



**The Ohio State Postdoctoral Association**

**New Postdoctoral Scholar  
Orientation Guide**



Congratulations on your postdoctoral position at The Ohio State University! This guide will take you through the basic steps to help you start your career at The Ohio State.

\*\* If you plan to take additional training courses at The Ohio State University or another university, Please make sure to get copies of college/university transcripts and pictures/copies of your diploma.

\*\* You may need to have copies of health records and in particular vaccination/immunization records in case you need additional vaccines.

## Important Contacts at The Ohio State

### Human Resources

*Information on benefits for postdoctoral researchers at The Ohio State*

— Telephone: (614) 292-1050

—Website: <http://hr.osu.edu/>

Contact your local College/Unit HR representative for questions or concerns

### Health Services

*For non-life threatening medical needs, contact your primary care physician. If they are not available (or you have not selected one) walk-in care is available at:*

Martha Morehouse Medical Plaza

— Address: 2050 Kenny Road, 2nd Floor, Suite OPAC 2250, Columbus, OH 43221

— Telephone: (614) 685-3357

Hours: Monday-Friday 4-9:30 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

- Other walk-in clinics can be found at: <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/healthcare-services>
- Medical eligible individuals can also use the Physician Connect web site to find a OSU-covered provider if they don't have one: <https://osuhealthplan.com/find-a-provider-search#osuhp>

### Public Safety

*Security services, emergency management planning and other public safety services*

— Address: 901 Woody Hayes Dr., Columbus, OH 43210

— Emergency Call: 911

— Telephone (Campus-wide): (614) 292-2121

— Telephone (Medical Center): (614) 293-8500

Website: <https://dps.osu.edu>

### Help Desk

*IT service and help and support*

— Address: 60A Thompson Library, Columbus, OH 43210

— Email: [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu)

— Telephone: (614) 688-8743

Website: <https://ocio.osu.edu/help>

\*\*Some Colleges/Units have a local IT department

### International Office

*Oversees education abroad and international students and scholars*

— Address: 1712 Neil Ave, Columbus, OH 43210

— Telephone: (614) 292-6101

Website: <https://oia.osu.edu>

### Postdoctoral Association

*Postdoc run organization that addresses the needs and concerns of postdoctoral researchers*

— Website: <http://u.osu.edu/postdocs/>

Co-chairs: Jessica Irons ([irons.39@osu.edu](mailto:irons.39@osu.edu)); Sara Koenig ([Sara.Koenig@osumc.edu](mailto:Sara.Koenig@osumc.edu))

International committee co-chairs: Faith Brennan ([Faith.Brennan@osumc.edu](mailto:Faith.Brennan@osumc.edu)); Mona ElRefaey ([Mona.ElRefaey@osumc.edu](mailto:Mona.ElRefaey@osumc.edu)).

