



# Postdoctoral Fellows Handbook

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## Postdoctoral Fellows at Toronto Metropolitan University

Postdoctoral scholarship is an integral part of our scholarly, research and creative (SRC) activities at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). Working with faculty and industry partners on campus and beyond, the [Yeates School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral \(YSGPS\)](#) and the Office of the Vice-President, Research & Innovation (OVPRI) encourage and support prospective and current postdoctoral fellows ('postdocs') to be part of our vibrant community. TMU has over 120 postdocs across its eight Schools and Faculties. These postdoc appointments have been attained by individuals reaching out to faculty members who may have open positions with their own research groups funded by grants, by fellows bringing their own funding (via an external award or fellowship) to the university and finding a faculty supervisor, or by prospective postdocs working directly with a potential supervisor to obtain funding (i.e., MITACS).

Postdoctoral fellowship is administered by the Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (YSGPS), Human Resources (HR), and each postdoctoral fellow's home faculty. The [Academic Lead, Postdoctoral Fellows](#), housed within YSGPS, works to support and enhance postdocs' academic, professional and social experiences at TMU through events, workshops, training and community building.

### Contact information

Postdocs or supervisors should feel encouraged to connect with the Academic Lead, Postdoctoral Fellows should they ever have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Dr. Seth Dworkin, Ph.D., P.Eng., FCSME (he/him)  
Academic Lead, Postdoctoral Fellows  
Professor and Canada Research Chair  
Email: [seth.dworkin@torontomu.ca](mailto:seth.dworkin@torontomu.ca)  
Tel #: 416.979.5000 x 557311

### Hiring and Human Resources (HR)

Hiring, salary information, benefits, and other employment-related resources are handled through HR at TMU. When a postdoc is first hired, whether they have an external fellowship or are funded through a grant, the initial contract and hiring forms should be set up by the Research Accounts Support Officer (RASO) of the supervisor's home faculty. Appropriate contact information can be found from the links below.

Faculty of Arts:  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/arts/contact/>

Faculty of Community Services:  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/fcs/contact/>

Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science:  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/engineering-architectural-science/about/staff-contacts/>

Faculty of Science:

<https://www.torontomu.ca/science/about-us/contact-us/>

Lincoln Alexander School of Law:

<https://www.torontomu.ca/law/about/our-team/>

School of Medicine

<https://www.torontomu.ca/school-of-medicine/about/our-leadership-team/>

Ted Rogers School of Management:

<https://www.torontomu.ca/tedrogersschool/about/contact/>

The Creative School:

<https://www.torontomu.ca/the-creative-school/connect/>

## Appointment and Arrival

The general process for appointment and onboarding should proceed as follows. Slight variations may depend on the program and faculty.

1. The appointment and onboarding process begins by the faculty supervisor informs the RASO in their dean's office that they intend to hire and supervise a postdoc.
2. The RASO will connect with the postdoc and their supervisor to generate a hiring contract and fill out a hiring form. The RASO should verify eligibility to work in Canada, obtain signatures from the postdoc and their supervisor, and then process the forms and send the information to HR.
3. With confirmation from the RASO, the supervisor should then inform their departmental administrative staff that a new postdoc has been hired.
  - a. The departmental administrative staff should then activate a my.torontomu.ca account for the postdoc, including an email address and online identity.
  - b. The departmental administrative staff should inform the OneCard office so that the postdoc can get their TMU ID card.
  - c. The departmental administrative staff should then arrange building and room (lab, office, etc.) access for the new postdoc.
4. The supervisor should inform the Academic Lead, Postdoctoral Fellows at TMU that the new postdoc has been hired, and forward their contact information, so that the new postdoc can be included in orientation, networking, career building, etc.

During the appointment process and upon arrival at TMU, there are various resources available for the new postdoc and their supervisor to help them navigate their new position at TMU. These include:

## AskHR

The AskHR Information page, where postdocs can log in using their my.torontomu credentials and find information on benefits, leaves (parental, sick, accident, injury), and other employment-related topics

<https://www.torontomu.ca/human-resources/askhr/>

## International Postdoctoral Fellows

Foreign postdoctoral fellows must obtain a work permit and Social Insurance Number (SIN) to be

employed at Toronto Metropolitan University. Where appropriate, a temporary resident visa or an electronic travel authorization (eTA) may also be required.

