



**Postdocs** are scientists who have completed their PhD research and who continue to develop their scientific skills by working for a few years at a university or other research institution. Postdoctoral research positions give these scientists the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and to gain more research experience, without taking on any teaching responsibilities. At the same time, postdocs are often the primary source of manpower—and womanpower—to advance research projects.

In experimental particle physics, postdocs hired by universities commonly work at national laboratories, where most of the large-scale particle experiments take place. There the postdocs work at the forefront of particle physics research, leading groups that focus on data analysis or on detector- and hardware-related tasks.

Theorists use their postdoc years to begin new collaborations and to learn about new areas of research. Experimentalists usually spend their postdoc years working on experiments different from their PhD research.

During their time as postdocs, scientists have the chance to develop leadership skills and to become good science communicators, describing their work to colleagues and presenting results at conferences. Quite often, postdocs also supervise and mentor students. All these skills are necessary to reach the next level of a scientific career, such as a faculty position at a university.

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Symmetry  
A joint Fermilab/SLAC publication  
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Office of Science  
U.S. Department of Energy