**Office of Postdoctoral affairs (OPA)**

Website: <https://u.osu.edu/osupac/>

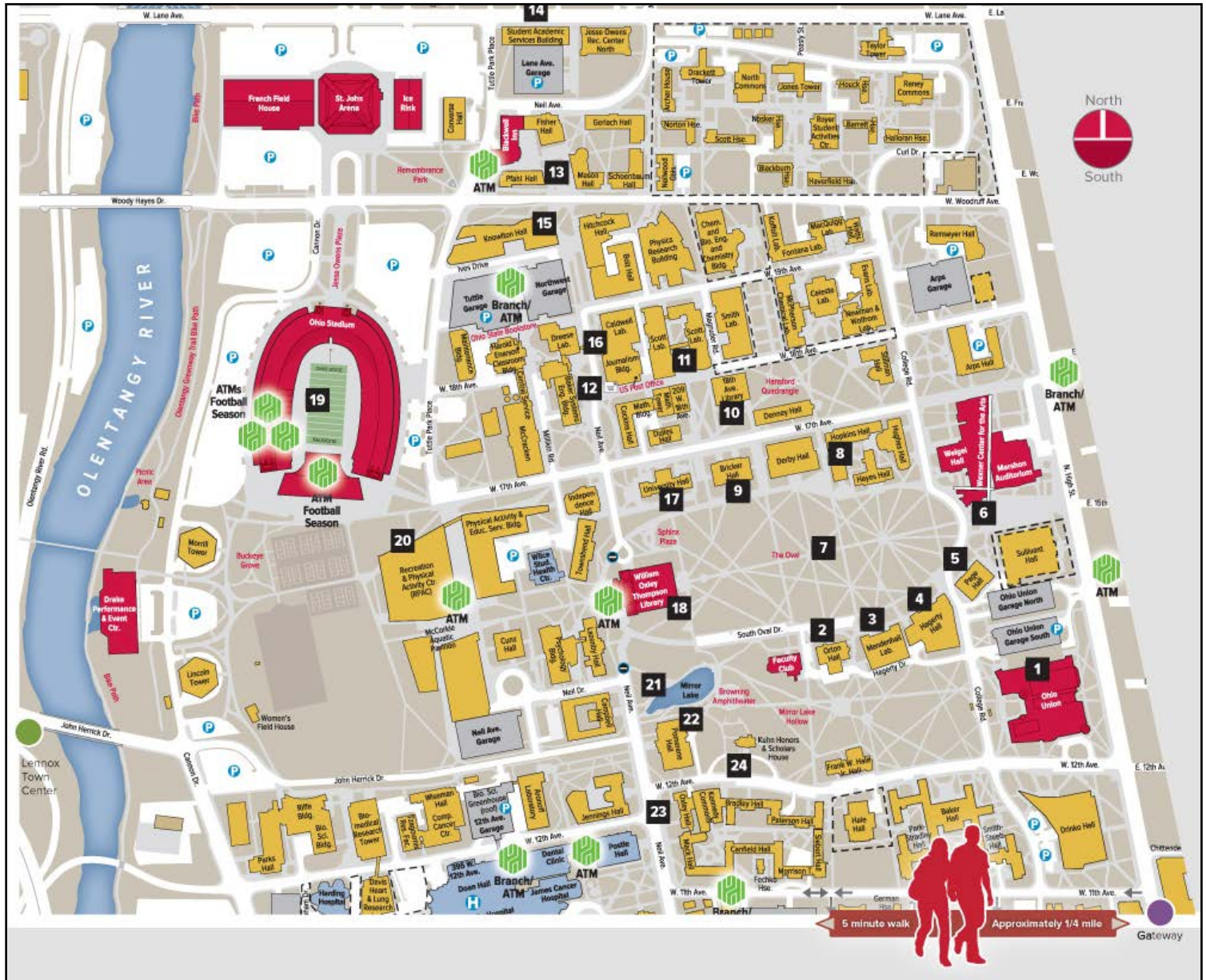
Noah Weisleder ([Noah.Weisleder@osumc.edu](mailto:Noah.Weisleder@osumc.edu)); Marcela Hernandez ([hernandez.16@osu.edu](mailto:hernandez.16@osu.edu));

Jeffrey Agnoli ([agnoli.1@osu.edu](mailto:agnoli.1@osu.edu))

# The Ohio State University Campus

Everything you need to know about The Ohio State University campus can be found at this link:

<https://www.osu.edu/map/>  
<http://visit.osu.edu/discover/>



The Ohio State University is the third largest university campus in the United States.

