

Handbook

For

New Postdoctoral Fellows

Marine Science Institute

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Dear New Postdoctoral Appointees,

Welcome to The University of Texas Marine Science Institute (UTMSI). We are excited to have you join our community of scholars and look forward to making sure that your stay at UTMSI is both productive and rewarding. We are here to serve your needs, and you should feel free to contact us at any time during your postdoctoral training. We are pleased to provide you with this short Handbook for New Postdoctoral Fellows and Research Associates. In it you will find vital information about UTMSI, the City of Port Aransas, and the local region. We hope that you will find the enclosed information useful, and we welcome your suggestions for enhancing future editions of the hand book.

This short handbook is an addition to the UTMSI new employee handbook

For any questions regarding your Post-doc at UTMSI you can also contact:

msi-postdocs@utlists.utexas.edu

This e-mail will arrive to all the Post-doc fellows in UTMSI and we will try to help as much as we can.

UTMSI webpage

<http://www.utmsi.utexas.edu/>

Housing Resources

University Housing Properties

University Properties are apartment buildings and complexes that are owned by UTMSI. Apartments offered through UTMSI are typically filled by the end of the summer. Furnished University apartments are available for registered single and married students and postdoctoral fellows in Port Aransas **on a first-come, first-served basis**. Before arriving to UTMSI it is better to consult your advisor and book housing in advance as the units are not always available. For costs please contact [Patricia Webb](#), Executive Assistant for Administrative Affairs.

Things to consider with university Housing:

1. Contract and duration.
2. Notice that in some cases a roommate will move in.
3. Ask for more notice if you have to move.
4. Graduate students have priority over Postdocs.
5. Pets are not allowed.

Costs for off Campus Housing

As a general guideline, expect to pay at least \$700/month for a one-bedroom apartment, and a minimum of \$450/month for a room in a shared apartment. In addition to the first month's rent, you will also need to put down a security deposit, which is normally equal to one to two months rent. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished. Utilities - heat and hot water, electricity, and gas are usually separate - unless 'utilities included' is specified. You should inquire about the cost of a typical winter heating and summer AC bill so that you can budget for the cost of utilities.

The [Port Aransas South Jetty](#) newspaper sometimes has good listings in the classifieds section as well as the announcement board at UTMSI. Feel free to ask current post-docs about the postings via the email link provided above.

Realtors/Management Companies

For additional assistance in finding an apartment or house for rent, consider contacting a local realty company. Several are listed below:

<http://www.portaransas.org/port-aransas-business-directory/real-estate-services/brokers--agents>.

Temporary Housing

It may take one to two weeks to find an apartment. While you are looking, it may be necessary for you to stay in a local hotel. Rates vary depending on the hotel and the time of year. You can also check to see if UTMSI has any short-term housing for a week or two.

Hotels in Port Aransas

Please follow this link to find hotels and other housing in [Port Aransas](#)

If you need a temporary place to stay for a month or longer during the summer, condos on North Padre Island tend to be much more affordable than the vacation rentals in Port Aransas. It is about a 30-minute commute from North Padre to UTMSI.

Rentals on North Padre Island:

-Palm Bay Rental Management (pet friendly), www.pipalmbay.com, 361-949-1055

Moving In

If you need to rent a truck or moving van in Port Aransas, start with the following companies. Make sure you get a confirmation number when making a reservation, note there are no truck rentals or return facilities in Port Aransas.

- *U-Haul*

www.uhaul.com

- *Budget Truck Rental*

www.budgettruck.com

Also consider renting cargo vans from the Car Rental locations listed in Port Aransas area.

Utilities/Phone/Internet

If utilities are not included in your rent, you will need to arrange to have the gas and/or electricity activated before you move in to your new place. You will also need to arrange for phone and cable service, if desired. Contact the following companies:

1. Clear internet - www.clear.com/packages
2. Century-Link - www.centurylink.com
3. Phone, TV, & Internet:
 - a. Century Link, 219 East Avenue C, Port Aransas, 361-749-9020
 - b. Time Warner Cable, <http://www.timewarnercable.com/texas>
4. Electricity: Rates and provider information are available at:
<http://www.powertochoose.org/>.

More utility providers can be found on: <http://www.portaransas.org/port-aransas-business-directory/general-services/utilities--city-services>

Cellular Phone Service

UTMSI plans are not available. Please find plans with Verizon, Nextel, T-Mobile, and AT&T by visiting the official website for the above companies. Note that UT Austin employees are eligible for a discount (<http://www.utexas.edu/its/das/>)

Health Insurance

Fellows and scholars may need to obtain own health insurance, if not employed by UTMSI.

