

# **Postdoccing and other matters**

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# What types of postdoc are there?

Three main sorts:

- Research fellowships (get your own grant)
- Research assistantships (funded by someone else's grant)
- Teaching fellowships (or temporary lectureships)

## Be your own boss: Fellowship grants

These are the most prestigious postdoc.

Typically, you write your own research project and apply for money to do it for 2 or 3 years.

Main sources:

- EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowships
- Royal Society Fellowships
- EU - Marie Curie
- Oxford & Cambridge JRFs

Go somewhere **else** after your PhD.

No formal supervision – go somewhere that's strong in your area, find someone you'd like to work with.

Approach your host institution early for advice, and get help from someone there, and your PhD supervisor when writing the grant.

Can sometimes be traded for a lectureship.

## **Be mildly bossed: Research assistantships**

A permanent academic or six will have got a (typically EPSRC) grant.

Can last anywhere from 1 to 4 years, 3 is normal.

Can provide an easier transition from PhD than Fellowship.

Some freedom to do your own research IF your bosses are nice. Typically they'll say 10% of your time is your own, other 90% you do research for them. Often in practice get more of your own time!

Even when working for them, not very supervised. Often no formal meetings.

Be open-minded about how close to your area it should be.

# To teach or not to teach?

Neither fellowships nor research assistantships usually require you to teach.

I strongly recommend that you do **some** teaching.

## Do:

- Try to get experience of different stages.
- Try to get experience of different teaching styles.
- Try to get some administrative experience.
- Keep records of student feedback.
- Keep records of training courses.

## Don't:

- Teach the same kind of thing repeatedly.
- Spend more than 1 day a week teaching, on average.

# Teaching fellowships

Very good short-term stop-gap.

Can be full-time or part-time.

Often advertised quite last-minute.

Teaching loads vary, depends how good the university is.

How much you'll feel like part of the department can vary.

Can be hard to do research – there generally won't be anyone in your area at the university.

Teaching alone won't get you a permanent job – you **must** publish.

## The US - [www.mathjobs.org](http://www.mathjobs.org)

Not many pure research postdocs – unless you're a US citizen when you can apply for grant funding.

Plenty of less good schools offering permanent jobs straight from PhD – may be hard to get back into a good university. On average 2 courses/term both terms = 180 hours/year.

AMS joint meeting in Jan. Often weaker schools hiring for teaching jobs, but hundreds of positions. Often pre-apply for the jobs and this is where they do their interviews.

Most postdocs hired by department rather than individuals.

All jobs will want teaching statement plus teaching-specific open reference 3 research references typically. References sent directly on application rather than the university contacting them.

Not typically supervised so quite independent.

## Show me the money!

St Andrews starting salary – post PhD – is £26915. London allowance is about £4000 more.

Post tax and deductions this is about £1500 a month.

Starting lecturer's salary is now £33101.

Post tax and deductions this is about £2000 a month.

On average salary goes up by about £2000 a year - £1000 by going up the scale, £1000 for inflation.

Academic pension scheme (USS) is one of the best in the UK. You pay 6.35%, your employer pays 14 %.

Pays half your final salary every year and 1.5 times your final salary as a lump sum on retirement.

# Postdoc vs PhD Student

Same:

- Relaxed working hours.
- Research focussed.

Different:

- More responsibility when teaching.
- Concentrate on papers.
- Probably paying more attention to work in other institutions.
- Worried about next job.

# Your social life

The bad bits:

- Undergraduates and some postgrads will seem increasingly young.
- Whilst older staff will be friendly to you, they'll still be **much** older.
- Can be hard moving countries all the time - or exciting!

The good bits:

- You'll generally be closer friends with your boss than you currently are with your supervisor.
- Probably you'll make friends with both PhD students and lecturers.
- Making friends with lecturers can give loads of help with job advice.
- Not too many responsibilities, lots of free time, quite a lot of cash :)

Works best when you make friends with people from other departments and nonacademics

## Supply and demand....

Not everyone who wants to be an academic will succeed..

But lots of people do

Try to make friends with as many academics at as many institutions as possible

Be as open-minded about country as possible

Give lots of conference talks