## Primary Administrative Tasks

First, you will need to schedule a “**J-1 New Scholar Check-In and Orientation Session**” with the Ohio State Office of International Affairs at the following link:

<https://instant-scheduling.com/sch.php?kn=134058&typId=8703&step=2>

— **Note: The majority of postdocs have J-1 status. However, it is possible that you have H1-B status. The primary administrative tasks are the same for both of statuses.**

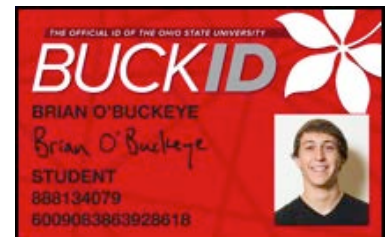
## Inside the University

**Account ID:** Once you enter Ohio State, you will be automatically given an account ID. Your account ID will be your username in all Ohio State credential processes. An account ID is your last name + “dot(.”) + number. Consider “Smith” as an example surname. The account ID would be “smith.1234”. The number is automatically assigned to distinguish people with the same surname.

**Email:** Once you obtain your account ID, your email address will consist of your account ID plus “@osu.edu”. Your Ohio State email account will be the primary connection means by which your department and the university will use to contact you. You can access your account through this link: <https://email.osu.edu>. For any question regarding configuration of your email account, contact the Ohio State IT department at [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu). If your department is located in the medical center, you will be given an OSUMC email address as well, which is your firstname.lastname@osumc.edu. You can access your OSUMC email account through this address <http://mail.osumc.edu/>. These accounts can be linked by contacting the Ohio State IT department.

**BuckID Card:** BuckID is your Ohio State identification card. To get your BuckID, you should go to the Ohio Union at 1739 N High St, Columbus, OH 43210. Note that your department should send a request to the BuckID office prior to your visit. Your appointment must be entered into the University's HR system prior to getting a BuckID. Please contact your HR representative if unsure. For more information, please check

<https://buckid.osu.edu>. To link your BuckID to your Huntington Bank account, please visit <https://www.huntington.com/buckid>.



For post-docs, the title on the card is “A/P STAFF”. The BuckID card can be used to:

- open doors which have badge-access (meeting rooms, labs, lounges, etc.);  
Please contact your local building coordinator to obtain door access.
- provide payment at participating retailers (in connection with your bank account);
- identify you as an employee of Ohio State.

**OSUMC ID:** If your department is located within the medical center, you will be sent to ID Processing (614-293-4452) for a background check and to get a hospital badge.

## Outside The Ohio State

You will need to obtain two important documents outside the university: a Social Security Number (SSN) card and an Ohio driver's license.

**Social Security Number (SSN):** This is a number in the format 000-00-0000, and it is used for identification purposes and to track Social Security benefits. Each person in the United States has one unique SSN. You need this number for opening a bank account, buying a car, leasing an apartment, etc. To obtain your SSN, go to the office of US Social Security Administration at 200 N High St, Columbus, OH 43215. The following link has a list of required documents: <https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/ss5doc.htm>. Once you apply for your SSN, you will often get it within 2 weeks.

— **Note: Some people holding specific visa types cannot get a SSN. For instance, if you are an H1-B visa holder, your dependents hold an H-4 visa, which is not eligible to get a SSN.**

**Driver's License/Identification Card:** A driver's license is the main piece of identification used. This card can be used to get on a flight, open a bank account, or identify yourself whenever needed. To get a driver's license, visit your closest Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV): <http://bmv.ohio.gov/driver-license.aspx>. You will need to pass a vision and computer-based knowledge exam to be given a temporary instruction permit identification card. Once you have the temporary license, you can then practice your driving skills as long as you are accompanied by a licensed driver 21 years old or older. To get your permanent license, you will take a driving skills exam (road test) that will include a parallel parking test.

— **Note: In Ohio, it is illegal to drive any motor vehicle without insurance, and it is illegal for a vehicle owner to allow anyone else to drive his or her motor vehicle without insurance. Drivers must carry proof of insurance when operating a motor vehicle.**

— **Note: Some countries have an agreement with the United States whereby their driver's license can be converted to a US driver's license without any exam. Check this possibility in the BMV website: <http://bmv.ohio.gov/driver-license.aspx>.**

## Ambassador Program

The postdoc ambassador program matches incoming postdocs with a postdoctoral association liaison (PAL) who best matches your criteria, and they will serve as a guide to help you with any questions or concerns you have about adjusting to life at Ohio State. Please contact the Postdoctoral Advisory Council to participate in the program. To learn more about the program visit: <http://u.osu.edu/osupac/postdoc-ambassador-program/>.