Driver's License and Car Registration in Texas

When changing address and car registration, proof of residency (need 2) is needed for change of address and car registration.

You also need to change the title, to TX, TX insurance, and 2 bills with local address or pay slip from UTMSI and 1 bill. TX inspection sticker can be accomplished at Golf Cart Medic 1004 6th Street, Port Aransas, Then go to City Hall and get TX plates or online.

Texas Department of Motor Vehicles ([DMV](#))

Locations of closest DMV offices: 913 South Commercial, Aransas Pass, TX 78336, 361-758-8680

Banking

The banks listed below are close to campus and are the only ones on the island. The best way to get information is to visit the website or walk over in person. When going in to open a bank account, make sure you take your UTMSI I.D.card. Some banks will eliminate fees if you arrange direct deposit of your paycheck.

American Bank

[Port Aransas](#) Branch

216 S. Alister

Port Aransas, TX 78373

(361) 749-7450

Special Note: American Bank has contract with UT- and can cash check immediately, will clear it in 24 hrs, and can provide loans at a good rate.

ValueBank

[Port Aransas](#) Branch

500 S. Alister, Port Aransas, Texas

(361) 749-5264

Child Care

Port Aransas has only one Daycare available and a school district:

[Trinity by the Sea Day School](#)

Trinity is only for children ages from 18m to 5yr

[Port Aransas Independent School District](#)

Living in Port Aransas

Grocery Store

Port Aransas has only one grocery market IGA, Family Center. Most of the people drive either to Aransas Pass HEB or Flour Bluff HEB for extended shopping.

Local Transportation

Most Postdocs live close to the UTMSI campus and do not absolutely need a car. Most will rely on walking and biking as needed.

Public Buses

The [Port Aransas Shuttle](#) travels daily through the city. Whether you're up for a morning of shopping, relaxing at your favorite restaurant for lunch, or spending a lazy afternoon at the beach, the shuttle can get you there and back in air-conditioned comfort! All the main streets and several side streets leading to the beach are served and the entire route is repeated every hour, from the first stop at about 10:00 a.m. to the last one at about 6:00 p.m. Remember, we are on 'Island Time,' so the times may vary slightly, depending on the season. Catch the shuttle at designated locations or just give one a wave and climb aboard anywhere along their route.

[Download the Shuttle Schedule and Fare](#)

The City also offers a Flexi B Bus that will take you to Corpus Christi and back.

[Download the Flexi B Schedule.](#)

Taxis

You must call in advance to order a taxi, they are very efficient and you will normally be picked up within 10 minutes. Below is a list of taxi services in the area:

- [Gulf Coast Taxi](#), 361-749-0850

Ferry

The Port Aransas Ferry System provides FREE marine transportation service seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. The ride connects Mustang Island and Port Aransas with the mainland via Aransas Pass. During peak hours, especially during holidays and summer months, some travelers may be required to wait their turn while the ferry makes the trip back and forth across the channel.

Post-doc funding opportunities

Teaching opportunities at UTMSI

If you are interested in teaching at UTMSI, please contact Ken Dunton or Joan Holt and tell them of your interest. If there is a course that needs an instructor, they can set it up as a Lecturer appointment for you. Undergraduate courses need Lecturers more frequently than do graduate courses. TAMUCC also occasionally needs adjunct instructors. Joe Fox (Department of Life Sciences) and Paul Montagna (Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences) are the appropriate contacts.

Postdoc eligibility to be Co-PI on grants

Postdocs are eligible to be Co-PI's (but not PI's) on grants. Co-PI status must be requested in advance. Here is the relevant information from the OSP handbook (<http://www.utexas.edu/research/osp/resources/handbook.html#pis>):

Is everyone working at UT authorized to be a PI or Co-PI?

No, employment at the University does not confer automatic PI or Co-PI status for everyone. When the University accepts a grant or contract from an external sponsor, the University assumes responsibility for the proper performance of the stated project, for the fiscal management of the funds received, and for accountability to the sponsor. Since the institutional responsibility for meeting these obligations is vested in the PI, only individuals in the categories shown below are deemed qualified and are authorized to be PIs or Co-PIs for sponsored projects. In rare instances others may be authorized as PIs or Co-PIs, and then only with the prior written approval of the Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects (AVP/OSP).

