

Research Fellowship for Postdoctoral Scholars - Frequently Asked Questions

How long and in-depth should the research statement be? Are there any specific guidelines?

We do not have specific guidelines. We prefer research statements that are no more than 2 pages long. There are good guidelines for writing a research statement available online.

Should the statement include a summary of past work as well as proposed research projects?

Yes; it is normal for research statements to include a summary of your research accomplishments and current work and also discusses the future direction and potential of your work.

Are applicants required to contact potential faculty collaborators and/or receive faculty approval before submitting their applications?

No; we discourage candidates from contacting faculty before applying. Applicants should explicitly name 3 faculty at Penn with whom they could potentially collaborate.

Do you have a list of faculty with whom the Fellows could potentially work?

Yes, we recommend applicants review the MindCORE Faculty listed here:

<https://web.sas.upenn.edu/mindcore/people/faculty/> for a sense of the current work being done at Penn, and a list of potential collaborators. That said, fellows are treated as independent investigators, and encouraged to develop research questions outside specific faculty interests. Candidates may also name a Penn faculty collaborator who is not yet listed among the MindCORE faculty, if their work is still within the scope of research related to brains and behavior.

Is this position open to international applicants that need visa support?

Yes. If you are selected as a MindCORE Fellow, we will connect you with the office on campus that helps process visa applications.

Does the program provide health insurance benefits, etc?

Yes; Fellows receive health insurance, a relocation allowance, and a research fund of \$20,000.

Who will mentor the Fellows?

Fellows are independent with financial and administrative oversight through MindCORE. While Fellows are strongly encouraged to collaborate with faculty, there is no expectation that Fellows be formally affiliated with faculty research groups. Fellows will be provided with a faculty mentoring committee and included in MindCORE networking and professional development events.

To what degree can Fellows be involved in shaping the work of MindCORE (e.g., by working with speakers, designing events)?

We anticipate that Fellows will shape the research agenda (via the portfolio of projects selected) and be engaged with the research community, but do not expect Fellows to be involved in the administration of MindCORE. We are excited for the Fellows to help develop a vibrant intellectual community around mind and brain at Penn, including through the design of symposia and other activities, for which MindCORE staff may provide administrative help.

Are MindCORE Fellows required to teach classes?

No. This is a research fellowship. MindCORE Fellows have no teaching responsibilities.

What is the review process?

Following a first-round review by faculty and a faculty selection committee, a select group of candidates will be asked to provide reference letters and invited for a one-day campus visit (possibly virtual) in late February/early March where candidates will give a talk, be interviewed by the committee, and meet with Fellows and faculty. Final offers will be made following the campus visit.

My referees want to know if it should be a concise one-page letter of recommendation or a longer letter like those for assistant professorships?

We do not have a minimum or maximum length requirement. That said, a more detailed letter is likely to be more helpful to us than a short statement of support. Note that we do not require recommendation letters for the first round review.

When is the start date for this position?

The earliest the position may start is July 1, 2023; the latest the position may start is January 30, 2024.

I do not yet have my PhD at the time of application – am I still eligible?

Individuals are eligible to if they will obtain their PhD before starting the position (e.g. if an applicant obtains their PhD during Fall 2023, they would still be eligible to start the position in January 2024).

Am I eligible if I am currently in a postdoctoral position or have previously had a postdoctoral position?

Yes, individuals who are currently in a postdoctoral position or previously had a postdoctoral position are eligible to apply. Note that Penn has a 5-year cap on postdoctoral length from all institutions. (Candidates ideally have been postdocs for <2 years at the time of appointment.)

Other questions not answered here? Email us at penmindcore@sas.upenn.edu