## Housing

Housing is not available through the university for postdocs. You will need to obtain off-campus housing which involves renting/leasing an apartment. You might want to live within walking distance from your place of work. If this option does not suit you, then make sure to have a car or rent an apartment on a bus route. Two major bus routes with stops on the Ohio State campus are No. 2 and No. 1. Route No. 2 runs north into the Clintonville section of the city and south into the Short North and Downtown.

— **Note:** Please see OIA’s information on off-campus housing and their searchable database for off campus housing <http://offcampus.osu.edu/>. Some apartments only rent to individuals with a social security number and/or renters insurance. The social security number is used to verify credit history and perform a background check.

For most apartments, you will need to put down a deposit that will be returned to you once your lease has ended. Normally, the deposit is equal to the rent of one month. The last step before obtaining an apartment is to sign the lease contract. Each lease contract has a duration. For instance if the duration is noted 13 months, you will need to stay at least 13 months in that property. Be sure to read all clauses of the lease contracts or rental agreements carefully before signing.

For discounted furniture, there is a ‘free and for sale’ facebook page which OSU staff can join. There is also a surplus store for campus furniture and electronics that has discounted items available <http://surplus.osu.edu>. There is also a Target Store nearby campus for furniture, clothing, linens, and many other items (1717 Olentangy River Rd).

If you plan to search for accommodation upon your arrival, we recommend booking a hotel or an AirBnB close to campus until you find suitable housing <https://www.airbnb.com>.

## Transportation

**Public:** For city bus options (COTA), please see <http://www.cota.com/schedules>. Transit mobile application has directions and real-time bus information: <https://transitapp.com>. There is also a free bus (C-bus) that goes from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to downtown (<http://www.cota.com/CBUS>). On campus, CABS buses are free for everyone <https://ttm.osu.edu/cabs>. The smartphone application for Ohio State University public transportation is <https://www.osu.edu/downloads/apps/>.

**\*\*\*COTA Bus Pass:** Ohio State faculty and staff can receive a discount on monthly bus passes from the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA). Discounted rates for local COTA routes are available to faculty and staff via monthly pre-tax payroll deduction. Participants will need a new BuckID to participate and must sign up for payroll deduction the month before they intend to ride. Biweekly employees need to enroll by the 7th of the month and monthly employees need to enroll by the 15th of the month. Regular-priced passes can also be purchased at the Transportation and Traffic Management (2500 Kenny Road), the Medical Center Gift Shop (410 West 10th Avenue) or COTA (33 North High Street).

**Get a Car:** Having a car is beneficial as public transportation is limited in Columbus. You will need to acquire a driver’s license prior to driving. Ohio State does have some discounts offered by local dealerships <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/discount-programs/>. Financing solutions are offered within car dealerships as well as with your bank. Be sure to check all available interest rate options and read the fine print of all loan or lease contracts.



**Parking:** To park on campus, you will need to acquire a parking permit: <http://osu.campusparc.com>. There are different parking locations in the campus. Parking on west campus and taking a bus into central campus is a cheaper option. Having

garage access is a more costly option. Review carefully all the information regarding the cost of the different parking passes in which you have access.

**Other Options:** Car2go is a car-renting service: <https://www.car2go.com/US/en/columbus/>. Also Uber (<https://www.uber.com/cities/columbus/>) and Lyft (<https://www.lyft.com/cities/columbus/>) are ride-share applications for moving around Columbus. Zagster is a bike-share service on the campus: <http://www.zagster.com>. There are many bike racks on campus, although we recommend purchasing a u-lock for bike security if you ride to campus. It is also possible to walk to campus from many nearby neighborhoods, and this is very pleasant from spring to fall. If walking during the winter months (Dec-Feb), we recommend purchasing 'yak tracks' to prevent slipping on ice in non-salted local sidewalks.

