

Bellwether Postdoctoral Scholar - School of Information

Job #JPF04845

- School of Information / School of Information / UC Berkeley

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POSITION OVERVIEW

Position title: Bellwether Postdoctoral Scholar

Salary range: The UC postdoc salary scales set the minimum pay determined by experience level at appointment. See the following table for the current salary scale for this position: https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/2024-25/oct-2024-scales/t23.pdf. The current minimum salary range for this position is \$66,737-\$71,769. Salaries above the minimum may be offered when necessary to meet competitive conditions. A reasonable estimate for this position is \$10,000 higher than the posted minimum, dependent on experience level at appointment.

Percent time: 100%

Anticipated start: As soon as July 2025. Exact start date contingent on completion of degree and is also negotiable.

Review timeline: Review will begin in April and finish in May

Position duration: 2 years.

APPLICATION WINDOW

Open date: March 20, 2025

Next review date: Friday, Apr 4, 2025 at 11:59pm (Pacific Time)

Apply by this date to ensure full consideration by the committee.

Final date: Monday, Apr 21, 2025 at 11:59pm (Pacific Time)

Applications will continue to be accepted until this date, but those received after the review date will only be considered if the position has not yet been filled.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The School of Information at the University of California, Berkeley invites applications for up to four new full-time Bellwether Postdoctoral Scholars to start as soon as July 2025. The exact start date is negotiable. These positions are available for two years, and are non-renewable. This position is not eligible for H-1B sponsorship, but is eligible to apply for a J-1 visa.

These postdoctoral positions are for academics in the early stages of their career who demonstrate exceptional potential as a scholar and researcher.

Applicants should either have completed a doctoral degree, or be able to convincingly demonstrate that they will complete the degree before they intend to start this postdoctoral position (e.g. by documenting a scheduled viva/final defense).

We are seeking applicants with active research plans in any of the following areas:

BPS1) We seek applicants with active research plans in the areas of social informatics, STS, or social & cultural studies of new technologies and information practices. The successful applicant will work on a project about tinkering as creative engagement with technology and self-taught/emergent expertise. Mixed methods will include case studies, qualitative interviews, literature reviews, and data analysis. This position will be supervised by Eric T. Meyer.

BPS2) We seek applicants with active research plans in climate and sustainability informatics, leveraging information and/or information tools to empower individuals, communities, and organizations in tackling the challenges of climate change and biodiversity conservation. We welcome applicants with strong backgrounds in one or more of the following areas: remote sensing, ML, NLP, HCI, participatory design, design research, biosensory computing. The successful applicant will become a core member of the IceBerk Lab (iceberk.berkeley.edu), and be supervised by John Chuang, with possible co-supervision by another IceBerk faculty member where appropriate.

BPS3) We seek an interdisciplinary scholar whose research area is positioned across digital communications, social psychology, and the humanities. This project investigates how pro-social messaging can be designed to compete in the current balkanized information ecosystem, with an understanding that a "one message fits all" approach will not work. This research will be informed by current research from the humanities and qualitative social sciences on belief resonance and narrative, founded in folklore and narrative theory, in combination with research from human-computer interaction in effective communication, visualization, and animation. The goal is to make content that is compelling and engaging without inflaming. The ideal candidate will be skilled with creating digital content, especially animation and video communication, in combination with an active research agenda investigating the current information distribution ecosystem (including social media, podcasting, etc). The mentors for this position are Professors Tim Tangherlini and Marti Hearst

BPS4) We seek applicants pursuing a research agenda at the intersection of computer science and applied economics, with interdisciplinary training and interests in both topics. The successful applicant will work on projects that are designed to address pressing global policy issues, using a mix of quantitative and computational methods (e.g., econometrics, data science, AI/ML). Examples of active projects include, but are not limited to, developing theory and methods for

robust and equitable decision making in social settings; the use of machine learning and digital data to guide resource allocation and related policies in low-income countries; and creating and validating new techniques for monitoring living standards and well-being in high-stakes policy environments. This position will be supervised by Joshua Blumenstock.

