



Boston University Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs



Growing in New Directions

Annual Report | FY2019

Overview

Boston University is committed to providing a supportive and competitive training environment for research and scholarship. Professional Development & Postdoctoral Affairs (PDPA) offers programs, resources, and services across the Charles River and Medical Campuses tailored to meet the specific needs of postdoctoral scholars (postdocs), doctoral students, and their faculty mentors. This includes our new National Institutes of Health-funded Postdoc Academy program, a comprehensive online and in-person professional development program that will launch its first content in January 2020.

This year we launched new University-wide professional development programs for doctoral students. Our programming focuses on career exploration and transferable skill development. Workshops, panels, and seminars are geared toward doctoral students from all disciplines. This programming is complementary to existing resources created for doctoral scholars by our partners across both campuses. Doctoral students can also access our brand new Vitamin PhD podcast via Buzzsprout, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts.

Quick Stats

365

Postdoctoral scholars
(66 non-employee, 299 employee)

14

Events for
postocs

7

Workshops
for doctoral
students

154

Postdocs
attended events

63

Advising
appointments

234

Doctoral students attended events

JUMP TO: **4** BU Postdocs **7** Postdoc Academy **9** Doctoral Students **10** Vitamin PhD

from the desk of the assistant provost

Opportunities for new growth

FY19 was an exciting year for PDPA as we grew in many new directions and my role expanded to Assistant Provost.

Though we still work within the Office of Research for all our services and programs related to postdocs, we also joined Graduate Affairs as we began to develop programming and resources for doctoral students.

Our website, bu.edu/postdocs, got a brand new look and updated content to reflect all the ways that we support BU's postdoc community.

And our seven grant-funded programs are now fully underway, enhancing our work and providing financial support to hire new staff.



Sarah Hokanson,
Assistant Provost

National Landscape

The BU postdoc community is part of a wider effort to support postdocs nationwide. PDPA contributes our leadership and voice through service on committees within the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA), the American Association of Medical Schools (AAMC) Postdoctoral Steering Committee within the Graduate Research, Education, and Training (GREAT) Group, and the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL) Network.

Professional development & core competencies

A report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommended substantial changes to graduate education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to meet the evolving needs of students and the broader workforce. PDPA is contributing to several BU groups focused on aspects of professional development and doctoral student skill development. Assistant Provost Hokanson is leading an advisory group that represents cross-campus professional development practitioners and faculty. She also participates in a working group focused on core competencies for doctoral students. The outcomes from these groups will lead to the creation of a five-year strategic plan that describes BU's professional development goals and metrics.

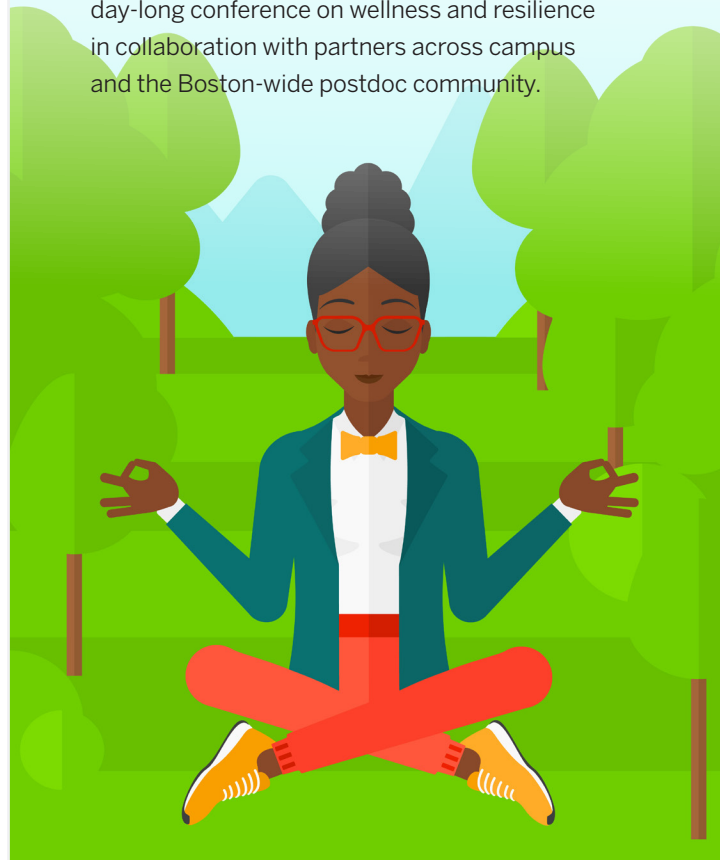
Sexual harassment in STEM

A report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine explores the influence of sexual harassment in academia. Assistant Provost Hokanson and Anthropology postdoc Erin Kane visited the BU Working Group on Gender-based Harassment Prevention to discuss the specific ways BU can provide support for our postdoctoral community. Recommendations from this working group will be released in fall 2019.

