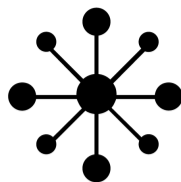


CIENTÍFICO LATINO POST-BACCALAUREATE GUIDE

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CIENTÍFICO LATINO

POST-BACCALAUREATE GUIDE

Research oriented STEM post-baccalaureate (post-bac) programs have risen in popularity over the past several years. Modeled after Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) post-bac programs for medical school, the goal of these programs is to diversify the biomedical arena by allowing recent college graduates from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged communities paid opportunities to conduct 1-2 years of research before applying to a PhD or MD/PhD program*. This guide serves to provide information on eligibility requirements, application materials, and more.

OVERVIEW OF A POST-BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Purpose: The primary reason college graduates apply for post-bac programs is to obtain additional research experience before applying to a PhD or MD/PhD program in a STEM discipline. For this reason, the desire to attain greater research experience among applicants stems from:

- Limited research opportunities at undergraduate institution
- Change in research and career interests
- Opportunities to present posters and/or publish papers
- More time to decide if research is right for you
- Option to retake undergraduate courses (depending on the program)
- Opportunity to take graduate courses

***Note:** These programs are meant for prospective PhD or MD/PhD students, NOT MD-only students. If you intend to enroll in a MD program but wish to do a post-baccalaureate program, refer to the [AAMC post-bacc database website](#).



Program Length: Unless otherwise stated, a post-bac is one academic year in length, beginning in August/September and ending in May/June of the following year. Some post-bac programs have the option to be extended by up to one year.

Program Structure: All post-bac programs follow a similar program structure that is primarily focused on conducting research under the mentorship of a Principal Investigator (PI). Research will take up roughly 75% of the post-bac experience, with the remaining 25% to be dedicated to career development, graduate school applications, seminars, and other professional development events. Some post-bac programs have enrichment themes according to the academic semester such as the following:

- Fall/Winter: GRE prep, Researching Graduate Programs and Potential PIs, Personal Statement and CV Workshops
- Spring: Presentation Preparation, Poster Sessions, and Writing Workshops
- Year Round: Check-In Meetings with Post-Bac Director and Post-Bac PIs

Culmination of a post-bac year typically ends with a poster presentation of the research you have done, a written report, or a combination of the two. Each program may have slightly different culminating events. If you have additional questions regarding program requirements, refer to the respective institution's post-bac website or contact the post-bac director for more information.



TYPES OF POST-BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS

Here is a brief overview of the types of post-bac programs commonly found:

1. **PREP** (Post-Baccalaureate **R**esearch **E**ducation **P**rogram) encompasses most of the of the post-bac programs offered in the United States. These programs are funded by the National Institutes of Health and adhere to a universal set of guidelines when it comes to program admissions and structure. Academic disciplines vary for each institution. Common disciplines include biomedical and natural sciences, however, some institutions offer PREP in engineering and social sciences.
2. **Independent** post-bac programs are usually funded internally by the university itself. These programs are smaller in number but have similar program goals, eligibilities, and application requirements as PREP.
3. **APS-BP** (American Physical Society **B**ridge **P**rogram) focuses on physics-related post-bacs at either a primary or affiliated academic institution.

Note: There is a 3rd type of post-bac titled the NIH Intramural Research Training Award (NIH IRTA). A one-of-a-kind program, the NIH IRTA accepts students year-round and offers research experience at one of their NIH Institutions. Requirements and structure are unique from both a PREP and independent post-bac programs as they require an application to be submitted 6 months before starting the IRTA. If interested, consult the [NIH IRTA website](#).



ELIGIBILITY

1. If applying to **PREP**, eligibility criteria are as follows:
 - Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident**
 - Have a baccalaureate degree in a biomedical relevant science field from an accredited college or university awarded no more than 36 months (3 years) before the time the PREP begins (i.e. For the 2020-21 cycle, if you graduated in June 2017 or earlier, you are not eligible for PREP)
 - Must not be currently enrolled in a degree program (the exception being graduating seniors)
 - Be from a group considered [underrepresented in biomedical research or from a disadvantaged background](#), as set from the NIH.
2. If applying to an **independent** post-bac, eligibility criteria mirror that of PREP. However, it is recommended that you adhere to the requirements based on those listed on the institution's website.
3. If applying to **APS-BP**, eligibility criteria are as follows:
 - Have a bachelor's degree in physics or closely related discipline (non-physics majors are eligible to apply as long as core physics requirements are completed beforehand)
 - Be a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or be a part of the DACA program
 - Satisfy one or more of the following criteria in the current academic year:
 - Did not apply to a physics graduate program; or
 - Applied to one or more physics graduate programs, but were not accepted by any program
 - Be committed to improving diversity in physics
 - Comply with any [additional requirements](#) that individual bridge sites may have.

While ineligible to apply to PREP, **some independent post-bac programs accept international students on visas. Requirements for applying with a visa are different for each program, make sure to contact the post-bac program's coordinator for specific instructions*



FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Stipend: Post-bac programs provide a salary equivalent to either a graduate student stipend, a research assistant, or a research technician. Depending on the program and the cost-of-living of the city, the salary can range anywhere from \$27,000-\$33,000.

Insurance: In addition, post-bac programs include medical, dental, and vision insurance as they are often considered as full-time employees.

Misc. Benefits: Depending on the program, some other benefits may include

- Relocation expenses
- GRE preparation
- Funding to attend one national conference
- Laptops
- Graduate courses

Every institution should have a general overview webpage detailing the goal, logistics, and outcomes of the post-bac program. Here is an example of a typical layout for a post-bac website:



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The following materials are typically required in your application to a post-bac program:

- Unofficial Transcripts
- CV or Resume
- 2-3 Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Statements (either a series of short statements or a 1-2 page essay)

Check each individual institution's website for any additional materials that may be required. With the exception of APS-BP, applications are typically done through an institution specific portal. If the program has an interview step, you should be notified to schedule a Skype or in-person interview.

“What should I write in my statement?”

When writing your statement, make sure to include **why you want to pursue a post-bac in the first place**. Regardless of the reason, post-bac programs wish to see your **short-term and long-term goals**.

A post-bac statement's mission is to convince the committee reviewing your application that you have the initiative and the determination to get the most out of your post-bac year. Apart from mentioning *why* you need additional research experience, elaborate on *how* the experiences at that particular institution, such as the research focus or a particular PI, can help you when you go to graduate school.

DEADLINES

With the exception of the NIH IRTA, which accepts applications on a rolling basis, all post-bac programs have a set deadline. Most deadlines are in late February or late March, however there are a handful of programs that are due as early as January or as late as May. If applying to several post-bac programs, we recommend that you utilize a sheet, such as Excel, to keep track of deadlines and application requirements. We have provided an example of a tracking sheet in our “Resources” section.



RESOURCES

If you need a list of post-baccalaureate programs...

- Científico Latino has a [directory of known post-bacc programs](#) on its website. If you know of a post-bacc program that is not on our list, please contact us cientificolatino@gmail.com
- NIH also has a list of [PREP only post-baccs](#) on their website.
- The American Physical Society has a [core website](#) of both core and affiliated post-bac programs dedicated to the physics field.

If you need a sheet to keep track of programs you're applying to...

- Use our [post-bacc tracker](#) as an example to organize applications.