BPS5) We invite applications for a postdoctoral position at the intersection of behavioral science and machine learning. The successful candidate will engage in a series of projects utilizing ML techniques—both supervised and generative models—to investigate psychological biases at scale, with a particular focus on the U.S. legal system and broader issues of discrimination. The primary project involves developing public-facing tools that empower researchers to explore variation in local laws across the United States. Ideal candidates will possess a strong theoretical foundation in at least one of the following areas: machine learning, psychology, economics, or statistics, coupled with a strong desire to learn the core principles of another. This opportunity is particularly suited for individuals looking to expand their expertise in applied research within policy-relevant settings. The position will be supervised by Diag Davenport.

BPS6) Seeking applicants with a background in literary/cultural theory interested in the ways in which computational methods, including large language models, are able to provide support for empirical sensemaking about literature, media and culture. We are especially interested in the affordances that come when pairing critical theory (drawing from structuralism, post-structuralism, new historicism, and other schools of thought) with computational methods to learn about the world and its representation in text and other media. This position will engage in collaborative work with computational researchers; some prior computational background may be advantageous but is not required. The position will be supervised by David Bamman.

BPS7) We seek applicants interested in pursuing an interdisciplinary research agenda in the broad area of algorithmic justice. The goal of the postdoc is to develop your capacity as an interdisciplinary researcher in the field of algorithmic justice. We are interested in many areas of algorithmic justice, but especially research that explores the effects of AI systems on the ground, and expands the solution space for responsible AI including improved algorithms, interface designs, legal reforms, improved organizational policies and processes, collective action, and social movements. This position will be housed within the Algorithmic Fairness and Opacity Working Group, interact with the UC Berkeley Executive Fellows in Applied Technology Policy, and be supervised by Professor Deirdre Mulligan.

The Bellwether Postdoctoral Scholar program is designed to allow exceptionally promising young researchers the time to develop their own research while collaborating with leading established faculty. It is designed to accelerate careers, and to maximize the ability of Bellwether Postdoctoral Scholars to build independent research trajectories. To accomplish this, a portion (30-40%) of each post-doc's time will be reserved for their own independent research and publication efforts, including publishing results from their dissertation.

Additionally, all Bellwether Postdoctoral Scholars will work with a mentor or mentors on research projects in the areas listed above (60-70%), all of which are either already active or will be at the time of the start of the post-doc. All have significant publication opportunities planned.

These postdoctoral positions are research-focused and do not include teaching. However, all post-docs will be given opportunities for guest lecturing and will be expected to give public talks about their research. Post-docs will also contribute to planning and hosting public talks for others, and will be expected to be active participants in I School academic events such as research talks.

Each postdoctoral scholar will have access to up to \$5,000 annually for research expenses and travel to professional conferences and research opportunities. A laptop computer will also be provided for the duration of the post-doc.

For all of the above positions, we only seek candidates with excellent research and leadership abilities and a commitment to contributing to the UC Berkeley I School and the field of information more broadly while accelerating their career.

The Berkeley School of Information (I School) is a global bellwether in a world awash in information and data, boldly leading the way with education and fundamental research that translates into new knowledge, practices, policies, and solutions. I School scholars and practitioners thrive in the intersections where people, organizations, and societies interact with information, technology, and data. Faculty comprise a mix of disciplines, including information, computer science, economics, political science, law, sociology, design, media studies, and more.

The I School offers three professional master's degrees and an academic doctoral degree. The MIMS program trains students for careers as information professionals and emphasizes small classes and project-based learning. The MIDS program trains data scientists to manage and analyze the coming onslaught of big data, in a unique high-touch online degree. The MICS program prepares cybersecurity leaders with the technical skills and contextual knowledge necessary to develop solutions for complex cybersecurity challenges. The Ph.D. program equips scholars to develop solutions and shape policies that influence how people seek, use, and share information. Our cohorts and classes are small enough to support intense student engagement; and we encourage collaboration among the students, faculty, and staff in the I School community. Our alumni have careers in diverse fields, such as data science, user experience design and research, product management, engineering, information policy, cybersecurity, and more.

