Seaver (HSC Campus) or the PSX (Parking Structure C, UPC Campus), Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please contact USCard Services at 213-740-8709 with questions or concerns. For additional information, visit http://www.usc.edu/bus-affairs/admin_serv/uscard_serv/

Email
All postdocs at USC are provided with a free email account. The email account is automatically generated upon registering with the home department. Accounts can be activated at http://usc.edu/firstlogin. USC Information Technology Services (ITS) also provides some security software and internet tools. For additional information, visit http://usc.edu/its.

Information about Office of International Services / Faculty/Staff Visa Services (OIS/FSVS)
For the international scholars at USC, immigration-related issues are handled by the Office of International Services (OIS). OIS also sponsors social and cultural activities to promote interaction among the international scholar population and also to bring about an awareness of the American culture.
A division of OIS, Faculty/Staff Visa Services provides specialized services for postdocs who are hired as staff. More information about OIS can be obtained at:

Office of International Services
Student Union Room 300
(213) 740-2666
(213) 740-5194 (fax)
ois@usc.edu
www.usc.edu/OIS
Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Information about USC

The University of Southern California, established in 1880, is one of the leading private research universities in the world. It is divided between two campuses, the University Park Campus (UPC) and the Health Sciences Campus (HSC). UPC is home to the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the Viterbi School of Engineering and various other professional schools. HSC houses the Keck School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy and three teaching hospitals. Additional Keck affiliates are the Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) and the House Ear Institute (HEI). All these campuses are located in or near downtown Los Angeles.

Health Sciences Campus (HSC)

Health Sciences Campus, or HSC as it is more commonly known, is located in East Los Angeles, about three miles east of downtown. It is home to the Keck School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy, Ostrow School of Dentistry with Divisions of Craniofacial Biology, Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy, and Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy. The Keck School of Medicine houses USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, Keck Medical Hospital of USC, the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute, the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine at USC, the USC Cardiovascular Thoracic Institute and the USC Institute for Global Health. For additional information visit: http://www.usc.edu/hsc/.

University Park Campus (UPC)

University Park Campus (UPC) is USC's larger campus. It is located southwest of downtown Los Angeles, and it is home to the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Business, Dentistry, Policy, among others. For more detailed information on UPC, see the website (http://visit.usc.edu/maps-directions/university-park-campus/).

Childrens Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA)

Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, or CHLA as it is commonly known, is one of the top five pediatric hospitals in the country. Located in the Hollywood district in LA, the hospital has been a USC affiliate since 1932 and is staffed by faculty physicians and scientists from the Keck School of Medicine. CHLA has a renowned research program that focuses on major pediatric fields such as cancer, genetics, neuroscience, cell biology and immunology. Research conducted at CHLA has led to a number of treatments for childhood illnesses.

Information that is useful for postdocs at CHLA

While on the CHLA network, postdocs have access to www.cw.org (or insideCHLA.org). This site has all of the employee information that you will need. Listed below are the most important pages that you will need for working at CHLA.

Employee Quicklinks:
- CHEX – where all of your "training tests" will be taken
- CHLA Benefits – where your health and insurance benefits information is located

Departments/Programs/Services:
- Accounts Payable – information needed for reimbursements
- Child Development Center – employee child care
- Commuter Services – transportation and parking information
- Human Resources – information on benefits, insurance, 401k and the CHLA employee handbook (definitely take a look at the handbook!)
- Office of Research Advancement and Administration – great resource for research information
- Research Institute – links to research faculty handbook and CHLA core facilities

Transportation and Parking

Visit the parking office located in the Human Resources building to determine your best parking option. On-site parking in the parking structures requires a monthly payment that depends on your parking status. Off-site lots are free, and van shuttles run every 10 minutes. You can also go to the commuter services page listed in the above www.CW.org section for more information.

Nearby Places for food

- Vons/Jons - both have good delis with fresh sandwiches.
- Agra Indian - near Sunset/Fountain, has an $8 lunch special that rocks!
- Nako – hole-in-the-wall, super cheap Japanese on Vermont, across from the post office and immediately before the movie theatre. A great lunch for under $7.
- Bianca's - a small Greek restaurant near Wendy's on Vermont.
- Hospital Cafeteria - easy and fast. On the lower floor of the hospital.
- Taco trucks abound - one is usually parked in front of the employee entrance of the hospital. We also get ones that sometimes park in front of Saban. There is also a good one on Maubert between Kaiser and the shopping center.
- Fish Tacos – at Hillhurst Ave. and Camero Ave. A short walk and totally worth it! Fish tacos are $1.50 while shrimp are $2.00.
- Nearby fast food - Quizno's, Subway, Wendy's, McDonald's in the hospital

Doheny Eye Institute (DEI)

The Doheny Eye Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving, improving and restoring human eyesight, as established by Mrs. Carrie Estelle Doheny in 1947. What started as two small rooms in St. Vincent Hospital has become one of the top vision research institutes in the country. In recent years the USC Department of Ophthalmology and Doheny Eye Institute have been ranked in the top 10 ophthalmology programs in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*. Doheny's vision is to become the premier vision research and education eye institute in the world through the discovery of new knowledge, innovative eye care therapies, and the education of leaders of ophthalmology and vision science. Today Doheny Eye Institute and USC are among the top two recipients of National Institute of Health medical research grants. For more information, please visit http://www.doheny.org.

House Research Institute (HRI)

The House Research Institute, formerly the House Ear Institute (HEI), is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing hearing science through research and education to improve quality of life. Established in 1946 by Howard P. House, M.D., as the Los Angeles Foundation of Otology, and later renamed for its founder, the House Research Institute has been engaged in the scientific exploration of the auditory system from the ear canal to the cortex of the brain for over 60 years.

Institute scientists investigate hearing loss and ear disease at the cellular and molecular level, as well as the complex neurological interactions between the auditory system and brain. They are also working to improve hearing aids and auditory implants, diagnostics, clinical treatments, and intervention methods. House researchers work with House Clinic physicians to integrate medicine and science through clinical and research trials that may directly benefit patients. The Institute shares its knowledge with the scientific and medical communities of both the University of Southern California and Caltech. Research is divided among three divisions: the Division of Cell Biology and Genetics, the Division of Communication and Auditory Neuroscience and the Division of Clinical & Translational Research. All three divisions participate in many activities at the University of Southern California campus. In addition, there is a jointly sponsored program between the House Research Institute and Neuroscience Graduate Program at USC. This program in Hearing Communication and Neuroscience (HCN) sponsors a retreat, speakers, and also funds a training program for graduate students, postdocs, and physician scientists.