- Tenure or Tenure-track faculty (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, Research Professor, Research Associate Professor, Research Assistant Professor)
- Directors; Chairs
- Research Scientists/Engineering Scientists and Senior Research Scientists/Engineering Scientists
- Research Associates
- Postdoctoral Fellows are eligible for Co-PI status only – status must be requested

I am qualified to act as a PI and/or Co-PI, but am not eligible for an automatic approval. What do I do next?

A department may request that an individual be granted PI or Co-PI status a) for a specific project. In this instance, authorization will endure for the life of the project. Or b), a department may request that an individual be allowed to seek funding and submit multiple proposals. In this instance, two options are available: the annual authorization will require annual renewal on August 31 or position specific authorizations can be approved for multiple years as long as the individual holds the same appointment at the University (in this case it is incumbent on the requesting department to inform OSP if there is a change in the status of employment required rescission of PI or Co-PI status). The request should make it clear which option is requested.

How do I initiate a request for PI or Co-PI status?

The individual's department (Dean, Associate Dean for Research, Department Director or Chair) must initiate a request to the AVP/OSP. The request must be made in writing and sent via email to: osp@austin.utexas.edu.

The request must include:

- name of individual requiring PI or Co-PI status
- type of request (annually renewable or project specific)
- type of status request: PI or Co-PI
- Acknowledgement that the proposed PI/Co-PI has read and agrees to abide by the Required Responsibilities for Researchers at The University of Texas at Austin. The memo can be found at: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/resources/policies/>

The request is reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Sponsored Projects. When a decision is rendered, all individuals copied on the original request and appropriate staff within the Office of Sponsored Projects will be notified.

*NOTE: Requests for PI or Co-PI status from the College of Natural Sciences must first be routed through the relevant department chair, and then the Office of the Dean prior to forwarding on to OSP. Requests for PI or Co-PI status from the Cockrell School of Engineering must be routed through the Dean's office via Joey Walker, Senior Grants and Contracts Specialist, Cockrell School of Engineering (walker@mail.utexas.edu; 512-471-5450) prior to forwarding on to OSP.

For UTMSI postdocs, all requests must originate with your advisor and go through the department chair.

ASPIRE:

AWARDS FOR STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Program goals:

- (1) Promote innovation and excellence in student and postdoctoral research.
- (2) Stimulate interaction and collaboration between graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.
- (3) Provide funding for proof of concept/high-risk/high-impact projects that can be leveraged for additional funding.

Eligibility:

All graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are eligible to apply. Each applicant may receive a maximum of 1 award during their time at MSI.

Funding restrictions and conditions:

Projects are limited to a maximum of \$2,000 for a single-applicant proposal or \$3,000 for a collaborative (multi-applicant) proposal. The maximum duration of an award is 12 months, during which time all funds must be spent or returned. Awardees will be required to present a 15 minute seminar on the funded research at MSI within 6 months of the end of the grant period.

Proposal submission:

Proposals may be submitted at any time via email to msi-aspire@utlists.utexas.edu. The format of the proposal is flexible, but should consist of three components:

- (1) Main text of the proposal, limited to 2 pages including figures and tables but excluding references, which can extend onto a third page.
- (2) Budget and budget justification, limited to 1 page.
- (3) Letter of support from the applicant's advisor, submitted directly by the advisor.

Reviewing process:

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of at least 5 reviewers. Potential reviewers will include Ph.D. candidates and postdocs not applying for funding as well as MSI faculty. Each review panel will include at least 2 graduate students, at least 2 postdocs, and at least 1 faculty member. Panel composition will also reflect the diverse expertise at MSI, with representation from each of the major research areas.

Submitted proposals will be distributed to the review panel and all MSI faculty. Within 10 days of submission, the applicant will be required to give a short (5-10 min) presentation to the review panel (and other interested faculty) on the merits and impacts of the proposed research. The proposal(s) will then be discussed among the reviewers and funding decisions will be made. All funding decisions will be made within 14 days of proposal submission. Feedback will be provided to applicants with the goal of improving future proposals and improving the quality of the proposed research. Before funding is released, an awardee may be required (at the director's discretion) to meet with the director to discuss the potential impact of the research.

Reviewing criteria and priorities:

- (1) Responsiveness to the goals of the program (see above). While collaboration is not a requirement of the program, collaborative projects are encouraged, especially collaborations between students and postdocs. Interdisciplinary research is also encouraged.
- (2) Intellectual merit (novelty, scientific soundness, significance of anticipated results).
- (3) Impact of proposed work on student/postdoc's current research program.
- (4) Appropriateness of the proposed budget for the work to be performed.

For questions, contact Zack Darnell: mzd@utexas.edu