The process for obtaining these and keeping them active and valid is available on this webpage:  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/international/student-support/immigration/electronic-travel-authorization/#laccordion-1644437540835-who-needs-an-eta->

More information about immigration can be found on this webpage:  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/international/student-support/immigration/>

Information about arriving to Canada from outside of the country can be found on this webpage:  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/international/student-support/immigration/>

## Benefits Plan

All TMU Postdocs are enrolled in a compulsory benefits plan. An 18% overhead is charged to the supervising professor's research grants to cover benefits and other HR related costs. For postdocs funded by external fellowships (i.e. tri-council Canada Postdoctoral Research Award programs), the supervising professor must still pay the 18% overhead.

Postdocs and their dependents have a comprehensive health benefits plan. Complete details on the benefits plan can be found on TMU's [AskHR page](#) (login required)<sup>1\*</sup>.

A summary of the benefits plan is as follows:

- 90% of prescription drug coverage (a dispensing fee maximum of \$9 and mandatory generic substitution)
- 100% out-of-country emergency coverage
- 100% for the following paramedical practitioners with an overall combined maximum of \$1000 per person per year: physiotherapist, massage therapist, chiropractor, speech therapist, naturopath, osteopath, podiatrist
- 100% up to \$900 for psychological services provided by a psychologist, social worker, psychotherapist
- Gender affirmation care up to \$10,000 per person per year or \$50,000 per person per lifetime
- 100% up to \$50 per person per year for optometry or ophthalmology
- 100% for vision care (glasses or contacts or laser eye surgery) \$300 per person every 24 months
- 100% audiology (one examination per year) and hearing aids (limit of \$1250 payable in any 5 consecutive benefit years per person)
- 100% for orthotics - one pair per year
- Annual dental reimbursement maximum is \$2000 per person, including 100% basic dental, 80% periodontic and endodontic, 50% prosthodontic and orthodontic
- Life insurance with a benefit of \$25,000

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<sup>1\*</sup> If there are any discrepancies between plan details listed here and by TMU HR, the TMU HR details should be considered authoritative.

## Campus and Community

### Grad+Postdoc News

The YSGPS team sends a regular e-newsletter to all graduate students and Postdocs at TMU containing information and news from the community, opportunities, events and articles of interest. All Postdocs are automatically subscribed to the newsletter when they start their position using their TMU email address.

### GRADCafé and Postdoc Luncheons

GRADCafé is a series of networking, social, and professional development events targeted to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Postdoc luncheons are informal social events where postdocs from across the university can gather with YSGPS, OVPRI, and faculty staff and leadership. These sessions occur a few times throughout the year and provide an opportunity to connect socially, learn how to maximize the graduate and postdoc experience at TMU, and address concerns and find solutions.

### Postdoc Appreciation Week

Since 2009, the National Postdoctoral Association has sponsored National Postdoc Appreciation Day/Week to recognize the significant contributions that postdoctoral scholars make to research and discovery. Institutions participate by holding special events.

The week takes place towards the end of September every year, and events are organized to create awareness, facilitate networking opportunities and celebrate the achievements and contributions of postdocs.

### Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars (CAPS)

Represents the work and community of postdoctoral scholars across Canada and hosts an annual conference where postdocs from around the country meet, network, and discuss issues related to postdoctoral scholarship.

### Other Resources

Campus Map

<https://www.torontomu.ca/maps/>

Living in Toronto Guide

[www.torontomu.ca/global-learning/incoming/toronto/](http://www.torontomu.ca/global-learning/incoming/toronto/)

## Professional Development

A variety of professional development resources and activities are available to postdocs at TMU. Some of them are noted below.

### Teaching Development

Many postdocs engage in teaching. This engagement can be as a teaching assistant (TA), often referred

to as a 'graduate assistant (GA), a lecturer, and/or a course coordinator. The [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#) (CELT) offers support and resources to TMU community members in their lecturing, teaching, and course design activities. While the CELT is faculty-focused, a variety of their events and initiatives are open to other members of the TMU community, including postdocs.

The [Graduate Teaching Development Program](#) provides postdoctoral fellows with an opportunity to enhance their teaching skills, to develop a teaching dossier, and to earn teaching certificates in higher education.

## Tri-Mentoring Program

The [Tri-Mentoring Program](#) pairs postdocs with a TMU undergraduate student who is exploring further graduate studies, as well as strategies for academic success now and in the future. In addition to acting as mentors, the program offers opportunities to pair postdocs with accomplished industry professionals in their field, who can provide them with support, advice, and mentorship.