The Institute has recently made changes to its policies regarding postdocs. Firstly the length of time a postdoc may continue to do research is limited to five years. Postdocs may continue to do research past the five year deadline if they are promoted to a Research Scientist position; however, as of 2012 promotions are prohibited. Postdocs are able to receive most benefits granted to Institute employees; however, they are not able to participate in any of the retirement plans. Other benefits include medical, hearing, dental and vision health plans; 12 sick days and 12 vacations days a year. Parking is also very reasonable in the facility's underground parking structure, which costs $15 a month.

Information Sciences Institute (ISI)
The Information Sciences Institute (ISI) celebrated its 40th anniversary this year and is a world leader in research and development of advanced information processing, computer and communications technologies. ISI is a unit of Viterbi School of Engineering, and is one of the nation's largest, most successful university-affiliated computer research institutes. The Institute consists of four main divisions including Informatics, Intelligent Systems, Computational Systems, and Advanced Electronics. The Institute attracts nearly $60 million annually – from corporations and more than 20 federal government agencies – for basic and applied research.

ISI seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical basic research and product-oriented research and development. The diverse expertise ranges from core engineering and computer science discovery to design, modeling and implementation of innovative prototypes and devices. ISI helped conceive, design and implement the Internet, including communications protocols that remain fundamental to Net operations. In addition ISI developed the Domain Name System (DNS) and its now-familiar ".com" address system.

ISI fulfills three roles: academic, including research and education; industrial, delivering technology-based solutions for government and business partners; and professional, offering students unusual, hands-on experience. The MOSIS subsidiary has fabricated more than 50,000 low-cost, low-volume integrated circuits for customers worldwide. The Institute employs about 350 engineers, research scientists, graduate students and staff. ISI is based in Marina del Rey, California, and maintains a presence in Arlington, Virginia. For more information, please visit: http://www.isi.edu/.

Maps
The USC website contains driving directions and maps for all USC campuses and locations. Simply go to the central 'Visit USC' website (http://visit.usc.edu/), and click on the place you want to go. You can also find convenient printable maps by searching in Google for the particular campus in which you are interested (e.g., 'usc hsc map').

Food at USC
The USC Hospitality website (http://hospitality.usc.edu/) lists all of the cafes on the UPC and HSC campuses. At UPC, an area directly north of the campus—University Village—also contains many places to eat. Be sure to ask around and try several of them, as there is a wide variety of food available.

Transportation
USC provides transportation to and from UPC, HSC, Union Station, CHLA and the Alhambra campus. This service is provided at no charge to anyone on campus.
For tram schedules and a list of routes visit http://transnet.usc.edu/transit/routes.aspx.
Also check the "Public safety" section to learn how to get a safe ride at night to your car or to a bus stop on campus.

Parking

Trojan Transportation issues parking permits for on-campus lots and structures. Monthly rates vary from $67 to $92. Generally, the closer to campus, the more expensive the permits will be. Carpool permits are cheaper ($53 - $67). Permits can be purchased online at the website above or at the Transportation Office in the Keith Administration Building (first floor, to the left of the elevators) at HSC.

Public Safety

The 2010 designation as an "International Safe Community" conveys USC's commitment to Public Safety. In fact, USC is the first university on the globe to seek and receive this coveted honor! In essence, USC functions like a city with its own police department, policies and procedures. The health and safety of faculty, students and staff are of paramount importance.
The key areas of focus are:

Escort Services
Often, Postdocs work late into the night. A Public Safety officer will escort you from your lab, your office, the library or any other campus location to your parked vehicle or dorm. Simply call the HSC Security Office at 323-442-1000 or UPC at 213-740-4321.

Campus Cruiser
The Campus Cruiser service provides a safe ride to your parked car, or to the bust stop, for all people on campus. Call when you are ready to leave. The dispatcher will send a Cruiser to pick you up in approximately 10 to 20 minutes. Only take vehicles with proper USC identification. After hours you may contact DPS for a ride to your car. Contact information for Campus Cruiser:
HSC: (323)442-2100, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.
UPC: (213)740-4911, 5:00 p.m. to 2:45 a.m., 7 days a week.
http://transnet.usc.edu/transit/cruiser_howto.aspx

USC Emergency Measures
To report an Emergency: Call the USC Department of Public Safety (DPS) at 323-442-1000 (HSC) or 213-740-4321 (UPC)

Emergency Notification Systems
• Call USC's Emergency Information Telephone Line 213-740-9233
The line can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls and has a backup system on the East Coast.
• Web Information will be posted at http://emergency.usc.edu
• TrojansAlert: University officials contact registered members of the Trojan Family via text message, voice-mail or email to apprise them of situations presenting an ongoing risk to public safety in our campus neighborhoods. Register at https://trojansalert.usc.edu/

Emergency Preparedness
Every USC building is equipped with two emergency supply kits, one containing first-aid supplies and the other general emergency supplies and tools.
- **USC Food Reserves and Supplies**: USC has stockpiled ready-to-eat meals and food bars on both the UPC and HSC campuses sufficient to provide 30,000 meals, enough to provide the University community with food for up to three days.
- **USC Emergency Response Vehicles**: Staffed by the Hazardous Materials Response Team, the university's hazardous materials vehicles ensure that USC can respond independently to chemical spills and other hazardous materials released in any of its 1,500 campus research laboratories. In the event that the Los Angeles Fire Department is unable to respond, USC's mini-pumper truck can connect to a standard fire hydrant or draw water from a pool.

- **Personal Preparedness:** Familiarize yourself with your department's emergency plan and with steps to take at home to be prepared for earthquakes or other major disasters. See
http://emergencyprep.usc.edu/emergency/resources.html

Special Events
USC is near the heart of downtown Los Angeles, and the UPC, in particular, may be affected by road closures: Presidential visits, Lakers' Basketball championship parades, etc. Pre-event notifications are posted and sent via email to the entire USC Community.

