

The Scientist's Life Science Salary Survey 2010 -- results announced

November 2 2010

This year's Salary Survey saw drops in salaries across the board with almost every speciality suffering a setback, some with dips as large as \$20,000 (ecology) and \$28,000 (virology).

However, a few select fields, namely bioinformatics, biophysics, biotechnology, and neuroscience, bucked the trend and actually posted salary increases this year. Whilst it is not easy to determine why these specialities saw salaries rise and others saw salaries cut, Mark Musen, head of the Stanford Center for Biomedical Informatics Research at Stanford University commented: "I've noticed this year that start-up packages for new faculty members in biomedical informatics have been enormously generous because the competition is so intense." And as Barry Connors of Brown University in Providence explains: "The field of neuroscience has enjoyed a steady increase in popularity over the past two decades, and this trend is continuing."

Many institutions have had to bear the brunt of the current financial crisis head on. Even tenured scientists near the end of their careers, those with contracted salaries, are feeling the effects. "There's an incentive to keep a salary coming in," says James Bassingthwaite, a tenured bioengineer at the University of Washington in Seattle, "especially when my retired friends express concerns that their income shrivels with the market downturns."

Feedback shows that it is not only the cost of living in harsh [economic times](#) that has risen, but the cost of actually doing science has increased

as well. As Mary Dickinson of Baylor College of Medicine commented: "Now instead of one to two grants to run a modest-size lab, people need three of four to keep pace."

Almost all professional levels in the life sciences are feeling the strain of the current financial situation, but there is one demographic group that always feels it – postdoctoral fellows. Currently, postdocs receiving federal awards make between \$37,740 to \$52,068 a year, depending on a fellow's level of experience. In some cities highlighted on this year's cost-of-living map graphic, this may be sufficient to cope with the cost of living, but many still feel the pinch. It's no surprise then, that postdocs have developed creative coping mechanisms for scraping by on a penny.

More information: Full results, further statistics and interactive charts can be found at www.the-scientist.com/salarysurvey and in the November print issue.

Provided by Faculty of 1000: Biology and Medicine

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