

HBI Postdoctoral Pioneers Program

Postdoctoral fellows are the lifeblood of biomedical research labs. They often develop or adapt new technologies and experimental paradigms, which allow their labs to address research questions that were previously intractable. They also can be the driving force behind a lab's entry into a new research area.

Recognizing that innovation frequently occurs at the interface of different disciplines and requires labs to venture out of established areas of expertise, the Harvard Brain Science Initiative (HBI) aims to support postdocs who serve as pioneers in their labs by taking on new or risky projects. [The HBI Postdoctoral Pioneers Program](#) offers **\$50,000 fellowships to mid- to late-stage postdocs who are conducting basic research in areas outside of their lab's established focus.**

These fellowships may be used over a period of one to two years. They are meant to be flexible and enhance productivity at a critical time in the postdoc's career. Expenses that are covered include (as examples) postdoc salary, the salary of a technician directly supporting the postdoc's project, professional development opportunities, and/or specialized research supplies needed for the postdoc's project. Please note that no F&A expenses can be covered by this mechanism.

We anticipate awarding at least 6 fellowships in Spring 2024.

Awardees will be chosen based on scientific excellence, commitment to the work proposed, extent to which the work is truly pioneering for the lab, and consideration of funding impact on applicant's research progress and career. Personal circumstances may also be taken into account.

You can read more about past awardees here: <https://brain.harvard.edu/grants/postdoc-pioneers-grant-program/>.

Eligibility

- This program is open to postdoctoral fellows who are conducting basic neuroscience research in life science labs at Harvard University, in FAS or HMS Quad basic science departments.
 - A full list of HMS Quad basic science departments can be found here: <https://fa.hms.harvard.edu/preclinical-and-clinical-departments>
- To be eligible, the postdoc must have completed at least two years of study in their lab by the start of the grant period
- **Each lab may nominate only one postdoc per application cycle.** While applications from all eligible labs will be considered, please note that priority may be given to labs which did not receive funding in the last cycle. (Also, please note that postdocs who were funded in the last

round may not apply again in this round)

- Due to funding limitations, this opportunity is currently not available to college fellows, clinical fellows, or postdoctoral fellows in affiliated hospital, GSE, HSPH or other labs outside of FAS and HMS Quad basic science departments

Application Deadlines

- Letters of intent are due Feb 1st
- Full applications are due March 1st
- Decisions will likely be made in April
- Grants will likely begin in May

How to Apply

Letter of Intent (LOIs), due Thurs Feb 1st:

Letters of intent are required in order for us to confirm your eligibility, make sure each lab has submitted only one application and develop an appropriately-sized review committee.

For these grants, the application cover page form can serve as your letter of intent. Simply fill out the form and send to HBI_Grants@harvard.edu. You should receive a message confirming your eligibility within a week of the LOI deadline. Please reach out if not.

Full Application, due Friday March 1st:

- **Cover Page** -- use template provided, same as already submitted for LOI
- **Applicant Research Description**, 500 words max, briefly introducing your research project, its major aims, progress made so far, and big picture significance. Explain clearly how the proposed research is pioneering for your lab. (Please avoid jargon and write for a broad audience; not all reviewers will be experts in your sub-field of neuroscience.)
- **Budget Request**, roughly one to two paragraphs describing how you would use the funds if you were awarded this fellowship. If you have been awarded any other fellowships, please note those here, including the award period and expenses covered, and explain any potential overlap. (Also, please note that no F&A expenses can be covered by this mechanism.)
- **Personal Statement**, 250 words max, describing your career goals, what stage you are at in your postdoctoral training, and how receiving this funding would make an impact on your work
- **Advisor Statement of Support**, 500 words max, describing scientific merits of the postdoc's work and their talents, providing context on how the proposed work fits into the lab's overall

goals, and explaining why it is pioneering. Please also share the impact you expect this funding to have on the postdoc's career, as well as your lab.

Please combine all of these materials into one flattened PDF file and email to HBI_Grants@harvard.edu. You should receive a message confirming receipt of your application within 3 business days. Please reach out if not.