Department of Public Safety (DPS) Officers on Campus
DPS provides law enforcement and protective services to the USC campuses partnering with all individuals to keep USC among the safest urban research universities in the country.

You will notice the presence of forest green uniformed officers. The officers are seen driving in USC Public Safety vehicles, manning the desks at hospital entrances, directing traffic at busy intersections and generally patrolling the USC area. DPS also maintains a secure Lost and Found division.

The Department of Public Safety locations:
Health Science Campus
2200 Lambie Street
Los Angeles, CA 90033
Emergency: 323-442-1000
Business: 323-442-1200

University Park Campus
3667 S. McClintock Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1912
Emergency: 213-740-4321
Business: 213-740-6000

Norris Medical Library
Norris Medical Library, located on the HSC campus, is one of the many libraries that serve the USC population. All USC postdocs have borrowing privileges and can apply for a card at the library. For information about other libraries at USC, visit: http://www.usc.edu/libraries/

General Information
Address
2003 Zonal Ave,
Los Angeles, CA 90089-9130
Phone 323-442-1116
Email: medlib@usc.edu
Web: www.usc.edu/hsc/nml
Hours
Monday - Thursday 7:00 a.m. - 12:00 Midnight
Friday 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Library Cards and Loan Privileges

Library cards are issued free to USC-affiliated users (USC faculty, staff, students and staff of USC-affiliated hospitals). Courtesy cards are available to select affiliated groups' members (see below). Free library cards are available for licensed health professionals and other qualified individuals, and for business organizations. Library privileges are non-transferable. For additional information, contact the Access Services Office at (323) 442-3313 or medlib@usc.edu.

House Calls/Consultation Services
USC students, staff and faculty (individually or as teams) may request a free consultation or instructional service session with a USC/NML Librarian in their lab or office site. An online request form is found at http://www.usc.edu/hsc/nml/assets/forms/hc-consult-request.html
A House Call can help you:
• Identify and use key information resources in your field
• Improve your database searching skills
• Find electronic full-text journals and books
• Manage journal references with productivity software
• Enhance visual presentations
• Use information resources more efficiently
Your House Call will be tailored to your individual information needs.

In-Library Consultations
Research Librarians will conduct an online search of keyword topics.
Norris Medical Library Reference Desk: 323-442-1116
Mon-Fri: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Educational Workshops
Educational Workshops are presented in the Computer Lab on the second level of the Library. Hands-on instruction for computer statistical packages (i.e., SAS, STATA, and SPSS Statistical Software), manuscript development and presentation workshops are offered throughout the year.
To register and view lists of courses online:
http://www.usc.edu/hsc/nml/lib-services/wkshp-descriptions.html

Videoconferencing
Through the use of Polycom VSX 5000 videoconferencing equipment, the library allows Health Sciences Campus faculty, staff and students to come together virtually with individuals in other locations for meetings, collaboration, lectures and training. A videoconference can connect you with colleagues on the University Park Campus, in other states, and throughout the world. PowerPoint presentations may be integrated into videoconferences. Videoconferencing may be point-to-point between two locations or may include multiple points with participants in various locations. Each videoconference site requires its own equipment. The library supports IP and ISDN protocols. Videoconference fees consist of a $50 equipment and set-up charge; additional charges may be incurred dependent upon requirements of the session. Reservations are required. Contact kofman@usc.edu.

Conference Room Reservations
Two conference rooms are available. $25 fee if food is served. Additional fees may apply. Available for meetings, workshops, site visits, etc. The rooms are equipped with PC computer, large projection screen, internet connection, laptop connection, and videoconferencing equipment.

Small Group Room Reservations
Reservations for small conference rooms, equipped with projector, conference table and chairs are available. These rooms have a 12 person maximum, and no food is permitted.

Reservations may be made one day in advance for up to 2 hours per day by calling the Loan Desk at (323) 442-1116.

Computer Use
Norris Library has 50 computers to freely use on a first come, first serve basis. There is no time limit, the latest software is installed, and the ergonomic chairs are especially nice. Use your same USC username and password to login. Computers are available during all library hours. Consultants are available weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and some weekend hours for help in using library equipment and software and with laptops.

Wireless Access
Wireless access is available throughout the library. For more details on accessing USC-restricted information resources with USC wireless, visit
http://www.usc.edu/hsc/nml/computing/connecting.html

Laptop Connection Ports
Eight Ethernet connections to ResNet, the university residential network for laptop users, are located on the lower level of the library beyond the current journal shelving. Specific hardware and registration are required. For further information, contact the Technology Support Center at (323) 442-1968.
NML Technology Support Center Health Sciences Computer Accounts
Phone: 323-442-1968
Email: hscaccts@usc.edu

Printing in the Library
Laser printers, activated by debit cards purchased from the card dispenser/regenerator on the Plaza Level next to the loan desk, produce black and white copies for $.05/page and color copies for $.25/page. Printers are located on each floor.

Health Care
Physicians
More than 500 Keck School physicians are members of The Doctors of USC, the faculty private clinical practice, offering a wide range of patient services from the most complex therapies to primary care for the entire family. The Doctors of USC practice at numerous locations through Los Angeles and Southern California. For other physician referrals, check with your insurance plan.

Hospitals
The Los Angeles area is home to many hospitals. Two of them – Keck Medical Center of USC Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital - are owned and operated by USC. Neither facility has an emergency room. Staffed by faculty physicians from the Keck School of Medicine, the two USC hospitals offer world-class, research-based medical care in a personal, private setting conveniently located on the Health Sciences Campus.

Keck faculty and residents provide health care at the adjacent Los Angeles County (LAC) + USC Medical Center, which serves all people of Los Angeles County, including the medically underserved. The hospital is a level 1 Trauma Center and has one of the largest and busiest emergency centers in the United States.

Affiliated with the Keck School since 1932, Children's Hospital Los Angeles is one of the nation's leading children's hospitals and is acknowledged worldwide for its leadership in pediatric and adolescent health care, research and education.

Below is a list of some other local area hospitals. Please note that some hospitals have particular specialties, so they may not be appropriate for particular medical conditions. Check with your insurance plan for coverage and with your primary care physician for the hospital(s) in which the physician practices. In case of serious or life-threatening injury dial 911. Brief descriptions have been provided for some of the hospitals.

