POSTDOC RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

Presented by SMD Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs (GEPA)

As you build your research team, one of the most important decisions you will make is hiring postdocs. They're essential members of any research team, and they play a key role in driving innovation and discovery.

This toolkit is designed to help you find the right fit. It includes resources and guidance on writing job postings, conducting interviews, and selling Rochester as one of the best places to live and work.

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GETTING STARTED

Make sure you review the postdoc appointment policy on the GEPA website. There you'll find information on benefits, written offer templates, term limits, guidelines for a successful learning environment, responsibilities as an advisor, and more.

Please also talk with your department admin, who can help with any GEPA-related processes.

And if you're ever interested in learning more about the hiring process at the institution, check out the Management Essentials: The Hiring Process course in myPath. While some of the info is specific to University staff hiring, most content is relevant for all hiring processes, such as appropriate interview questions, as well as ethical and legal obligations.

CREATING A JOB POSTING
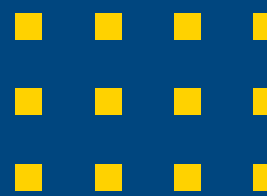
- Be inclusive
  - Paint a compelling picture that will engage individuals with a more diverse reach.
  - Review the "Creating Inclusive Postdoc Postings" resource on the Intranet.
- Be clear about the position's requirements. What skills and experience are you looking for? *Be specific.*
- Be transparent about funding.
- You must include the pay range. It's the law.
- Describe the research environment.
  - Being in an academic medical center, trainees can work directly with clinicians, translating research into treatments that directly impact patients.
  - Trainees can also leverage the strengths of both the medical center and River Campus. This opens doors to exciting cross-disciplinary research collaborations.

CREATING A JOB POSTING
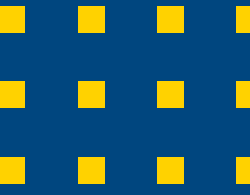
- Highlight the benefits of the position. Are there professional development opportunities? Is there funding for travel and conferences?
- This is also an opportunity for the candidate to evaluate you and your lab environment to see if it's a good fit for their career goals.
- Think about what you can show them that will make them excited about the position. A clear direction and exciting projects will attract a better fit.

ADVERTISE THE POSITION

- Create a posting on the GEPA website
- Utilize your social media networks
  - X (formerly Twitter)
  - LinkedIn
- Print and post flyers around SMD and River Campus (elevators, hallways, etc.)
- Share directly with colleagues
- Utilize wide-reaching publications, such as Science Careers, as well as field-specific publications and channels.
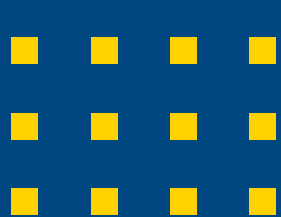
Open postdoc at SMD!

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
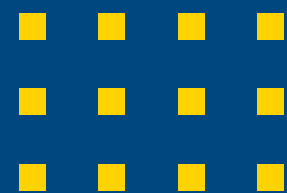
The interview process is crucial to finding the perfect fit for your lab. Yes, the science is important to discuss. However, you also want to get a sense of how you'll work together. This is where behavioral questions come in handy. For example:

- Tell me about a difficult problem you encountered in previous work, and how did you manage that?

These questions help determine whether the individual is committed to our institutional values as well as your team's.
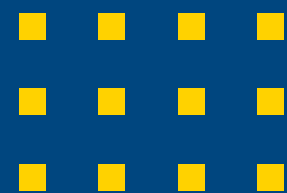
For ideas, check out the Sample Behavioral Questions section in this interviewing guide from Ohio State University.

"*I always ask postdocs how comfortable they are at training other people (e.g. grad students, undergrads)*"

Matthew Rand, PhD
Associate Professor, Environmental Medicine
Co-director, Toxicology PhD Program

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

It's also important to check references. Talking to others that have worked with your candidate gives you a good sense of their strengths and weaknesses. Make sure at least one is a current or former supervisor. Here's an example list of questions and scoring rubric for references.
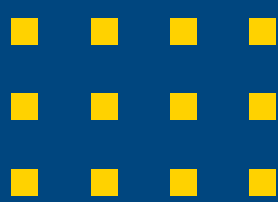
On the flip side, the candidate should also get the opportunity to talk to others on your team or who have worked with you in the past. This will help them get a sense of the culture and what life is like in your lab.

> *Be personable to encourage candidates to share their thoughts by framing the interview as an empathetic exchange, rather than a confrontational process. It is vital for them to recognize your compassionate nature and establish a sincere connection.*

Nathan Smith, MS, PhD
Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion for Research and Research Education
*Associate Professor, Neuroscience*
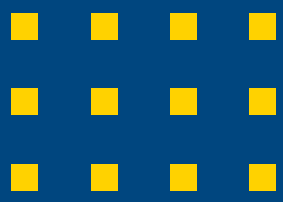
GOING BEYOND THE RESEARCH

Many candidates may not be familiar with Rochester, NY. It's our job to sell them on why it's a great place to live and work.

Check out the [Discover Rochester](#) website for info on the best Rochester has to offer for every season.

What we're known for:

- Big city life with an intimate feel
- Hiking and other outdoor activities
- Proximity to the Finger Lakes where there's beautiful scenery, water activities, wineries, and more.
- Rochester's [dining scene](#) has something for everyone
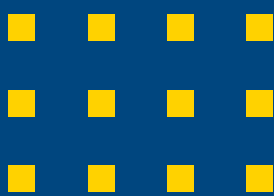
Rochester is a hidden gem and it should be made known for more scientists what a great place it is to work and live in.

Kirsi Jarvinen-Seppo, MD, PhD
Professor, Pediatrics

QUESTIONS?
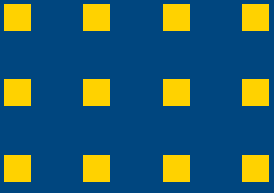
For any GEPA-related processes, start with your department admin.

For communications and marketing questions, contact Jeff Koslofsky, senior marketing strategist for GEPA at jeff_koslofsky@urmc.rochester.edu.