Prioritizing wellness and resilience

The postdoctoral training stage is one of the most difficult within the academic and non-academic career ladder. Although there will always be stress for postdocs in the workplace, an increasing number of universities acknowledge that wellness and resilience should be a priority.

At BU, PDPA provides programs and events focused on wellness and resilience. The Postdoc Academy (page 7) has dedicated two weeks of its digital programming to developing resilience. This year, we look forward to continue serving the BU postdoc community by hosting a day-long conference on wellness and resilience in collaboration with partners across campus and the Boston-wide postdoc community.



BU Postdocs: At a Glance

School of Medicine, **161**

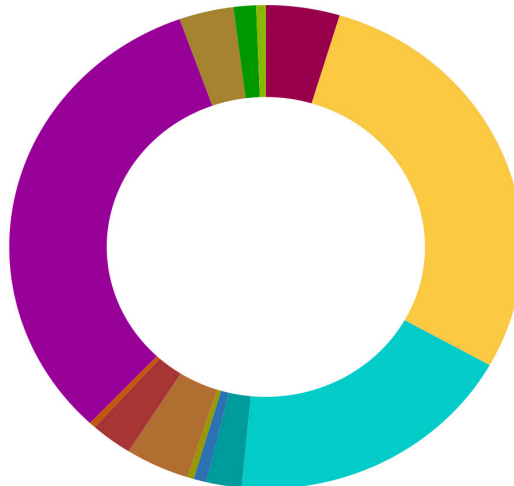
School of Public Health, **17**

School of Law, **2**

Wheelock College of Education, **13**

Sargent College, **20**

Questrom School of Business, **2**



Univ Professors-Honors, **7**

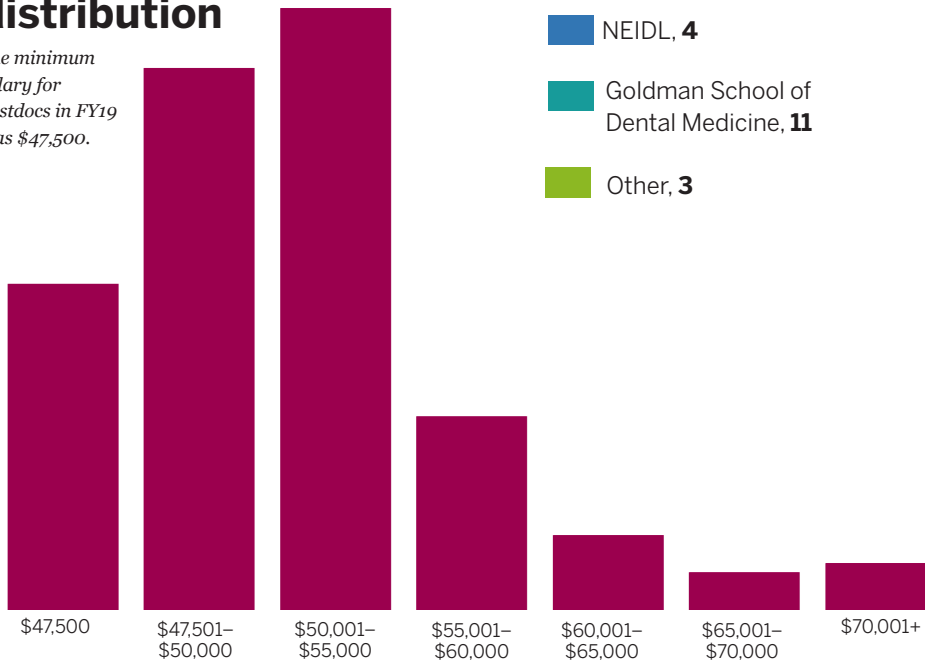
Academic Insts & Centers, **23**

College of Arts & Sciences, **141**

College of Engineering, **91**

Salary distribution

The minimum salary for postdocs in FY19 was \$47,500.



NEIDL, **4**

Goldman School of Dental Medicine, **11**

Other, **3**

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

BU postdocs represent **47** countries. The most common countries of citizenship are:

- United States: **237**
- China: **66**
- India: **31**

GENDER

Total

283 male 212 female

Charles River Campus

188 male 114 female

Medical Campus

89 male 92 female

RACE

- White: **253**
- Asian: **162**
- Black: **16**
- American Indian: **2**

Race data is missing for 62 postdocs.