California Hospital Medical Center
1401 South Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90015
http://www.chmcla.org/index.htm
(213) 748-2411

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center (This is a well respected hospital on the West Side of Los Angeles - linked to UCLA)
8700 Beverly Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90048
http://cedars-sinai.edu/
(310) 423-3277

Good Samaritan Hospital (This hospital has won many awards for patient care)
1225 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017
http://goodsam.org/
(213) 977-2360

Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center
1300 N Vermont Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90028
http://www.hollywoodpresbyterian.com/
(323) 361-6070

Huntington Hospital
100 West California Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91105
http://www.huntingtonhospital.com/Main/Home.aspx
(626) 397-5000

Kaiser Foundation Hospital - Los Angeles (Use of this hospital is restricted to participants of the Kaiser Permanente Health Care Plan)
4867 Sunset Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90027
https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/html/kaiser/index.shtml
(800) 954-8000

St. Vincent Medical Center (This hospital is located across the street from the House Ear Institute)
2131 W 3rd St
Los Angeles, CA 90057
http://www.stvincentmedicalcenter.com/
(213) 484-7111

Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS)

GPSS is a student body comprised of graduate and professional students at USC and may complement your postdoctoral fellowship experience. In specific departments or divisions, postdoctoral fellows are noted as 'students/staff'. If this is the case for you, the benefits of GPSS are worth investigating. The organization represents the 14,000 USC graduate and professional students in areas of Administrative Advocacy and Recognition and hosts Special Events. The elected officers and senators represent all graduate departments within the university as the 'official voice' of the graduate and professional student body on campus. For additional information on GPSS and services, such as free Legal Aid and partial Travel Grants, visit http://www.gpssusc.com/

Childcare Services

USC provides benefits-eligible postdocs access to childcare services on the UPC and the HSC campuses. Additional information is available at http://www.usc.edu/dept/hr/childcare/.

Postdoctoral Scholars

In-depth information about USC policies regarding postdoctoral scholars can be found at:
https://postdocs.usc.edu/files/2011/09/Postdoctoral-Scholars-Policy-rev-9-19-11.pdf

These definitions and conditions are accurate until July of 2012. Significant changes in University of Southern California policy regarding the employment status and benefits of postdoctoral scholars are expected to be enacted in July of 2012.

Definition

A **Postdoctoral Scholar** is a trainee in residence at the University pursuing advanced study beyond a doctorate in preparation for a full-time academic and/or research career. To be considered for appointment as a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of Southern California, the individual must qualify as a: (1) **Postdoctoral Research Associate**, (2) **Postdoctoral Fellow** or (3) **Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow**. The Postdoctoral Research Associate or Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow is appointed as a temporary, fixed-term employee of the University. The Postdoctoral Fellow is registered as a non-matriculated, non-degree seeking, and limited status student of the University.

A Postdoctoral Scholar must have been awarded a Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate in an appropriate field within five years of initial appointment. The appointment involves substantial full-time research or scholarship. (In the case of a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, teaching is permitted up to 50% of total effort, not to exceed instruction in three courses per year). The Postdoctoral Scholar appointment is viewed as preparatory for a full-time academic and/or research career. Postdoctoral appointments are not part of clinical (patient care) training programs. Appointees work under the oversight of a more senior scholar, who is the faculty mentor. The appointee has academic freedom, and is expected to publish the results of his or her research or scholarship during the period of the appointment with his or her faculty advisor(s).

The University category Research Associate is reserved for long-term, career employees who hold the Ph.D. or equivalent doctorate. Unlike a Postdoctoral Scholar appointment, a Research Associate appointment is not usually preparatory toward a full-time academic and/or research career.

Title and Benefits

Postdoctoral Research Associates are a category of visiting scholars seeking to further their educational and professional development and who meet the above definition. Postdoctoral Research Associates may be in residence at the University for a period not to exceed five years. All Postdoctoral Research Associates appointed at the University must be issued a University letter that sets forth the terms of the appointment. Postdoctoral Research Associates will be eligible for benefits provided University exempt staff employees, with the exception of tuition assistance benefits. Since Postdoctoral Research Associates are not faculty members, they do not accrue eligibility toward sabbatical leave. **Postdoctoral Research Associates may be supported on research projects or grant awards.**

Postdoctoral Fellows are a category of visitors seeking to further their educational and professional development and who meet the above definition. Postdoctoral Fellows must be registered as non-matriculated, non- degree seeking students while in residence as Postdoctoral Fellows at the University. Postdoctoral Fellows may be in residence at the University for a

period not to exceed five years. All Postdoctoral Fellows appointed at the University must be issued a University offer letter that sets forth the terms of their appointment. Postdoctoral Fellows will be eligible for benefits provided University students. Postdoctoral Fellows are supported on external training grants, or with USC or external stipends. **The postdoctoral fellow category shall only be used when student status is an expectation of the organization that sponsors the postdoctoral appointment.**

Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows is a category of visiting scholars seeking to further their education and professional development and who meet the above definition. Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows are appointed for a period of at least one and no more than two years. All Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows appointed at the University must be issued a University letter that sets forth the terms of their appointment. Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows will be eligible for benefits provided University exempt staff employees, with the exception of tuition assistance benefit. Since Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows are not faculty members, they do not accrue eligibility toward sabbatical leave. Postdoctoral Teaching Fellows may be supported on internal funds and/or on grant awards. However, grant award funding can only be used to compensate research effort occurring during the fellowship, unless the funder explicitly permits and/or requires compensation for teaching activity.

A Postdoctoral Scholar's financial support provided by external agencies, whether or not called a fellowship, is to be confirmed by the department at the time of the appointment and is considered to be part of the Postdoctoral Scholar's total financial support. An appointment is always subject to the conditions of the agency or organization making the award.

When employed by the University to teach or work on a research project or grant award, University Policies that are applicable to staff employees must be followed.

Benefits for postdoctoral scholars at CHLA, DEI and the House Research Institute are independent from the USC benefits – see the sections on CHLA, DEI, or House Research Institute.