Mentors are asked to commit a maximum of three hours per month to the program, engage in biweekly meetings with the mentee, and participate in one virtual event per month (e.g., training in February, and a brief check-in meeting with program administrators in March).

## Future Smart

The Yeates School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, in partnership with a variety of skill-development providers, offers [Future Smart: Essential Professional Development Skills](#). The program helps graduate students and postdoctoral fellows develop essential skills that will facilitate your career search, post-university transition, and success in your future career, whether you are thinking about academia, research or non-academic employment.

## Career and Co-Op Centre

The [TorontoMet Career, Co-op & Student Success Centre](#) will provide you with innovative career assessment and development skills so you can excel in the workplace now and throughout your career. You can book an appointment via email with one of their [Specialists](#), who are dedicated to working with graduate students and postdocs, or attend one of many career education workshops/ webinars and employer events, to get the support you need.

## Scholarly Research and Creative (SRC) Activity Policy Information

The university's policies are set by the TMU Senate and Board of Governors. TMU SRC is governed by policies and practices that ensure the protection of SRC participants, scholars (faculty, students and staff members), the university, and the public. These policies and practices cover research involving humans, the use of animals, controlled goods and hazardous materials, among others.

Individual researchers, in addition to being governed by internal policies and procedures, may be governed by external ethical guidelines imposed by professional associations such as the Canadian Psychological Association or the Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons, as well as the guidelines of Canadian and other regulatory agencies, such as the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

All funded or unfunded research involving humans, animals or controlled goods undertaken at Toronto Metropolitan University facilities and conducted by Toronto Metropolitan University personnel is subject to review and approval.

Consult with your supervisor if you have any concerns about various forms of approval for your SRC.

## Research Ethics Board

The [Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#) approves, rejects, proposes modifications to, or terminates any proposed or ongoing research involving humans that is conducted by faculty, trainees (including students and postdocs) or staff of the university, so as to protect research subjects and ensure that research is conducted ethically. No research on humans shall be undertaken without the prior approval of the REB. When applicable, research ethics compliance responsibility rests with your supervisor, in consultation with trainees (students and postdocs). Visit the REB website for more information.

## Dimensions Program

The Dimensions Program is a federal initiative supported by all three federal research granting agencies (SSHRC, CIHR, and NSERC) to support post-secondary institutions seeking to increase equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in scholarly, research and creative (SRC) activities. The objectives of the program are to create transformational change within the research ecosystems of post-secondary institutions by identifying and eliminating obstacles and inequities. The program seeks to improve equitable access to funding opportunities, increase equitable and inclusive participation, and embed EDI-related considerations into research design and practices.

[Learn more about the federal Dimensions program.](#)

Toronto Metropolitan University endorsed the Dimensions Charter, and successfully applied as one of 17 post-secondary institutions selected to take part in the Dimensions Pilot Program. By endorsing the Charter, TMU commits to adopting these principles through our SRC practices and cultures. In recognition of their ongoing work, TMU Dimensions was recognized with “Construction” status in 2023.

Each Faculty has a Dimensions Chair who can act as a resource for postdocs should you have any questions or concerns relating to Equity, Diversity, or Inclusion.

[Learn more about TMU’s Faculty Dimensions Teams.](#)

## TMU Senate Policies

TMU University’s Senate holds academic authority, and is responsible for maintaining, communicating and implementing institutional policies pertaining to: the content and quality of all programs and courses of study; the standards for admission to the university; and the qualifications for obtaining degrees, diplomas and certificates.

[www.torontomu.ca/senate/policies/](http://www.torontomu.ca/senate/policies/)

## University Administrative Policies

The Office of the General Counsel and Secretary of the Board of Governors maintains a comprehensive central repository of the University's administrative policies, procedures, guidelines and standards.

[www.torontomu.ca/policies/policy-list/](http://www.torontomu.ca/policies/policy-list/)

## Funding for Postdoctoral Positions

Postdoctoral funding is available from a variety of internal and external sources. While not a complete list, this section details where to find guidance and information on key awards and fellowship opportunities.

### TMU Postdoc Opportunities

If you are interested in finding a postdoctoral position where you are paid by a faculty member's grant, we recommend that you [explore TMU faculty and department](#) websites. You are encouraged to reach out to faculty members whose research interests align with your own to ask if they are looking to hire a postdoctoral fellow. Postings can be found [here](#), though you may directly contact a faculty member with related research interests even if there are no current postings in that area.

