

POSTDOCTORAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES (updated November 2024)

I. POSTDOCTORAL CENTERS AND ASSOCIATIONS

The [Graduate and Postdoctoral Scholars Resource Center](#) (GPSRC) leads graduate retention and professional development at UC Irvine. GPSRC supports the academic, professional, and career development of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars with free, year-round skills training, workshops and certificate programs in areas including grant writing, mentorship and diversity, communication, and wellness.

[Office of Postdoctoral Affairs \(OPA\)](#) within Graduate Division is dedicated to supporting postdoctoral scholars with comprehensive resources. The OPA director and coordinator facilitate a monthly New Postdoctoral Scholar Orientation to introduce new incoming scholars to personal and professional development resources available on campus. Collaborating with the GPSRC, the OPA ensures programming is tailored to meet the specific needs of postdoctoral scholars. Additionally, the OPA regularly disseminates emails detailing professional development opportunities at the GPSRC and other campus partners.

[UCI Postdoctoral Association \(PDA\)](#) is a grassroots volunteer organization officially recognized in 2009 as an advisory group to the UC Irvine Graduate Division. Supported by the OPA, the PDA Board has a vital role fostering the professional and social development of the Irvine postdoctoral community. It organizes and promotes career workshops as well as social and recreational activities for postdoctoral scholars throughout the year.

Additionally, PDA collaborates with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs to host an annual Postdoctoral Symposium. Featuring oral and poster presentations by postdoctoral scholars from across the campus, the event provides a vital opportunity for scholars to introduce their research to a wider audience, expand their scientific network, and explore collaborations and career opportunities.

[National Postdoc Association](#) (NPA) is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) educational organization in the United States committed to improving the quality of the postdoctoral experience. As an institutional member, UC Irvine enables all its postdoctoral scholars to obtain a free affiliate membership which includes ample resources.

[National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) (NCFDD) Founded in 2010, NCFDD is the leading provider of professional development in higher education. Working with over 300 colleges and universities, as well as thousands of individuals, NCFDD supports faculty members, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate students in successful career transitions. As an institutional member of NCFDD, UC Irvine and its postdoctoral fellows have access to training webinars, multi-week courses, discussion forums, as well as past workshop materials. Additionally, the Center provides writing retreats and challenges to help scholars set and achieve personal and professional goals, establish a consistent and sustainable daily writing routine, learn best-practices in academic time management, and develop a publication profile.

Beyond the Professoriate is an online professional development training platform for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars hosted by the Division of Career Pathways. Through two programs of study – Academic Careers and Professional Careers – participants can explore career options and acquire effective job search strategies in academia and in diverse professional fields.

II. MENTORING

Mentoring Excellence Program (MEP) is a 5-week certificate program for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars enhancing their mentoring skills. The program cultivates a pool of mentors qualified to support their peers in campus-wide initiatives. Completion is required to serve as a mentor for many UCI Graduate Division mentoring programs. Participants report that completing the program improves their experiences as mentees and provides them with a skill set sought after inside and outside of academia. Curricular areas include effective interpersonal communication, resilience, mentoring diverse students, and conflict resolution.

III. COMMUNICATION

Public Speaking Certificate is an eight-week program teaching effective presentation skills and public speaking fundamentals. Participants learn how to overcome nerves, distill research into an engaging pitch, and develop effective vocal techniques. Student presentations are recorded in week one and week eight and evaluated for improvement.

IV. TEACHING

Improv for Teaching is a four-session certificate program that equips educators with the skills necessary to create engaging classroom environments. Its objective is to instill confidence in teachers, enable them to think quickly on their feet, and remain composed in unforeseen situations.

Certificate in Teaching Excellence Program (CTEP), offered by the Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation (DTEI), delivers comprehensive pedagogical training for UCI graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in a flexible, self-paced manner. Upon completion, participants will be proficient in: (1) designing lessons using evidence-based pedagogical principles; (2) analyzing and evaluating teaching practices, and (3) facilitating learning through advanced pedagogical techniques.

Preparing for Faculty Careers. This summer certificate program prepares graduate students and postdoctoral scholars for the academic job market. In six interactive sessions, participants learn how to search for academic positions, write an application for an academic position, craft an effective teaching philosophy, and prepare for job interviews.

California State University Pre-Professor Program (CSU PREPP) is a semester-long curriculum guided by CSU faculty mentors, emphasizing teaching, promotion, and mentorship expectations at a California masters' granting institution. Notably, Irvine is the sole UC campus partnering with the CSU system to prepare graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for permanent faculty roles within CSU. Since its inception in 2019, the program has expanded from 2 fellows to 24 per semester, with a significant portion of UCI PREPP participants self-identified as racial/ethnic minorities or underrepresented students. Participants benefit from a \$1,000 completion award and additional professional development funding.

V. CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLORATION

[A2i \(Accelerate to Industry\)](#) prepares UCI graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in STEM and non-STEM fields with skills and knowledge to embark on a range of industry careers. Through workshops, career panels, company site visits, and an annual conference, participants interact with alumni, industry stakeholders, hiring managers, and university leadership to broaden their professional networks and secure internships. Since Fall 2023, A2i has brought together over 250 participants from 14 UCI graduate schools.

[Graduate Professional Success for STEM Ph.D.s and Postdocs \(GPS-STEM\)](#) is a career and professional development program for Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows. The program aims to better prepare scientists for careers in the STEM workforce. It identifies, creates, and supports innovative approaches to graduate and postdoctoral training. In surveys, a large percentage of alumni attribute their career preparedness to GPS-STEM.

Building upon the success of its NIH-BEST (Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training)-funded predecessor, GPS-BIOMED (2014-2019), GPS-STEM now encompasses five schools (Biological Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, Physical Sciences, and Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences) and 20+ departments.

Upon completion of myIDP (Individual Development Plan), trainees are encouraged to discuss their career trajectory with research mentors. Via a four-pillar model, GPS-STEM advances academic and industry preparation: *Explore* (increase awareness and interest in diverse science-related careers); *Train* (improve professional, communication, and grant writing skills); *Experience* (provide hands-on industry site visits, internships and externships); and *Transition* (build networks for students and postdocs to transition to careers in academia and beyond).

V. WELLNESS RESOURCES

Irvine's Graduate Division [Wellness and Inclusion Team](#) is the first of its kind in the UC system. Focusing on the retention of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, the team provides individual academic counseling sessions and wellness workshops. Counselors also proactively connect students to campus partners and resources.

VI. OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

[Student Wellness and Health Promotion](#)

[Basic Needs Center](#)

[Disability Services Center](#)