Minimum Salaries for Postdoctoral Scholars
https://postdocs.usc.edu/policies/

Effective fall of 2012 until June 30, 2013, the minimum salary for newly hired and renewed appointments for postdoctoral scholars (including postdoctoral research associates, postdoctoral fellows and postdoctoral teaching fellows) is **$39,264** per year (12 months).

Additional Information
For the topics listed below, please see the indicated sections of this URL:
http://policies.usc.edu/p3empWorkplace/postdoctoral_scholars.html

Privileges and Obligations of Postdoctoral Scholars
Appointment of Postdoctoral Scholars:
Responsibilities of Faculty Mentors
University Responsibilities for its Postdocs

Postdoctoral Goals

The career goals for each postdoc are, by and large, subjective as they are based on one's experiences and interests. Summarized here are the important aspects outlined by The Federation of American Scientists for Experimental Biology (FASEB) for postdocs to achieve their particular goals. USC has implemented the use of the IDP. Please visit https://postdocs.usc.edu/mentoring/idp/ to get started on your IDP. Postdocs seeking more in-depth coverage of these points can also visit the 'Career Planning Resources' section on the National Postdoc Association (NPA) website (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/careers/career-planning-resources).
For further information, refer to the section on the NPA at the end of this chapter. The NIH website (http://grants.nih.gov/training/resources.htm) also has a 'Careers Resources' section, which contains a wealth of information and tips on such things as how to write a research grant, resources for new investigators, and how to improve mentoring skills.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

IDPs provide a planning process that identifies both professional development needs and career objectives. IDPs also serve as a communication tool between individuals and their mentors. The IDP focuses on these core competencies and their development in line with the postdoc's career aspirations. The IDP process, initiated by the postdoc with full participation by the mentor(s), consists of four steps for both postdoctoral scholar and mentor(s):

Basic Steps	For Postdocs	For Mentor(s)
Step 1	Conduct Self-Assessment	Become Familiar with available career opportunities
Step 2	Write an IDP, share the IDP with mentor and revise	Review the IDP and help revise it
Step 3	Survey career opportunities with mentor	Discuss career opportunities with postdoc
Step 4	Implement the plan and revise IDP as needed, at least annually	Establish regular review of progress and help revise the IDP as needed, at least annually

To get started with your IDP, please visit: https://postdocs.usc.edu/mentoring/idp/. This website includes self-assessment forms, IDP forms, and links to additional resources available regarding the IDP.   A postdoc is expected to conduct a self-assessment and generate a draft IDP to share with their mentor(s) within the first month of arrival at USC, and on an annual cycle thereafter. Keep in mind that the self-assessment form is most likely to be a private document that the mentor(s) should not expect to see. The IDP form should be shared in a draft form with the mentor(s) at the meeting where the postdoc's accomplishments and goals will be discussed in light of the core competencies and the postdoc's career aspirations. After the meeting, the postdoc will revise the form and present it to the mentor(s) for signature(s), which will serve to formalize the process and document the meeting outcomes. Meetings between postdocs and their mentor(s) will probably occur frequently, both formally and informally. However, a formal meeting where the IDP is discussed and signed should occur at least once per year.

Postdoctoral Core Competencies

The National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) has established six core competencies to offer guidance to individual postdoctoral scholars. There is a growing national consensus that on-going training for these skills is essential to a research-oriented scientific career. At USC, we expect that postdoctoral scholars will be provided the opportunity to develop the following core competencies:

USC Core Competencies for the Humanities & Social Sciences	NPA Core Competencies for the Sciences
Teaching Skills	Discipline-specific Conceptual Knowledge
Research Skills	Professional/Research Skill Development
Writing & Publication	Communication Skills
Communication Skills	Professionalism
Professional Development	Leadership & Management Skills
Leadership & Collaboration	Responsible Conduct of Research

A detailed description of the six core competencies required by postdocs can be found at the NPA's postdoctoral core competencies toolkit webpage (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/competencies).

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

From determining authorship on a postdoc's first lab publication, to taking ownership of data (NOTE: the data if created through a grant award, belongs to the University and must be negotiated with their PI) when a postdoc transitions to a faculty job, RCR issues are fundamental to a postdoc's professional development and everyday research practice. Yet many postdocs indicate that, despite the requirements from some funding organizations, they have not had guidance in issues of research integrity. While most institutions have general RCR training resources, targeted programs specifically for postdocs can be tailored to the unique roles they play in the research enterprise and their particular phase of career development.

Some particular issues for postdocs include:
1. The dual role of both mentor and mentee
2. Cultural diversity among postdocs, the majority of whom are visa holders
3. Lack of official standing for most postdocs in their institutional community
4. Postdocs' dependence upon their supervisor for career advancement, which can influence conflict management in the lab/research group
5. The need for effective communication skills in sensitive or difficult conversations, especially when English is a second language
6. The implications of short-term appointments on data and project ownership, as well as competition between postdoc and mentor

The NPA website has a section (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/publications/rcr) dedicated to aiding postdocs in issues relating to RCR.

Individual schools at USC have created classroom based courses on RCR, including the Keck School of Medicine and the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. Please consult your school for information on available RCR courses. The KSOM holds an in-depth 1-week RCR course each summer

(INTD 500) which all postdocs are encouraged to attend. Search the KSOM Events Calendar (http://keck.usc.edu/About/Events_Calendar.aspx) for "INTD 500," to see if this course will be available soon. Classroom RCR instruction is required for certain (but not all) NIH programs and *online instruction is a requirement for all NSF-funded postdoctoral scholars*. Please see USC's Office of Research's Responsible Conduct of Research page: (http://research.usc.edu/policies/rcr/).

Professional Development

Starting as a postdoc is the start of the next step toward the rest of your life, so now is the time to start (or to continue) figuring out what the rest of your life is going to hold. While most people coming into a postdoc plan to obtain a faculty position at the end of their term, there is good evidence to suggest that only a minority end up at that goal. Therefore, it is important for you to start setting career goals and making plans to reach them. Here is a sample of the resources available to help you understand the postdoc experience and the things you need to do to move forward in your chosen direction. These are only a start. Also search online, as there is a lot of information out there (if you look for it).

