

Best Places for Postdocs to Work in 2008

This year the J. David Gladstone Institutes in San Francisco, CA was ranked number one in *The Scientist's* sixth annual survey of the "Best Places to Work: Postdocs." *The Scientist* rankings were based on a web-based survey sent to readers of their magazine. The 3,086 responses were received from readers who self-identified as non-tenured life scientists employed in academia and/or non-commercial research institutions.

The top ten places for postdocs to be employed in 2008 are mostly in the private or government sector. Since funding is less of a concern for these institutions versus academia, Rick Willis at the second-ranked National Jewish Medical and Research Center explains "we don't have to be so stressed out about grants." Of the top thirty-five ranked U.S. institutions, fourteen are academic institutions, ten are private, nine are government, and two are industry.

Rank	Institution	Number of Postdocs	Type	Salary	Postdoc Resources	Health/Retirement Benefits*
1	The J. David Gladstone Institutes, San Francisco, CA	84	Private	\$42,400-56,800	Postdoc advisor	Health
2	National Jewish Medical and Research Center, Denver, CO	87	Private	\$36,096-51,036	None	Health, retirement
3	Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, NM	76	Government	\$77,800	Postdoc professional development program	Health, retirement
4	Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle WA	230	Private	\$36,996-51,036	Student-postdoc advisory committee	Dependent on funding source
5	M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX	474	Academic	\$36,996-54,058	Postdoc association, advisory committee	Health, retirement
6	Genentech, South San Francisco, CA	120	Industry	\$49,000-52,000	Postdoc program director	Health, retirement
7	Fox Chase Cancer Center, Philadelphia, PA	90	Private	\$36,996-51,036	Postdoc association, office of research education	Health
8	The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation	57	Private	\$41,200-61,800	Postdoc representative	Health
9	The Jackson Laboratory, Bar Harbor, ME	51	Private	\$36,996-51,036	Postdoc representative	Health
10	Sandia National Laboratories, Livermore, CA	48	Government	\$77,800 (min)	Postdoc professional development program	Health, retirement

Notes: * Retirement denotes a plan with a match from the employer
 Source: CPST, data derived from *The Scientist*

The following institutions were ranked as the top ten places for postdocs to work outside the United States:

1. University of Cambridge, UK
2. University of Liverpool, UK
3. University of Nottingham, UK
4. Edinburgh University, UK
5. Dalhousie University, Halifax Canada
6. Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research, Basel, Switzerland
7. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada
8. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
9. Netherlands Cancer Institute, Amsterdam
10. University of Toronto, Canada

In order to deduce the top postdoc institutions, survey participants were asked to respond to statements regarding their work environments according to forty-four criteria in eleven different areas. Participants could respond using a scale from one to five, one meaning they strongly disagree with a statement, five meaning

they strongly agree, and three meaning they neither agree nor disagree. Participants were also asked to rank the importance of each statement on a scale from zero to three, or not relevant.

Because postdocs spend a longer time training, it has been seen for the second year that “family and personal life” was ranked more important than either “training and mentoring” or “networking and opportunities.” However, the most important factor in choosing a place of employment was the “quality of facilities and infrastructure.” This year, 19% of participants said that they expect to be working in industry two years from now, which is an increase from 15.5% in 2007.

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