



Illinois Distinguished Postdoctoral Research Associate Program

The Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (VCDEI) is pleased to offer the Illinois Distinguished Postdoctoral Research Associate Program. The Program provides academic units with funding for postdoctoral research associate (postdoc) positions that advance the University's missions of fostering research excellence and building a diverse and welcoming campus community. Its ultimate goal is to identify individuals from underrepresented groups and women traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields who, through participation in the Program, will become highly competitive candidates for tenure-stream appointments at Illinois. Accordingly, units are encouraged to nominate candidates who demonstrate significant academic potential, who the units plan seriously to consider for tenure-stream appointments before the Program's completion, and who will advance the units' diversity goals if ultimately appointed.

Program applications are reviewed by the Diversity Realized at Illinois through Visioning Excellence (DRIVE) Committee. Commissioned by the VCDEI and staffed by faculty and administrators from across campus, DRIVE develops faculty recruitment and retention policies and practices that advance the University's DEI goals.

Funding and Appointments

- The stipend for the 2022-2023 year is \$56,000 (for a 12-month appointment) and includes health benefits.
- An additional \$5,000 is provided for research, travel, and related expenses.
- Academic units may supplement the stipend and/or expense allowance.
- Initial Program appointments are for up to one year (12 months). Reappointments for up to an additional year are generally available, subject to the VCDEI's approval. The VCDEI may extend Program appointments beyond two years but will do so only in extraordinary circumstances.

Program Parameters

- Funding priority will be given to external candidates identified through national searches for faculty or national searches for postdocs.
- Academic units:
 - Must be part of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to receive Program funding.
 - Are responsible for submitting Program applications and all supporting materials via their unit executive officer. Candidates may not submit application materials directly to DRIVE.
 - Must submit Program applications through the [Illinois Distinguished Postdoctoral Research Associate Program Request](#) portal.
 - Must identify faculty mentors who will develop and supervise the implementation of candidates' mentoring plans (see Application Materials below).
 - Must agree seriously to consider their postdocs for **tenure-stream positions** before the Program's completion.
 - Are eligible to receive recurring salary support from the Provost's Office under the Targets of Opportunity Program (TOP) if they hire their Program postdocs to tenure-stream positions. TOP funding is available if an academic unit (1) initially identified its Program



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postdoc through a national faculty or national postdoc search and (2) rigorously considered the tenure-stream candidacy of its Program postdoc before the Program's completion. In rare circumstances, the Provost's Office may make TOP funding available for Program postdocs not initially identified through national faculty or national postdoc searches.

- If an academic unit recommends a Program postdoc for a tenure-stream appointment after rigorously evaluating their candidacy, and if the unit would receive TOP funding in connection with that appointment, the Dean and the unit's administrative leadership (e.g., head or chair) must agree to support the appointment. (See Application Materials below).

Program Candidate Eligibility

- Program candidates must:
 - Satisfy the TOP faculty eligibility criteria established by Provost's Communication No. 7.
 - Obtain their PhDs or other terminal degrees (e.g., MFAs, JDs) required for faculty positions in their fields before July 1, 2022.
 - Commit to full-time residence at the Urbana-Champaign campus during the academic year(s) covered by the Program award.

Application Materials

- Academic units must submit:
 - A mentoring plan designating a faculty mentor (or mentors) and detailing how they will actively support the Program candidate's research and teaching development.
 - A description of the Program candidate's planned professional activities if funding is approved. This plan should explain how its successful completion will improve the candidate's competitiveness for a tenure-stream appointment in the academic unit. Note that Program postdocs are expected to teach no more than one course per academic year. Units may argue for a two-course teaching load by explaining why it is consistent with instructional norms in the applicable profession or discipline and is needed for the postdoc's professional development.
 - Separate letters from the Dean and the academic unit's executive officer (e.g., head, chair) expressing support for the Program application. The letters must also express support for the candidate's tenure-stream appointment if the unit so recommends after rigorously evaluating their candidacy, and if the unit would receive TOP funding in connection with that tenure-stream appointment. The Dean alone may submit this support letter in undivided colleges and schools.
 - A letter of interest from the Program candidate addressed to the academic unit's executive officer. A previously submitted letter of application to a faculty or postdoc search may serve as the letter of interest.
 - The Program candidate's CV and at least three reference letters.
 - A summary of the process the academic unit will use before the Program's completion to evaluate the candidate for a tenure-stream faculty position, highlighting how that process will differ from the unit's typical appointments process.



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- Program applications will not be considered until all required materials have been submitted.

Relevant Dates

- Applications will be accepted from **January 31 to March 21, 2022**.
- Decisions will be sent no later than **April 8, 2022**.

Questions

- Please direct questions to the DRIVE Chair, Jamelle Sharpe (jcsharp@illinois.edu), or the Office for Access and Equity at (217-333-0885, accessandequity@illinois.edu).