Books:
- *Tomorrow's Professor* (1997), by Richard Reis
- *A PhD is Not Enough* (1993), by Peter Fiebelman
- *At the Helm: Leading your Own Laboratory* (2nd Edition, 2010), by Kathy Barker
- *Management Skills for Scientists* (2005), by Carl M Cohen and Suzanne L Cohen
- *Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty* (2nd edition, 2006), by Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Other resources:
- *Doctors Without Orders* (2005), from Sigma Xi. A great survey on postdoc job satisfaction.
- *Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience for Scientists and Engineers* (2000), from National Academies Press. An older (but still relevant) review of the state of postdocs in US universities.

Networking

Networking is an important part of every postdoc experience, both with your peers and with established scientists. It is well-known that the transition to both academic and industry positions after a postdoc are largely acquired through one's networks, as well as scientific achievements. Networking is the core to forming collaborations, sharing advice, and identifying new resources for one's research. It is also a good way to relax and socialize with your peers, who often share the same stresses and hectic schedule you do.

The USC Postdoctoral Association hosts at least one networking event on the HSC each month and will soon implement similar events on the UPC. These events are a great opportunity to meet other postdocs on campus. You may find a new collaborator, a resident expert on a new technique you are learning, or a new friend.

In addition to these social events, any seminar, workshop, professional development event, or scientific meeting can serve as an ideal networking opportunity. Feel free to talk to the speaker after a seminar or introduce yourself to other scientists at a meeting. Most people enjoy discussing their research and career, and are frequently excited to share with junior scientists.

Professional, online networks like LinkedIn (http://www.linkedin.com) can also be a good way to maintain the contacts you've already made and make use of the networks of your friends and colleagues. A professional development seminar on using LinkedIn and other social networking tools was presented on the HSC by Ken Schmitt President & Founder at TurningPoint Executive Search & StartingPoint

on October 12, 2011. A recording of this presentation "Leveraging Social Media for Career Development" can be viewed at http://keckmedia.usc.edu/mediasite/Catalog/catalogs/keckpostdoc.aspx.

Beyond scientific networking, socializing outside of work is an important part to leading a balanced and happy life during your postdoc. As such there are a number of different social organizations and groups throughout LA for nearly every interest, from sports, to art, to family-oriented activities. A simple Google search of your interest + LA will yield a multitude of links from which to choose.

Grant Writing

Your postdoctoral training period is the best time to learn and to adopt sound practices that can improve your odds in the competition for funding. Some basic but important tips include: (1) to make sure you are working from the most recent set of application guidelines; (2) to keep the review criteria in mind throughout the process; and (3) to contact the program officer or other designated contact person if you have questions. Please ask your mentor for the contact person who is at your research institution for help with some of the documentation.

The Office of Research on the UPC (headed by Randolph Hall, Vice President for Research) provides a number of resources for grant writing and offers help for investigators who are seeking funding and applying to sponsored research competitions. Visit their website at http://www.usc.edu/research/. Workshops on grant writing are frequently offered by USC's Center for Excellence in Research (CER). Visit their website for list of upcoming seminars and workshops at http://research.usc.edu/about/vp/cer/.

Below is a list of grants, which is divided into two parts: research awards for those that have just begun their postdoctoral training and transitional research awards to aid in your transition from a postdoc to an independent researcher. Some of the most general awards are discussed in detail.

Research awards
NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSAs) for Individual Postdoctoral Fellows (F32)
These are among the most prestigious training awards, which have several parts and also require your mentor to complete an extensive portion of the application. NRSAs provide a stipend, tuition and fees, and an institutional allowance. Stipend levels for Fiscal Year 2011 range from $38,496 to $ 53,112 a year depending on years of postdoctoral experience. Individuals can receive up to three years total of NRSA support at the postdoc level.

Eligibility highlights: Doctoral level degree holder, such as a Ph.D., M.D., D.O, D.V.M., Pharm.D., Sc.D., or D.D.S. U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or permanent resident of the U.S. at the time of the award. Individuals on temporary visas are not eligible. Awardees must participate full-time in research training.

Deadline(s): Application upload dates are April 8, August 8, and December 8.

Website: Program announcement at http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-113.html. Also see http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm for a menu of links about the NRSA program.

Tips (not from the NIH): A previous fellow at Penn shares some pointers for applying for your own fellowship at http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/funding/nrsaguidelines.html.

American Cancer Society (ACS) Postdoctoral Fellowships

This award is to support the training of researchers who have received a doctoral degree to provide initial funding leading to an independent career in cancer research (including basic, preclinical, clinical, cancer control, psychosocial, behavioral, epidemiology, health services and health policy research). Awards may be for three years with progressive stipends of $44,000, $46,000, and $48,000 per year, plus a $4,000 per year fellowship allowance. Depending on availability of special endowment funds, the Society annually selects one or more of the top-ranked fellowships to be supplemented above the standard stipend. Eligibility highlights: U.S. citizen, non-citizen national of the U.S., or permanent resident (green card holder). Less than four years since Ph.D. or M.D. awarded.

Deadline(s): April 1 and October 15

Web site:
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/RES/content/RES_5_2x_Postdoctoral_Fellowships.asp?sitearea=RES
(note that application materials are available on January 1 and July 1)

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) Fellowships
The Training Program funded by the CIRM provides postdoctoral students with a solid understanding of the biology of stem cells, the skills to use stem cells in their own research, and the ability to devise and use computational approaches in their stem cell research.

The Postdoctoral CIRM Scholars program offers one-year-long fellowships for researchers pursuing or planning to pursue laboratory research with a CIRM mentor in some aspect of stem cell biology. Program trainees receive guidance from faculty mentors and are expected to participate in activities associated with the CIRM Training Program. Scholars are encouraged to present their work at a local, national, or international scientific conference. Postdoctoral fellows may be expected to participate in planning and organizing some of the scholarly activities related to the training program.

Award period: Appointments are for one year, with the possibility of reappointment for up to three years total.
Course requirements: Postdoctoral CIRM Scholars will be expected to audit stem cell training program-specific courses.

Reappointment: Reappointment to a second or third year requires specific action on the part of the scholar.