## Benefits

— **Note: Eligibility for benefits and aspects of compensation and taxation differ depending on job title. Ohio State uses two job titles for postdocs: Postdoctoral Researcher (most common) and Postdoctoral Fellow. For more information about postdoc job titles visit:** <http://u.osu.edu/osupac/two-postdoc-job-titles-what-is-the-difference/>.

The university's benefit eligibility tool <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/eligibility> is a useful way to determine available benefits at a quick glance across all types of appointment classifications (employee groups). For postdoctoral researchers, the two criteria are 100% FTE and Regular or Term appointment. However, we strongly suggest that you double check your FTE and appointment type with your human resources representative.

**Health:** To receive medical, dental, and vision insurance, you will pay a set premium (fee) and this will be deducted every paycheck. The premium you pay is subsidized by Ohio State, so the cost of insurance is much lower than if you were to obtain insurance on your own. Dental benefits are through Delta Dental (see <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/dental/>). For vision, you can choose between the Basic and Premier Plan option in the Vision Service Plan Choice Network (see <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/vision/>).

For medical benefits, you will have a choice between two plans:

1. **Prime Care Advantage**, which requires that you receive medical care from a statewide network of providers, and requires an annual deductible and coinsurance at time of service ("copay" or a small payment)
2. **Prime Care Choice** has lower employee payroll contributions with network and out-of-network coverage for medical services that are typically subject to a deductible and coinsurance.

For more information about plan options, see <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/medical/>. When selecting a medical plan, think about how frequently you visit the doctor, whether you need out-of-network coverage and how you want to balance your employee payroll contributions with what you are required to pay for medical services.

**Retirement:** Postdoctoral researchers are eligible for retirement benefits and have two options for selecting a retirement plan:

1. Enroll in the state-mandated Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS)
2. Elect the Alternative Retirement Plan (ARP).

You have 120 days from the date of eligibility to elect the ARP, otherwise you will be automatically enrolled in OPERS. You have 180 days from your date of eligibility to elect plan



options within OPERS. For more information, please see <https://hr.osu.edu/benefits/retirement/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cWVHHDQAQnSo> or contact Human Resources.

\*\* Contributions into a retirement plan are required of all university-compensated individuals; however, those contributions are refundable upon leaving the University.

**Leave:** All Ohio State postdocs are *ineligible* for paid vacation and paid parental leave. Additionally, postdoctoral fellows are *ineligible* for sick leave or family & medical leave (FMLA) benefits.

For assistance with specific questions regarding benefits, you are highly encouraged to participate in the Ambassador Program!

## Compensation

For details regarding Ohio State's implementation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), please visit the following link: <https://goo.gl/Hoiq2K>.

Below is an example of a typical postdoc paycheck, which highlights the deductions taken (blue and green boxes) and the final net pay deposited (circled in red).

\*To check your FLSA status, please contact your HR representative.

\* If you are non-exempt, you are required to fill out a time sheet weekly in order to receive a paycheck.



The Ohio State University Payroll Services - Office of the Controller 901 Woody Hayes Drive, 2nd Floor Columbus, OH 43210 614/292-2311	Employee ID: ██████████ Business Unit: OSUBU Benefits Service Date: 10/06/2015 Pay Group: BW1-Regular Non-Exempt	Pay Begin Date: 10/02/2016 Pay End Date: 10/15/2016 Check #: ██████████ Check Date: 10/28/2016
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EMPLOYEE INFORMATION		DEPARTMENTS		TAX DATA		
██████████	Empl Record: 0	Department/Organization: ██████████ Engineering	Comp. Rate: 19.63/Hr	Tax Data Federal: OH - Ohio 18000 - COLUMBUS	Marital Status: Single Not applicable	Allowances: 2 Addl Amt: 0

