



**CCC**

Computing Community Consortium  
Catalyst

*Catalyzing the computing research  
community and enabling the pursuit  
of innovative, high-impact research*

## Lessons Learned from the Postdoc Best Practices Program

### Regularly review progress with the postdocs

Systematic evaluation of progress helps postdocs stay on track and increases the quality of mentoring. Conducting these reviews using 3-6 month progress reports or individual development plans (IDP) can facilitate a productive assessment of progress. Adapting the reporting tools and/or IDP for the computing field will increase their usability.

### Match skill-sets with professional development opportunities

Postdocs may choose to attend activities on topics they feel more comfortable with or perceive as more immediately relevant to their careers; however, it is important to build all skills necessary for successful careers. Advisors and mentors should help identify the skills that are in greater need of improvement by closely reviewing progress reports and IDPs with each postdoc. Then, actively encourage professional development opportunities that are targeted towards refining those specific skills.

### Organize skill development activities in a variety of formats

Because postdocs are busy and may not be able to attend each event organized by their institution (or partnering institution), offering a variety of formats for skill development activities may help accommodate postdocs' schedules and increase attendance rates. For example, live-streaming workshops or hosting webinars would help engage postdocs in professional development activities who still need to manage the demands on their time. Furthermore, this approach can reduce the amount of resources and time required of the faculty/department. These online formats, in addition to hands-on activities held in person (e.g., job market preparation; grant writing), are important aspects to the overall postdoc training experience.

### Facilitate networking

Networking is a key component of postdoc professional development and future success as researchers in the field. During advising or mentoring sessions, identify opportunities for the postdoc to participate in that are tailored to building strong communication and networking skills. Further, incorporate networking opportunities into organized workshops and seminars, even for specialized topics.

### Keep in mind the geographical proximity of activities to the postdocs

While organizing activities as part of a postdoc program, it is important to consider the geographical location of the activities. For instance, when multiple institutions with a large geographical spread form a partnership for postdoctoral affairs, if events are primarily held at a single location, many postdocs are unable to attend.