Eligibility: Candidates must have received a Ph.D. or a professional doctorate in a scientifically related field, must be pursuing or planning to pursue laboratory research with a CIRM mentor in some aspect of stem cell biology, and must have agreement from that mentor to work in his or her laboratory. Trainees are not required to be California residents or US citizens. CIRM is particularly interested in training a diverse pool of individuals from many backgrounds, including underrepresented minorities. A scholar can receive a maximum of three years of support through this program. Candidates are expected to be within seven years of completing their Ph.D.s, although applicants that are further from Ph.D. will be considered.

The PI of the CIRM training program for USC is: Professor Robert Maxson (maxson@usc.edu). For more information on CIRM fellowship openings at USC, visit:
http://keck.usc.edu/Research/Research_Institutes/Eli_and_Edythe_Broad_Center_for_Regenerative_Medicine_and_Stem_Cell_Research_at_USC/Training_Opportunities.aspx

A. P. Giannini Foundation Medical Research Fellowship Program

The A. P. Giannini Foundation invites promising, junior postdoctoral investigators in the early stages of their careers to apply to their Medical Research Fellowship Program. This program supports innovative medical research in the basic sciences and applied fields with fellowships funded for up to three years.

Eligibility: Postdocs (MD or PhD) with no more than 3 years of postdoctoral experience are eligible to apply, and must be US citizens or permanent residents.

Deadline: November 7, 2011.

Website: http://apgianninifoundation.org/ for additional information.

List of some other awards:
- American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) Clinical and Translational Cancer Research Fellowships
- American Heart Association Western Affiliate Postdoctoral Fellowship
- American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) Post-Doctoral Grant Awards
- American Lung Association (ALA) Senior Research Training Fellowship Award
- American Physiological Society (APS) Postdoctoral Fellowship in Physiological Genomics
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowships
- Helen Hay Whitney Foundation Research Fellowships
- Irvington Institute Fellowship Program of the Cancer Research Institute (formerly the Cancer Research Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship Program)
- Jane Coffin Childs Memorial Fund for Medical Research
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International (JDRF)
- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Career Development Program
- Life Sciences Research Foundation (LSRF) Postdoctoral Fellowship Program
- National Research Council (NRC) Research Associateship Programs (RAP)
- PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America) Foundation
- AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowships

Transitional Research Awards
NIH Pathway to Independence (PI) Award (K99/R00)
This award is designed to help the most talented postdocs transition into an independent, stable research position and obtain an R01 earlier in their career. The award provides a combination of 1-2 years of support for mentored postdoctoral research (K99) followed by up to 3 years of support for independent research if the grantee obtains an assistant professor position (or the equivalent) (R00 phase).

Eligibility highlights: Open to both U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens. Exceptional postdoctoral candidates with clinical or research doctorates (or equivalent degrees) who have no more than 5 years of postdoctoral research training at the time of their initial application or resubmission.

Deadline(s): February 12, June 12, and October 12 for new applications (see K series dates at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/submissionschedule.htm)

Website:
Program announcement: http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-11-197.html

Questions and Answers, Contact List, and other resources:
http://grants.nih.gov/archive/grants/new_investigators/pathway_independence.htm

Other NIH Career Development Awards (K Kiosk)
NIH offers a spectrum of 14 different K awards targeted for different career stages. Mentored awards exist for postdocs. (The newest K award for postdocs, the K99/R00, is described above.)
Possible awards for postdocs with a research doctorate (Ph.D. or equivalent)
K99/R00 (see above)
See http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm for additional options

Possible awards for postdocs with a health-professional doctorate:
http://grants.nih.gov/training/kawardhp.htm
Tip: K award offerings vary among the NIH units, and institutes and centers may differ in how they implement the awards that they do offer. Read program announcements carefully and consider contacting the designated official at the program institute or center to inquire about particular awards.
Eligibility highlights: Generally a doctoral degree is required, with some awards (K08 and K23) requiring a clinical degree. U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or permanent resident (green card holder), except for K99/R00, which is available to non-U.S. citizens (see above).
Restrictions on previous funding: Typically applicants cannot be or have been a PI on another career award, an R01, or a subproject of a program project (P01) or center (P50). It is fine to have an R03 or R21.

Deadline(s): February 12, June 12, and October 12

Website: http://grants.nih.gov/training/careerdevelopmentawards.htm for overviews of all the K awards, links to announcements, and a handy career award wizard that asks you a series of questions and in response suggests which award(s) might be appropriate for you.

Other transitional research awards include:
Burroughs Wellcome Fund Career Awards for Medical Scientists (CAMS)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society Career Transition Fellowship

National Postdoctoral Association (NPA)
Ideas for an NPA emerged after an ad hoc steering committee – comprised of postdoctoral representatives from across the country, each a chair or founding member of an institutional postdoctoral association – initiated its formation. This steering committee coalesced during Science's NextWave Postdoc Network meeting in April 2002 in Washington, D.C. At this meeting, attendees expressed broad support for a national postdoctoral organization that could provide focus and effect positive change.

The NPA is a member-driven organization that provides a unique, national voice for postdoctoral scholars. The underpinnings of the NPA are centered on enhancing the postdoc experience in the United States. From its inception, the NPA worked collaboratively and constructively with research institutions, postdoctoral affairs offices, postdoctoral associations (PDAs), professional organizations, and scientific funding agencies. More information about the objectives, roles and achievements of the NPA can be found on the NPA website (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org).

Membership
Postdocs who would like to be more involved in the NPA can become a member by registering at http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/membership/join-us/how-to-join. Apart from the social and networking benefits, becoming a NPA member also offers other financial rewards. These include joint membership discounts with other organizations (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/membership/join-us/dues-options), member discounts for various services and products (http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/membership/the-

[benefits/member-discounts](), and access to health insurance for postdocs without health insurance ([http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/membership/the-benefits/full-member-benefits/health-insurance]()).

The KSOM has institutional membership for NPA, which provides postdocs at USC (with a USC email address) access to the NPA affiliate membership. This membership provides access to a number of resources on the NPA website.

POSTDOCket([http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/publications/postdocket]())
The POSTDOCket is a quarterly NPA newsletter covering news items and features of interest to the postdoctoral community. The NPA welcomes member submissions for inclusion in the POSTDOCket. Postdocs wishing to contribute articles to the POSTDOCket can do so by contacting the POSTDOCket Editor-in-Chief, Katie Kelm, Ph.D. ([katie_kelm@unc.edu]()).