Quick Stats

\$53,734

Average salary of current postdocs

61%

Postdocs on the Charles River Campus

114

New appointments on the Charles River Campus

1.2

Average years of service for current postdocs

83

New appointments on the Medical Campus

\$2M+

Grants won by postdocs (based on expenditures)

Postdoc Onboarding & Benefits

Boston University offers a range of benefits to postdocs, beginning with a comprehensive orientation session the PDPA office offers monthly. We also ensure that all of our non-employee postdocs receive health insurance, dental discounts, and a subsidized travel pass.

30

Non-employee postdocs and their dependents receiving subsidized health insurance



30

Non-employee postdocs receiving subsidized MBTA passes



Postdocs prefer email as their main method of communicating

\$28.8k

Amount reimbursed in non-employee postdoc health insurance



Postdocs tend to start work at BU in January or August

11

Orientation sessions between July and August

27

Applicants for PDPA travel awards



\$14.9k

Amount reimbursed in non-employee postdoc MBTA passes



TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Alexandra Bunnell

Alexandra joined the PDPA team in February as Program Manager. She recently worked on revamping the PDPA website to make all the resources for postdocs easier

to find. She also manages the non-employee benefits program, all PDPA communications, and postdoc data requests.



Professional Development for Postdocs

Quick Stats

56

Business card packages ordered

14

In-person and
online workshops

63

Advising
appointments

154

Workshop attendees

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Brian Fenster



Brian manages events for PDPA and the Office of Research. In his role, he serves as a liaison to event facilitators and members of the Boston University community. He also oversees the logistics of events by selecting the venue location, ordering food, determining the event layout, and making sure that A/V technology is present. Brian can usually be found providing on-the-ground support at these events.

Professional development is at the heart of helping our postdocs realize their professional goals, and PDPA offers postdocs opportunities to build their skills through providing tools, resources, and workshop opportunities throughout the year.

Workshops

The programming that we provide is focused on skill-building, specifically on the core competencies identified by the National Postdoctoral Association as being important for all postdocs – discipline-specific knowledge, research skill development, communication skills, professionalism, and leadership and management skills.



Travel Awards

Boston University is not the only source for professional development, and we encourage our postdocs to seek opportunities outside the University to network and enhance their skills. PDPA offers six travel awards per year to support postdocs to present their work at conferences or attend other professional development opportunities.

Business Cards

Business cards are an essential networking tool for postdocs entering the job market or looking to expand their network of peers and mentors. To ensure all postdocs have access to this resource, PDPA works with postdocs to design and order one complimentary box of business cards.



Postdoc Academy

Our vision for professional development programs is to create initiatives that address nationally identified priorities and needs of the postdoc training experience.

We have been successful in expanding the work that we do by obtaining sponsored awards to support growth in our professional development opportunities.



The Postdoc Academy is a National Institutes of Health-funded project to create a comprehensive professional development program for postdocs. Our team at BU is working collaboratively with teams at Northwestern University, Michigan State University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This programming includes free Massive Open Online Courses, open educational materials, in-person workshops, and supported learning communities.



BU Events in 2019

At the annual postdoc retreat this spring, the Postdoc Academy team facilitated a workshop on the obstacles that postdoctoral scholars might encounter while career planning and how to overcome them.

In online focus groups, 19 BU postdocs provided critical feedback on the digital content, which the team used to shape the final content.

Looking Ahead to 2020

This fall, postdocs can join the team for in-person pilot sessions. The first course, “Succeeding as a Postdoc,” will launch January 2020 on the edX platform, thanks to a collaboration with BU Digital Learning and Innovation.

In the spring, supplemental in-person learning communities will launch at BU and provide additional learning and support for postdocs on campus.

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Celine Young

Starting in December 2018 as Program Director, Celine is responsible for operations, content development, facilitation, communications, and partnership management for Postdoc Academy. Celine has been leading online focus

groups and in-person workshops to create a new community for postdocs across campus. You can also find Celine working with the PDPA team to provide in-person professional development for postdocs throughout the year.



BU Postdoc Association

The Boston University Postdoctoral Association (BUPDA) supports and advocates for postdocs, organizes events, and liaises with BU administrators, as well as other postdoctoral associations. The group is open to all postdocs on the Charles River and Medical Campuses, and has an active web presence on PDPA's website as well as Facebook.



BU Postdoctoral Seminar Series

The BUPDA organizes a monthly lunch series featuring two postdocs presenting their research. This offers postdocs an opportunity to present their research and receive feedback, improve their presentation skills, and learn about the research of other postdocs. It also creates opportunities for postdocs to socialize and network.

