

ABOUT POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Postdoctoral fellowships come in many varieties. They may involve doing research on someone else's project (often a major grant), time to pursue your own research and writing, or provide you with new teaching experiences. If you are interested in a postdoc, you should consider postdocs in different kinds of institutions. They may be in traditional academic departments, centers at research university, liberal arts colleges, or even non-profit organizations. When applying, think carefully about whether the fellowship fits your needs: if you want to write articles or work on your book manuscript, you may want to avoid teaching postdocs. Keep in mind that postdocs are often extremely competitive. The Societies of Fellows postdocs at Michigan, Chicago, and Princeton receive nearly a thousand applications each year. However, they are also often more focused than jobs. This means that you are more likely to get a postdoc that is targeted toward your specific interests.

Where to find postdocs?

Many regularly offered humanities and social sciences postdocs are listed on the following website:

http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Humanities_and_Social_Science_Postdocs_2009-2010.

Increasingly, postdocs are also listed on the ASA job bank and the Sociology Rumor Mill. Some postdocs are privately arranged through contacts. Many postdocs are not well advertised. You should go to university websites and look up research institutes and centers to find if they have postdocs. You can also look at the CVs of scholars in your field to see if they have held postdocs that may be of interest to you. Depending on your field, you should take a close look at centers for area studies, women's/gender studies, international studies, religious studies, and so on.

Deadlines: All year round. Can be as early as September, as late as April or May. Many have deadlines in October and November.

Applications: Usually require project statement (5-10 pages), CV, writing samples, and references

Benefits of Postdoctoral Fellowships

Gives you time to work on publications and be more competitive for jobs

New people can give you different kinds of feedback

Expands your social network (can get reference letters from mentor)

Sometimes will give you some funding for additional research

Consider overseas postdocs because foreign universities are often well funded

Many 1 year postdocs are extendable