

# Unionization Improves the UC Postdoc Experience



	BEFORE FIRST CONTRACT	WITH CURRENT CONTRACT
<b>Salary</b>	All salary levels and increases were unpredictable and set unilaterally by UC. Some Postdocs made as little as \$18,000 per year.	Postdoc wages have increased by over \$20,000 (an increase of over 50%) since our union was formed in 2010. In the 2022 union contract, Postdocs will become the highest-paid Postdocs at a US university, with up to 57% salary increases.
<b>Health Benefits</b>	UC determined all health plan benefits and costs. Many Fellows and Paid-Directs did not receive University-provided health insurance for themselves or dependents.	All Postdocs and dependents receive comprehensive UC-provided health benefits at about 10X lower costs than at peer universities. Postdocs have negotiated new benefits including IVF and acupuncture coverage starting in 2024.
<b>Paid Family Leave and Childcare</b>	No guarantee of leave benefits for maternity, family, medical, bereavement or other reasons, and no childcare benefits.	In the 2022 contract, Postdocs won 8 weeks of fully paid leave that can be used after the birth or adoption of a child, or for family care. Postdocs can also use PTO, sick leave and short-term disability for maternity leave. Childcare subsidies of \$2,500/year, increasing to \$2,800/ year by 2026, and lactation support at work.
<b>Personal Time Off (PTO), Sick Leave &amp; Holidays</b>	PTO was only given at the PI's discretion, and time off requests were frequently denied. One sick day per month with no roll over to new appointments.	24 days PTO and 12 sick days available on the first day of appointment, and 14 holidays. Sick days roll over to new UC appointments if unused.
<b>Transit Benefits</b>	UC unilaterally set all parking and transit policies. No guaranteed transit benefits.	In the 2022 contract, Postdocs won first-ever transit benefits, including a commitment from UC to provide fully-funded transit passes at all campuses and e-bike discounts.
<b>Non-Discrimination and Inclusive Campus Environment</b>	Instances of discrimination, harassment, and exclusion handled through UC offices or state and federal agencies, which were time consuming, costly, and without representation by elected peer union reps.	Industry standard-setting protections against all forms of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. A grievance process with clear timelines — separate from the Title IX process — to resolve abusive or discriminatory conduct and the right to appeal to a neutral arbitrator. The right to survivor-centered interim measures and remedies after reporting in order to continue working in a safe environment.
<b>Workload Protections</b>	There were no limits on the number of hours or days that a PI could demand that Postdocs work.	PIs can only require Postdocs to work what's reasonably necessary to complete the project.

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Appointment Security	No minimum appointment length.	The duration of initial appointments must be at least two years. Fellows and Paid-Directs receive appointment lengths that match the length of their fellowship funding.
Discipline and Dismissal/Layoffs	Postdocs could be disciplined or dismissed arbitrarily, or “at will.” UC could lay off Postdocs at any time and for no reason with no notice or compensation.	UC must prove “just cause” in order to discipline or dismiss Postdocs. This means that all discipline must be fair and cannot be arbitrary. Layoffs require very specific conditions and Postdocs must get 30 days’ notice.
Access Needs	UC had unilateral control over accommodations for workers with disabilities.	Postdocs have the right to receive accommodations for access needs. UC must engage in an interactive process that allows the worker to determine what accommodations they need. UC must provide interim accommodations immediately without requiring medical documentation to do so.
Health & Safety	UC unilaterally set and enforced health and safety standards.	Postdocs have the right to work in a healthy and safe environment.
Dispute Resolution	No neutral, fair contractual dispute resolution process. UC Admin decided disputes.	All workplace disputes are resolvable by a fair and expedient grievance procedure and, ultimately, appeal to a neutral arbitrator.
Career Development/ Individual Development Plans (IDP)/Mentoring	No guaranteed performance evaluations or right to mentored IDP development with your PI. Access to campus career development resources could be removed at any time.	All Postdocs have the right to participate in career development activities on paid time, create an IDP with their PI, and receive annual performance reviews. UC is obligated to fund career activities (such as travel to conferences) outlined in an IDP. Career development resources need to be available and continually improved.
Fighting for Immigrant and International Scholars’ Rights	No protection against UC’s delays in visa processing, and no guaranteed time off for immigration appointments. No unified Postdoc voice in immigration and visa policy making.	Postdocs must be compensated for any losses suffered due to UC delays in work authorization processing. Guaranteed leave time for immigration appointments and protections if immigration laws change. Through our union, Postdocs have fought to expand rights for J-, H- and F- visa holders.
Increasing Science Funding	No unified Postdoc voice in state or national policy making.	Through our union, UC Postdocs have successfully lobbied for greater federal research funding.

**Become a Member of Your Union!** Since the union was formed, our strength has come from member support and involvement. Whether enforcing the rights listed above, developing critical resources for Postdocs (such as career development tools and visa/immigration support), or winning more rights in the future, our success is dependent on Postdocs joining in collective efforts. When Postdocs stand together, we all achieve more!

**CONTACT US: [uaw5810@uaw5810.org](mailto:uaw5810@uaw5810.org) • 510-845-5726 VISIT US ONLINE: [uaw5810.org](http://uaw5810.org)**

Note: This is only a summary. Please refer to the actual contract at [uaw5810.org](http://uaw5810.org) for detailed information.

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