Aspects of postgraduate researchers experience scale NIST survey

We invite you to consider participating in a survey about your experiences as a

Postgraduate Researcher at NIST.

For the purpose of this work, **Postgraduate Researchers** are defined as **early-career researchers no more than 7 years from receiving their final degree.** This includes NRC postdocs, federal term employees, and guest researchers (US citizens and foreign nationals) supported via the PREP program or other agreement with external institutions.

The purpose of this survey is to assess how Postgraduate Researchers find themselves at NIST and to identify areas where their experiences need improvements. The results of this survey will be shared with NIST leadership and will be used to inform training programs and policies.

No identifying information about you will be collected. Survey data will be summarized, and aggregated results will be included in presentations and publications which may be shared with NIST management, staff and the public. The raw, individual data will be accessed only by the team administering this survey, which is led by Justyna Zwolak.

The survey is completely voluntary. If you have any questions, please contact Justyna Zwolak, PhD, jpzwolak@nist.gov or 301.975.0527.

OMB Control # 0693-0033 [to be updated]
Expiration Date 09/30/2025 [to be updated]

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with an information collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless the information collection has a currently valid OMB Control Number. The approved OMB Control Number for this information collection is 0693-0033. Without this approval, we could not conduct this survey/information collection. Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be approximately 15 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection. All responses to this information collection are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the NIST at: 100 Bureau Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20899, ATTN: Justyna Zwolak.

* Indicates required question

Demographic questions

For the purpose of this survey, Postgraduate Researcher is defined as an early-career researcher no more than 7 years from receiving their Ph.D. This includes NRC postdocs, federal term employees, and guest researchers (US citizens and foreign nationals) supported via the PREP program or other agreement with external institutions.

All demographic data will be aggregated to prevent identification of respondents.

1. Q0. Have you taken this survey previously? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

2. Q1. What type of appointment at NIST do you currently hold? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Federal employee (e.g., NRC postdoc or term appointment)   *Skip to question 3*

   ◯ Non-federal appointment (e.g., PREP postdoctoral researcher)   *Skip to question 4*

3. Q1a. Have you been a non-federal employee postgraduate researcher at NIST prior to your current   *
   appointment?

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

   Skip to question 5

4. Q1b. Are you interested in applying for an NRC postdoctoral researcher appointment at NIST? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes

   ◯ No

   ◯ I am not eligible (e.g., a foreign national or my PhD is more than 5 years old).

   ◯ I did not know that is an option.

   Skip to question 5

5. **Q2. How long ago did you earn your PhD degree?** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Less than 1 years ago

   ◯ 1-3 years ago

   ◯ 3-5 years ago

   ◯ More than 5 years ago

6. **Q3. How long have you been at NIST as a Postgraduate Researcher?**

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Less than 1 year

   ◯ 1-2 years

   ◯ More than 2 years

7. **Q4. Have you had prior postgraduate experience?** *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ No, I came to NIST after graduating with my Ph.D.

   ◯ No, but I spent some time working in the industry.

   ◯ Yes, I held one other postgraduate researcher position outside of NIST.

   ◯ Yes, I had two or more other postgraduate researcher positions outside of NIST.

8. **Q5. Are you interested in becoming a federal employee at NIST once your current appointment comes to an end?**   *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes, I would like to become a full-time federal employee.

   ◯ No, I would rather go to a different government laboratory/institution.

   ◯ No, I am more interested in a position in academia.

   ◯ No, I am more interested in a position in industry.

   ◯ Other: _____

9.   Q6. What is your Operating Unit (OU) at NIST? *   ⊙ Dropdown

Mark only one oval.

○ BPEP (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program)

○ CTL (Communications Technology Laboratory)

○ DO (Director's Office)

○ EL (Engineering Laboratory)

○ HMEPP (Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program)

○ IIS (Innovation and Industry Services)

○ ITL (Information Technology Laboratory)

○ LP (Laboratory Programs)

○ MML (Material Measurement Laboratory)

○ MR (Management Resource)

○ NCNR (NIST Center for Neutron Research)

○ OAAM (Office of Acquisition and Agreements Management)

○ OAM (Office of Advanced Manufacturing)

○ OFPM (Office of Facilities and Property Management)

○ OFRM (Office of Financial Resource Management)

○ OHRM (Office of Human Resource Management)

○ OIS (Office of Information Systems)

○ OSHE (Office of Safety, Health and Environment)

○ PML (Physical Measurement Laboratory)

10.   Q7. Which NIST site are you affiliated with? *

Mark only one oval.

○ Gaithersburg

○ Boulder

○ Other: _____

11.   Q8. What is your sex?
You may skip this question if preferred.

Mark only one oval.

○ Male

○ Female

12.   Q9. What is your race and/or ethnicity?
        Select all that apply and enter additional details in the spaces below.

        Check all that apply.

        ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (For example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, Maya, etc.)

        ☐ Asian (For example, Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)

        ☐ Black or African American (For example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.)

        ☐ Hispanic or Latino (For example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Cuban, Dominican, Guatemalan, etc.)