HOURS AND EARNINGS						
		-----Current-----			-----YTD-----	
Empl Rcd	Earnings Description	Rate	Hours	Earnings	Hours	Earnings
0	PHA Credit			15.00		298.85
0	Overtime	29.45	8.40	247.34	8.40	247.34
0	Regular	19.63	80.00	1,570.40	1,559.00	30,116.84
0	Holiday Pay Benefit				56.00	1,080.56
0	Vacation Taken				76.00	1,462.24
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>88.40</b>	<b>1,832.74</b>	<b>33,205.83</b>

TAXES					
		-----Taxable Wages-----		-----Taxes-----	
Description	Current	YTD	Current	YTD	
Fed Withholding	1,596.28	28,822.29	161.89	2,628.31	
Fed MED/EE	1,778.05	32,112.98	25.78	465.64	
OH Withholding	1,596.28	28,822.29	40.77	681.19	
OH COLUMBUS Withholding	1,778.05	32,112.98	44.45	802.90	
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>272.89</b>	<b>4,578.04</b>	

BEFORE-TAX DEDUCTIONS			AFTER-TAX DEDUCTIONS			EMPLOYER PAID BENEFITS		
Description	Current	YTD	Description	Current	YTD	Description (* Taxable)	Current	YTD
Prime Care Advantage	50.95	1,018.46				Prime Care Advantage	227.68	4,534.68
Dental Service Plan	Health/Dental/Vision 2.27	44.71				Dental Service Plan	12.83	252.74
Vision Premier Plan	Insurance 3.82	74.81				Vision Premier Plan	2.66	53.01
ARP OPERS/VOYA	Retirement 181.77	3,290.69				Group Life*	2.35	45.13
						Long Term Disability	8.28	164.96
						ARP OPERS/VOYA	240.49	4,353.65
						OPERS Mitigating Rate	14.00	253.36
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>238.81</b>	<b>4,428.67</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>508.29</b>	<b>9,657.53</b>

	TOTAL GROSS	FED TAXABLE GROSS	1042 GROSS	TOTAL TAXES	TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	NET PAY
Current	1,832.74	1,596.28	0.00	272.89	238.81	1,321.04
YTD	33,205.83	28,822.29	0.00	4,578.04	4,428.67	24,199.12

LEAVE BALANCE					NET PAY DISTRIBUTION			
	YAC	SICK	MIL	FML	Payment Type	Account Type	Account Number	Amount
Start Balance	16.9	588.6	176.0	480.0	Advice ██████████	Savings	██████████	250.00
+Eamed	3.6	5.1	0.0	0.0		Checking	██████████	1,071.04
-Taken	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0				
+Adjustments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0				
End Balance	20.6	593.7	176.0	480.0	<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>Final Net Pay 1,321.04</b>
Max Carryover	240.0							

MESSAGE:

For more information about paychecks, please visit: <http://controller.osu.edu/pay/pay-paycheck.shtm>.

## Banking

You will need to open a checking account in order to receive your paychecks through direct deposit from Ohio State. Huntington Bank is the Official Consumer Bank of The Ohio State University. With 26 ATMs and 5 full service branches on campus, it is one of the easiest banks to access during the workday. To open an account, you will need to physically visit a branch with your Social Security Card, passport, and your employment letter (e.g., I-20). For more information, please visit <https://www.huntington.com/osu>.

## Visa and Immigration

For all your visa-related inquiries, the best resource is the Office of International Affairs (OIA) at Ohio State. OIA has excellent resources and qualified coordinators who can guide you properly through your visa and immigration troubles. An additional resource is the Visa Survival Guide at the Ohio State PDA website. Another comprehensive resource is National Postdoctoral Association's survival guide for international postdocs. As always the Ohio State PDA and PAC are more than willing to help incoming postdocs.

