



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

Dear Newcoming Postdoc,

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences (FAS) and the FAS Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPA), I am delighted to welcome you to the Harvard FAS Postdoctoral community. As Director of the FAS OPA for several years now, I support around 1,300 scholars like you, including postdoctoral fellows, research associates (slightly more senior postdocs), and College Fellows (Teaching postdocs). Trained as a historian, I have been at Harvard for over 20 years, as a Lecturer on History & Literature, a Resident Dean (taking care of undergraduates), and an Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs in the Division of Science. Given this experience, I can either help you or I know someone who can.

The mission of the FAS OPA is to enhance your professional development and experience while at Harvard, to build a comprehensive training and career development experience, to foster good mentoring, and to cultivate a sense of community. As a trainee here, you will be expected to gain the knowledge and experience necessary to advance your career through research, publications, and development of your network. To accomplish this, you may need to be in the lab or in the library at any given time, day or night. Since your hours are not recorded, those of you who work in labs will have to work with your faculty PI to manage your time, experimental schedule, and research progress. You should also plan to attend the workshops, talks, and seminars I either organize or coordinate with other offices and FAS units across Harvard. All these are an important part of your professional development, will provide good food for thought, and may give you ideas about career paths and opportunities you may not have considered. By the time you are ready to take the next step in your career—either an academic position or outside academia—I can help you prepare your materials and coach you through the application process.

While acknowledging the immense time and effort it takes to be a successful postdoc—and in so doing, to make significant contributions to the FAS’s research mission—keep in mind the importance of having a life beyond your work. To this end, I work closely with the FAS Postdoctoral Association (PDA), a volunteer organization by postdocs for postdocs, to help build a sense of community among FAS postdocs and to enrich the FAS postdoctoral experience. The PDA is always looking for volunteers, so if you would like to get involved, which is a great way to meet other postdocs, just contact faspda@fas.harvard.edu.

As part of our welcome, I encourage you to watch the [short presentations](#) prepared by several administrative units, including the Harvard International Office, the Benefits Office, and Global Support Services. While your department should be your first point of contact for administrative issues, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I have also posted much of the information you may need on the [FAS Postdoc Website](#), including this [Checklist page](#), as well as the Postdoc Handbook, which summarizes administrative and policy essentials. Finally, you will automatically start receiving weekly emails from me—subject line “For Postdocs from the Mothership”—which hopefully will stand out from your other emails.

I wish you a smooth and pleasant start, and I look forward to meeting you at some point, hopefully in person.

Best,

Stephen Kargère, Ph.D.
Director