The I School is particularly interested in candidates who will contribute to diversity, inclusive perspectives, collegial respect, and support for underserved student populations through their intellectual voice and actions in research, teaching, and service. This commitment to advancing equity and inclusion is essential for the I School, as our excellence can only be fully realized if our entire community shares in the commitment to these values.

UC Berkeley has an excellent benefits package as well as a number of policies and programs to support employees as they balance work and family, if applicable.

School: <https://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/>

School: <https://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/about/community>

QUALIFICATIONS

Basic qualifications (required at time of application)

PhD (or equivalent international degree), or enrolled in a PhD or equivalent international degree-granting program at the time of application.

Additional qualifications (required at time of start)

PhD (or equivalent international degree) required by start date.

No more than three years of postdoctoral research experience.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Document requirements

- Curriculum Vitae - Your most recently updated C.V.
- Cover Letter - 1-2 pages. Required elements of your cover letter include:
 - which position(s) you are applying for (e.g. BPS1 or BPS5);
 - when you would be available to start your postdoctoral work;
 - a clear articulation of your fit with the UC Berkeley I School, addressing how your expertise overlaps with, enhances, or expands upon the research area indicated for your position(s) of interest. Please include names of any mentors that you would like to work with beyond the project supervisor.
- Statement of Research - 2-3 pages. Includes a description of the focus of your planned independent research and publications during the post-doc, what resources would you need to do that work, and an explanation of how the research builds on and goes beyond work you have already done.
- Statement on Contributions to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging - Statement on your contributions to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in research, teaching, and service, including information about your record of activities to date, and plans for contributing if hired at UC Berkeley. [More Information and guidelines.](#) (Optional)
- Writing Sample - Preferably a pre- or post-print of a first-authored publication.

Reference requirements

- 3-5 required (contact information only)

We may contact your references at any stage in the hiring process unless you request otherwise. Please only provide contact information and do not request letters be sent at the time of application. Letters will be solicited for all finalists.

Apply link: <https://aprecruit.berkeley.edu/JPF04845>

Help contact: pmarchetti@berkeley.edu

ABOUT UC BERKELEY

UC Berkeley is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The excellence of the institution requires an environment in which the diverse community of faculty, students, and staff are welcome and included. Successful candidates will demonstrate knowledge and skill related to ensuring equity and inclusion in the activities of their academic position (e.g., teaching, research, and service, as applicable).

The University of California, Berkeley is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, or protected veteran status.

Please refer to the [University of California's Affirmative Action Policy](#) and the [University of California's Anti-Discrimination Policy](#).

In searches when letters of reference are required all letters will be treated as confidential per University of California policy and California state law. Please refer potential referees, including when letters are provided via a third party (i.e., dossier service or career center), to the [UC Berkeley statement of confidentiality](#) prior to submitting their letter.

As a University employee, you will be required to comply with all applicable University policies and/or collective bargaining agreements, as may be amended from time to time. Federal, state, or local government directives may impose additional requirements.

As a condition of employment, the finalist will be required to disclose if they are subject to any final administrative or judicial decisions within the last seven years determining that they committed any misconduct, are currently being investigated for misconduct, left a position during an investigation for alleged misconduct, or have filed an appeal with a previous employer.

- "Misconduct" means any violation of the policies or laws governing conduct at the applicant's previous place of employment, including, but not limited to, violations of policies or laws prohibiting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other forms of harassment, discrimination, dishonesty, or unethical conduct, as defined by the employer.
- [UC Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

- [UC Anti-Discrimination Policy for Employees, Students and Third Parties](#)
- [APM - 035: Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination in Employment](#)

JOB LOCATION

Berkeley, CA