### Tri-Agency Postdoctoral Fellowships

Canada's three federal granting agencies, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), all provide funding for fellowship programs geared towards highly-qualified applicants at the postdoctoral stage of their careers.

In 2024 the three agencies harmonized their Postdoctoral Fellowships Program into the [Canada Postdoctoral Research Award program](#).

CIHR Fellowships provide support for highly-qualified applicants [in all areas of health research](#) at the postdoctoral (post-PhD) degree or post-health professional degree stages to add to their experience by engaging in health research either in Canada or abroad.

NSERC Postdoctoral Fellowships provide support to a core of the most promising researchers at a pivotal time in their careers. The fellowships are also intended to secure a supply of highly-qualified Canadians with leading-edge research skills for Canadian industry, government and academic institutions.

SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowships support the most promising Canadian new scholars in the social sciences and humanities, and assist them in establishing a research base at an important time in their research careers.

### Mitacs

Mitacs is a national not-for-profit organization that works with institutions, companies and the federal and provincial governments to promote and support innovation. Postdoctoral opportunities available through Mitacs include the following programs: [Globalink Research Award](#), [Accelerate](#), [Elevate](#) and the [Canadian Science Policy Fellowship](#).

Application details and eligibility criteria are available on the [Mitacs website](#) and the [Office of the Vice-President, Research & Innovation](#).

## Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars (CAPS)

provides valuable resources for Canadian postdoctoral fellows, including, amongst many things, funding opportunities.

## The Image Centre at TMU Research Fellowships

The Image Centre at TMU administers the Nadir Mohamed Postdoctoral Fellowship

This fellowship includes a \$10,000 (CAD) stipend for travel, research, and other expenses. Candidates must hold a PhD. Please visit [The Image Centre](#) at TMU for more information about the fellowship.

## The TMU Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black Scholars

**In 2023, TMU launched a new Postdoctoral Fellowships for Black Scholars program.** The university funded four two-year fellowships for scholars who self-identify as Black (of African descent; for example, Africans and African heritage people from the Caribbean, Americas, and Europe). Information on the fellowship competition and subsequent calls for applications can be found [here](#).

## Appendix – Other TMU Resources

### Visit our Campus

Get to know the TMU urban campus and everything the university has to offer:

[www.torontomu.ca/admissions/visits-tours/](http://www.torontomu.ca/admissions/visits-tours/)

### Recreation

Community members may access the TMU recreation facilities and services as well as [athletic events](#).

[www.torontomu.ca/recreation/](http://www.torontomu.ca/recreation/)

### Health and Wellness

The [medical centre](#) and [mental health supports](#) are available to current students, staff and faculty, including postdocs.

### Library services

The offers core academic and scholarly, research and creative support and resources.

### Office of Social Innovation (OSI)

OSI offers unique services and opportunities in social innovation for all members of the TMU community. A range of resources and readings can be found on their website:

[www.torontomu.ca/social-innovation](http://www.torontomu.ca/social-innovation)

## Appendix – Other External Resources

### Toronto and Surrounding Area

About Toronto and the surrounding area

[www.toronto.ca/community-people/moving-to-toronto/](http://www.toronto.ca/community-people/moving-to-toronto/)

Destination Ontario

[www.destinationontario.com/](http://www.destinationontario.com/)

Destination Toronto

[www.destinationtoronto.com/](http://www.destinationtoronto.com/)

### Attractions near campus

- [Eaton Centre](#)
- [Yonge-Dundas Square](#)
- [Royal Ontario Museum](#)
- [Art Gallery of Ontario](#)
- [Church and Wellesley Village](#)
- [St. Lawrence Market](#)
- [Mattamy Athletic Centre \(Formerly Maple Leaf Gardens\)](#)

### Transportation

- [Parking](#)
- [Toronto Transit Commission \(TTC\)](#)
- [GO Transit](#)
- [Coach Canada](#)
- [VIA Rail](#)
- [Zipcar Vehicle Rental](#)
- [BikeShare Toronto](#)
- [Union-Pearson Express](#)

### Higher Education News and Information

- University Affairs - [www.universityaffairs.ca/](http://www.universityaffairs.ca/)
- Academic Matters - <https://ocufa.on.ca/academic-matters/>
- The Chronicle of Higher Education - [community.chronicle.com/news](http://community.chronicle.com/news)