        ☐ Middle Eastern or North African (For example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, Israeli, etc.)

        ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (For example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)

        ☐ White (For example, English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, Scottish, etc.)

    Skip to question 13

Mentoring and research experience

13.   The person (or people) I mostly identify as my mentor(s) is/are [select all that apply]: *

        Check all that apply.

        ☐ Current research advisor

        ☐ Researcher from my division

        ☐ Researcher from another division

        ☐ Former advisor (prior to joining NIST)

        ☐ I do not have a mentor

        ☐ Other: _____

    Rate the following statements based on the degree you agree with each of the following statements. This should reflect your experience as a post-doc at NIST.

14.   R1. I have frequent meetings with my mentor to discuss my research progress and any challenges I face. *

        Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

15.   R2. My mentor(s) helps me in selecting research projects and developing my academic plans. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

16.   R3. I have informal meetings with my mentor(s) where I get assistance/support with any issues I face (for *
example, on issues such as life-work balance, develop social network, set future goals, access health care
resources, etc.).

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

17.   R4. My mentor(s) helps me integrate into the group and the division community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

18.   R5. My mentor(s) teaches me what it means to be an independent researcher and a scholar. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

19.   R6. My research/project group meets at least once per week. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

20.   R7. In my research group meetings, we devote time to reading and discussing about the current state of   *
      knowledge in the field.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

21.   R8. I have regular meetings with my research mentor and receive feedback on a regular basis. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

22.   R9. The research project I am working on matches my research interests. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

23.   R10. I have presented/am planning to present my research at a group meeting or in a journal club. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

Professional and academic development

Rate the following statements based up to the degree you agree with each of the following statements. This should reflect your experience as a post-doc at NIST.

24. D1. At the beginning of my appointment, it was made clear to me the expectations of my incoming   *
     preparation and was given resources to succeed.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

25. D2. I was offered help when working on my personalized performance plan. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

26. D3. Senior researchers and/or experienced post-docs lead guided group-work sessions to encourage   *
     post-docs to work collaboratively on core concepts relevant to their projects.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

27. D4. I attend mini-conferences where post-docs from nearby institutions can share research progress and   *
     learn networking skills.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

28. D5. At the beginning of each fiscal year, my research advisor(s) and I develop a time-management plan   *
     that help me identify areas where my time could be used more effectively.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

29.   D6. My Division/OU provides training opportunities that focuses on time management skills. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

30.   D7. Senior researchers in my division are available to meet when I need help with my research project. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

31.   D8. I attend activities for post-docs that include trainings or professional development on best practices *
for effective mentoring in my current role (mentoring of SURF students or junior post-docs).

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

32.   D9. I attend activities for post-docs that include trainings or professional development on the role of an *
independent researcher/PI.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

33.   D10. I attend trainings that focus on how to maximize my chances of finding a career that is a good fit for *
my interests and skills.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

34.   D11. I attend training or professional development on learning about mentoring skills for my future role as *
         a faculty or researcher.

         Mark only one oval.

                    1   2   3   4   5

         Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

35.   D12. I attend training on organizing and managing a research group. *

         Mark only one oval.

                    1   2   3   4   5

         Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

36.   D13. I attend activities where I can learn about effective networking. *

         Mark only one oval.

                    1   2   3   4   5

         Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

Social and scholarly exploration support

Rate the following statements based up to the degree you agree with each of the following statements. This should
reflect your experience as a post-doc at NIST.

37.   E1. The division hosts social activities (e.g., teatime, regular lunches) that are valuable in allowing me   *
         opportunities to share my thoughts and struggles with my peers and discuss research areas.

         Mark only one oval.

                    1   2   3   4   5

         Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

38.   E2. The division offered a space where post-docs can build an academic and social community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

39.   E3. People in my division were supportive and caring about my accommodation needs when I first moved *
into town.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

40.   E4. A senior peer mentor(s) provided invaluable resources and inducted me into division and/or   *
laboratory cultures.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

41.   E5. I had or have support and flexibility from my division in finding my research interests. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

42.   E6. I had or have the opportunity to collaborate on projects with different groups, divisions, and/or OUs   *
without making a commitment in order to find my research match.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

43.   E7. I attend(ed) a research seminar surveying the areas of expertise within the division. *

        Mark only one oval.

                1   2   3   4   5

        Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

44.   E8. My research mentor was very flexible with my research assignments when I was struggling with   *
        alternative post-doc responsibilities.

        Mark only one oval.

                1   2   3   4   5

        Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

45.   E9. Whenever I face(d) a challenge with my responsibilities outside of research, someone from my   *
        division helps(ed) me overcome it.

        Mark only one oval.

                1   2   3   4   5

        Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

Financial Support

Rate the following statements based up to the degree you agree with each of the following statements. This should
reflect your experience as a post-doc at NIST.

46.   F1. There is secured funding, internal or external to my OU, for the duration of my entire appointment. *

        Mark only one oval.

                1   2   3   4   5

        Stro ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   ◯   Strongly Agree

47.   F2. My appointment comes with health benefits. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

48.   F3. I have no financial concerns about completing my postgraduate training. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stro	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly Agree

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