

Best Places for Postdocs to Work in 2009

This year the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research in Cambridge, MA was ranked as number one in *The Scientist's* seventh annual survey of "Best Places to Work: Postdocs," up from 14th place last year. Many of the institutions that made this year's list of best places to work offered support for postdocs from foreign countries, especially relating to obtaining work visas.

Those institutions with the highest rankings were those that offered quality facilities, good salaries and networking opportunities. This year's top programs also offered extensive support to international postdocs, both in and outside the lab. As seen in the tables, many of the top U.S. institutions were on last year's top 40 list. These institutions are able to be competitive with international programs by offering comparable starting salaries, and benefits such as health and retirement. In the top 15 for the United States most of the institutions are privately sponsored versus the heavily academic nature of those abroad; on the top 10 U.S. list only one academic institution was listed, while more than half of the top 10 international institutes were academic sponsored.

TOP 15 U.S. INSTITUTIONS FOR POSTDOCS, 2009						
Rank	Last Year	Institution/Company	City, State	Salary	Type	Number of Postdocs
1	14	Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research	Cambridge, MA	\$48,058-51,125	Private	130
2	9	The Jackson Laboratory	Bar Harbor, ME	\$36,996-51,036	Private	46
3	1	The J. David Gladstone Institute	San Francisco, CA	\$43,900-59,400	Private	98
4	8	The Samuel Roberts Noble Institute	Ardmore, OK	\$41,200-61,800	Private	61
5	10	Sandia National Laboratories	Livermore, CA	\$77,800	Government	68
6	15	Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research	Cambridge, MA	starts at \$55,000	Industry	36
7	13	Institute for Systems Biology	Seattle, WA	\$36,996-50,000	Private	27
8	19	Rocky Mountain Laboratories, NIH	Hamilton, MT	\$42,810-51,633	Government	40
9	6	Genetech, South	San Francisco, CA	\$49,000-52,000	Industry	110
10		University of Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	\$40,000-50,000	Academic	700
11	37	Oak Ridge Associated Universities	Oak Ridge, TN	\$40,000-80,000	Government	1123
12	7	Fox Chase Cancer Center	Philadelphia, PA	\$36,996-50,000	Private	90
13	20	Argonne National Laboratory	Argonne, IL	\$50,400-92,880	Government	162
14	4	Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center	Seattle, WA	\$36,000-86,000	Private	278
15		Van Andel Research Institute	Grand Rapids, MI	\$40,000-48,000	Private	20
<i>Best Places to Work: Postdoc Survey 2009</i>						
<i>Source: "Best Places to Work: Postdocs 2009." March 19, 2009. The Scientist. 23:3. 47.</i>						

According to *The Scientist*, only 34% of postdocs were born in the country where they are doing their postdoc. With the rapid growth of foreign nationals accepting U.S. positions and the growing complexity of U.S. immigration visa policies, many institutions offer assistance to help new arrivals master the U.S. way of life and cut through the bureaucratic red tape. For many of the international postdocs, assistance with securing both their initial visa (J1) and then their professional work visa (H-1B) was cited as a tremendous help. Several of the postdocs interviewed in the article spoke about how visa assistance showed that the institute really wanted them, and enabled them to be more focused on other areas of their postdoctoral work.

The same was also true for U.S. postdocs who decided to complete their work at international institutions. One postdoc, Cliff Brangwynne, is completing his postdoc work at the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology

and Genetics in Dresden, Germany. In an interview with *The Scientist*, he explains that life inside the multicultural lab is similar to the experiences of those in the states, but that the real learning curve is outside of the lab. According to Brangwynne, the international office at Max Planck assisted him with a variety of tasks for getting settled, including helping him establish an internet connection at home, immigration visa paperwork and sending someone with him to register his motorcycle. Other non-U.S. academies provide support for their international postdocs via full day seminars on topics like national healthcare claims and social insurance to cultural norms and informal conversations with locals.

For more information about the “Top U.S. and International Institutions for Postdocs in 2009,” including additional tables and data related to the benefits offered to postdocs at these institutions, visit *The Scientist*, <http://www.the-scientist.com>.

TOP 10 INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR POSTDOCS, 2009					
Rank	Institution/Company	Location	Salary Range	Estimated Salary in USD (\$)	Number of Postdocs
1	Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics	Dresden, Germany	£25,200-45,600	\$37,320.44-67,532.23	165
2	University of Copenhagen	Copenhagen, Denmark	31,904 DKK	\$5,739.70	356
3	University of Medical Center	Utrecht, The Netherlands	£28,104-44,568	\$41,621.18-66,003.87	125
4	University of Dundee	Dundee, United Kingdom	£28,839-43,622	\$42,709.69-64,602.87	270
5	University of York	York, United Kingdom	£29,000-35,000	\$42,948.13-51,833.95	400+
6	John Innes Center	Norwich, United Kingdom	£26,088-36,789	\$38,635.55-54,483.41	53
7	Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research	Basel, Switzerland	n/a	n/a	35
8	Biozentrum	University of Basel, Switzerland	65,194-86,430 CHF	\$57,413.33-76,114.89	112
9	University of Liege	Liege, Belgium	£40,000-50,000	\$59,238.80-74,048.50	454
10	Karolinska Institute	Stockholm, Sweden	20,000-40,000 SEK	\$2,486.142-4,972.285	336
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