LinkedIn Workshop and Professional Headshots

BUPDA members co-organized a workshop for BU postdocs called "Using LinkedIn Profiles Effectively" with BU's BEST and PDPA. The workshop was led by Lauren Celano, co-founder and CEO of Propel Careers. Postdocs also had the opportunity to get a professional headshot at the event.



Boston Postdoctoral Association

The BUPDA is actively involved in the Boston Postdoctoral Association (BPDA), which is a non-profit organization that includes postdoctoral representatives from Boston and Cambridge institutions. Postdocs from BUPDA are involved in the leadership BPDA, including its Presidency, Board of Directors, and Committee Chairs. They also participate actively in the organization of many events and data collection to the benefit of all Boston postdocs.

BPDA Symposium 2019

Members of the BUPDA, together with other volunteers from the broader Boston postdoc community, took the lead in organizing the 2019 edition of Boston Postdoctoral Association Symposium of Collaboration and Career in Science, including the Grant Writing and Research Statement workshops and Science Communication Panel.



Social Events

The BUPDA has organized numerous events to help BU postdocs meet each other and enjoy what Boston has to offer. Recently, BU postdocs visited a special exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts and organized a bowling night with the postdocs from Tufts University.

Professional Development for Doctoral Students

Although doctoral students have frequently attended PDPA events in the past, this year PDPA formally expanded to offer resources and programming tailored specifically for doctoral students. To carry out these efforts, the PDPA team has grown to include a staff member who supports professional development for doctoral students, and PDPA now jointly reports to the Office of Graduate Affairs and the Office of Research.



Kick-off Event

In January, we hosted a kickoff event called “Embark on Your Professional Development Journey.” Over 120 students attended this event, where they had the opportunity to get a professional photograph, learn about the resources offered by our office and ten of our partner offices and organizations, and network with other doctoral students.

Workshops

Using data collected from a doctoral student survey, as well as meetings with student organizations and other stakeholders, we piloted programming on topics which our respondents identified as areas of need. During the spring semester, we offered a variety of workshops for doctoral students on topics such as writing strategies, navigating mentoring relationships, and career exploration.



Drop-in Hours: Offered twice a month, once on the Charles River Campus and once on the Medical Campus, drop-in hours provide BU doctoral students with a space to ask PDPA staff questions, receive career development advice, and learn about available resources.



Grants

Although BU offers many professional development opportunities for doctoral students through departments, offices, and organizations, we recognize that external opportunities often arise that have the potential to significantly benefit students’ professional growth. The professional development grant program was established to provide financial support for such opportunities. Each review cycle, two grant recipients will be selected and awarded \$500 to cover or supplement the cost of their proposed professional development activities.



Vitamin PhD Podcast

We created the Vitamin PhD podcast to provide another way for doctoral students at BU and beyond to engage in professional development and form community. The podcast is on Apple Podcasts and Spotify, making it available to a worldwide audience. Listeners can access additional information and resources at bu.edu/vitaminphd, or join our growing community on Twitter at [@BUvitaminphd](https://twitter.com/BUvitaminphd).

The podcast features two different episode series. In Career Pathways episodes, we help doctoral students explore career options by interviewing people who have earned their doctorate and now work in a variety of sectors. In Navigating Challenges episodes, we discuss issues that can present difficulties in graduate school, and we provide tips to help doctoral students succeed. Doctoral students who are interested in serving as a guest host on the show can submit a pitch through our website.



VITAMIN PHD

A "SUPPLEMENT" TO DOCTORAL STUDY

Episode 1: Navigating Conferences

Episode 2: Navigating Entrepreneurship

Episode 3: Navigating Interviews

Episode 4: Pathways to Higher Ed Administration



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Podcasts

Summary

Our mission is to ensure that Boston University provides a supportive and competitive environment for doctoral and postdoctoral scholarship and training.

Professional Development

- In-person workshops, digital course content, and podcast episodes
- Travel awards
- Business cards
- One-on-one advising consultations

Postdoctoral Support

- Offer letters
- Postdoc guidebook resource
- In-person orientation sessions
- Non-employee / trainee benefits

Community & Wellness

- Family-friendly events
- Social events
- Wellness programs
- Postdoc association



Connect with PDPA



In Person

Charles River Campus:

1 Silber Way, Room 909,
Boston, MA 02215

Medical Campus:

72 E. Concord Street, Room
L306, Boston, MA 02118



Online

bu.edu/postdocs
bu.edu/grad
postdocacademy.org
bu.edu/vitaminphd



On Twitter

[@postdocacademy](https://twitter.com/postdocacademy)
[@buvitaminphd](https://twitter.com/buvitaminphd)



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