National Postdoc Appreciation Day/Week
In 2009, the NPA initiated the National Postdoc Appreciation Day/Week to celebrate the significant contributions that postdoctoral scholars make to the U.S. scientific research enterprise. At the inaugural event, seventy-plus institutions across the country (including USC), plus three in Canada and Australia, joined the celebration by organizing special events to show their appreciation. `mailto:` The U.S. House of Representatives passed [H. Res. 1545]() expressing support for designation of the week beginning on the third Monday in September as "National Postdoc Appreciation Week."

Information about LA

If you are looking to find best places to eat, to shop, to see and to entertain, nothing is better than reading the ideas of those who have experienced these places before. You can find helpful information in some review and recommendation websites like www.yelp.com.

Grocery

Grocery stores in LA range from the basic chain to mom & pop to organic stores. Here is a list of them:

- Trader Joe's - www.traderjoes.com - a local favorite, Trader Joe's is a less expensive alternative to the fancy organic stores. Cheese and wine are super cheap!
- Target- www.target.com- a convenient shopping option in which grocery, clothes, health supplies, furniture, and home appliances can be found for reasonable prices.
- Albertson's – www.albertsons.com - your basic grocery chain.
- Vons – www.vons.com - your basic grocery chain.
- Ralph's – www.ralphs.com - your basic grocery chain.
- Whole Foods – www.wholefoodsmarket.com - sometimes referred to as "Whole Paycheck," Whole Foods sells the highest quality, highest priced natural and organic products.
- Gelson's – www.gelsons.com - another natural and organic grocer.
- Pavilion's – www.pavilions.com - the fancy version of Vons.
- Farmer's Markets - www.farmernet.com/events/cfms - this site provides a great list of all the certified farmer's markets available in LA.
- Costco – www.costco.com - a bulk goods store that requires a membership.

Places to visit in LA

Los Angeles provides many sources of entertainment. Some of them are listed below:

- Griffith Park - www.laparks.org/dos/parks/griffithpk/ - one of the nation's largest city parks, Griffith Park has many interesting sights and hiking trails.
- Griffith Observatory - www.griffithobs.org - a great spot overlooking LA and the Hollywood sign. Admission to the grounds and building are free, and the observatory hosts a free monthly star-gazing party. Tickets to the planetarium and live shows range from $5-$7.
- LA Zoo - www.lazoo.org - a very nice local zoo located in Griffith Park. Admission is $14.
- Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens - www.huntington.org - a beautiful botanical garden, $15 admission on weekdays, $20 on weekends. Closed on Tuesdays. First Thursday of every month is free, but you must book one month in advance as the spots are taken quickly. For example, next month's free day tickets were available on the 2nd and they were already sold out by the 4th.
- Descanso Gardens - www.descansogardens.org - a lovely botanical garden. Admission is $8.
- Natural History Museum - www.nhm.org/site - $9 admission.
- California Science Center - www.californiasciencecenter.org - free admission to all exhibits, $8 for IMAX shows.
- Page Museum and La Brea Tar Pits - http://www.tarpits.org/ - a great family outing filled with fossils and prehistoric discoveries with an admission of only $7.
- Catalina Island - www.catalinachamber.com - take a relaxing day trip to the lovely island of Catalina.
- Channel Islands - www.islandpackers.com - Island Packers offers day trips or overnight camping trips to the five Channel Islands. These islands are rugged and uninhabited. A great way to get away from city life!

- Downtown Art Walk - www.downtownartwalk.org - the second Thursday of every month, downtown LA is the hippest place to be. Art galleries open their doors and their wine bottles from noon-9 pm for a fantastic party with a new experience every month.
- Walt Disney Concert Hall - www.laphil.com - tickets for individual shows range from $45-$100. Keep an eye out for FREE concerts that are sometimes available! You can also tour the Concert Hall for free; check their webpage for dates and times.
- Disneyland – http://disneyland.disney.go.com/ - $80 per park per day, an expensive ticket, but a classic for visitors.
- Universal Studios – www.universalstudioshollywood.com - $77 for a 1-day ticket for SoCal residents.
- Studio Tours – multiple LA studios give tours: Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures, Warner Brothers, NBC Studios, Universal Studios, etc. Check out their websites for more details.
- Live Studio Audience for Television Shows - www.tvtickets.com - free admission to be in a live studio audience! You can also check out individual studio websites to see if your favorite show is available for live audiences.

Tickets for many attractions are available for discounted prices through USC. Please check the USC website or check in at the ticket office locations for an updated list.
UPC campus - http://www.usc.edu/bus-affairs/ticketoffice/ticketoffice/index.html
HSC campus - http://www.usc.edu/bus-affairs/admin_serv/uscard_serv/general/hsc.html

Cinemas

Los Angeles is the entertainment capital of the world and thus offers a wide variety of movie-going experiences. Some of them are:
- AMC - www.amcentertainment.com - about $12 per ticket.
- Arclight – www.arclightcinemas.com - at $16 per ticket, Arclight is one of the more expensive theaters, but they offer the highest quality movie experience with no commercials, great picture and sound, and reserved seating.
- Highland Theatres – www.highlandtheatres.com - the cheapest place to go for first-run movies. $4 matinees, $6 after 6 p.m., and $3 all day/night Tuesdays and Wednesdays. It's definitely not a high-class movie experience, but you just can't beat $3 for a first-run movie!
- Laemmle - www.laemmle.com - $11 per ticket for independent films.
- Mann - www.manntheatres.com - $12 per ticket.
- Pacific Theatres – www.pacifictheatres.com - $12 per ticket.
- Rave Motion Pictures (formerly The Bridge) - www.ravemotionpictures.com - $13 per ticket.
- Regency Theatres - www.regencymovies.com -$11 per ticket.
- Second-run movie theatres - www.family-vacation-getaways-at-los-angeles-theme-parks.com/Discount-Theater-Locations.html - it's a long URL, but this site has a great list of cheap second-run theatres near Los Angeles that range from $1.50-$6 per ticket. Tickets are usually cheaper in weekdays and before 6 pm.

USC also offers discounted movie tickets for major theatres. Please use the links under the "Places to Visit" section to view available discounts. Some apps and websites for easily finding where the movies you want to see are playing include Fandago and movietickets.com.