— Ohio State Visa Survival Guide:

[https://u.osu.edu/postdocs/files/2014/10/Visa-Survival-Guide\\_20151209-1ldk39i.pdf](https://u.osu.edu/postdocs/files/2014/10/Visa-Survival-Guide_20151209-1ldk39i.pdf)

— National Postdoctoral Association Survival Guide:

<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/?page=SurvivalGuide>

## Taxes

All incoming postdocs, irrespective of their visa status, will be considered nonresident aliens for tax purposes. One is considered a resident alien when they obtain a permanent resident card/green card. However, according to the IRS rules, another test which is applied is substantial presence test. This basically means that if you are in the US for more than 5 years, you are considered a resident alien for tax purposes. OIA is always conducting tax seminars for incoming postdocs and graduate students. Please be on the lookout for those seminars in your Ohio State email or the OIA website. If you have questions, ask for more clarification during OIA's orientation when you come to the university.

You may want to review the Nonresident Aliens section of the Payroll Services site at <http://controller.osu.edu/pay/pay-nonres.shtm>. Postdocs who are nonresident aliens for tax purposes (excluding permanent residents with green cards) must use Glacier software: <http://controller.osu.edu/pay/pay-nonres.shtm#glacier>. This will determine the amount of federal tax to be withheld from paychecks. An email with a password and information about Glacier should arrive two to three weeks after you begin your postdoctoral position.

If you do not receive your Glacier information, please contact the Tax Office at [taxoffice@osu.edu](mailto:taxoffice@osu.edu). Establishing a record in the Glacier system may allow you to qualify for the benefit of a tax treaty if one exists between your home country and the US. More information about US taxes is available from the Office of International Affairs at:

<http://oia.osu.edu/int-scholars-taxes-and-social-security.html>.

## Childcare and Schooling

Childcare services are available through Ohio State:

Ohio State Postdoctoral Association

<https://hr.osu.edu/child-care-program/>. The waitlist is long for Ohio State childcare, so plan accordingly. Childcare in the US is costly. Typically, the cost of childcare can be \$250/week or \$1250/month, which is approximately half of the take home salary of a postdoc.

— **Note: If your child is born in the US, postdocs on visa cannot apply for assistance from the US government for childcare, because this automatically disqualifies them from getting visa and visa extensions.**

For children who are school age, public school is free in the US. However, there can be additional expenses such as for school supplies and extra fees for some courses. An important consideration is to understand the school districts. To find school districts and ratings you can visit <http://www.greatschools.org/>.



For more information, please visit resources from Office of International Affairs at <https://oia.osu.edu/int-scholars-life-at-ohio-state/parenting.html>.

## Other

We recommend purchasing a cellular phone. There are many providers nearby campus, including T-mobile, At&T, Verizon wireless, etc.

## Further Help and Volunteering for the PDA

The purpose of the Ohio State PDA is to address the needs and concerns of postdocs by:

- Providing representation and liaison between its members and the administration of the Ohio State University
- Promoting the academic and non-academic career goals of its members
- Advocating for constructive changes in the research environment and in policies that affect the lives of postdocs and their families
- Building a community of postdocs by promoting interaction between postdocs on academic, social, cultural and political issues
- Please visit our website <http://u.osu.edu/postdocs/> and join our listserv <https://lists.osu.edu/mailman/listinfo/postdocassociation> for more information about leadership opportunities and our monthly meetings. We hold regular coffee and donut breaks, have a spring hike, summer picnic and many more fun social events. We also host many career development and advocacy events. Upcoming meeting dates and locations will be published in the “Events” page and on the left side of our webpage under “Recent Posts”.

*Editors: Behrooz Omidvar-Tehrani, Suresh Kari, Mona El Refaey, Faith Brennan, Jessica Irons, Brenda Reader, Yoshie Narui, Marcela Hernandez*  
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*Ohio State University*  
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