



iJOBS Career Panel Series: Pharmaceutical Medical Information

Tuesday May 12, 2015

4:30-6:00pm

Rutgers Biomedical Engineering, Room 102

599 Taylor Road

Piscataway, NJ 08854

What it is like to work in a Contract Research Organization (CRO)

- The kinds of positions at CROs for PhDs include: developer, testing, tech support, project management, marketing, sales, quality assurance, research and development, corporate business development.
- You can stay connected to the academic community since many of the customers are academics. It is helpful to understand the science behind the project you are working on so you can put it into context.
- You are helping the larger research community in a supportive role.
- Sometimes you get to travel to meet the customers or present the data.
- CROs have a team component where marketing, IT, business, and finance people work alongside the developers and researchers.
- There is a smaller feeling and more personal touch than big pharma. For example, you frequently have opportunities to interact with VPs and the CEOs.
- It is also easier to learn different roles in the company and move laterally or vertically more quickly compared to big pharma.
- However, CROs do not pay as well and do not have as good benefits as big pharma.
- If you want to move up the chain then ask your supervisor for resources to take a workshop and gain skills.
- It is important to push yourself and make sure you are developing in your current position. Keep looking for opportunities to expand your skills.
- It is important to develop the people who work for you and look to replace yourself for when you get promoted.
- Some projects are only a few hours long (e.g. Sanger sequencing). Other projects last for months including a month prior to the start to develop the plan, the actual project, and a few months after to finish the report.
- The goal is to have high client satisfaction and increase the likelihood of the client returning as a repeat customer.
- Teams who are successful sometimes get to attend special events like Broadway shows etc... as incentive.

- They were mixed opinions as to whether CRO employees are stable and safe from layoffs. CROs do not necessarily pick up the work from big pharma layoffs so it may not be any more secure than big pharma.
- Some people use CROs as a stepping-stone to big pharma companies yet others stay at the CRO for a long time.
- It is important to go to a CRO that adheres to the new strict Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) rules because in the near future, pharma companies will not contract with CROs that do not do this. As a CRO employee should follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and help develop and write new ones.
- There are sometimes audits by customer companies and the FDA through the Quality Assurance department. These can be unannounced or with very little notice.
- Work-life balance is possible at a CRO if you want to make it very 9am-5pm. Some people with PhDs do work longer hours because they are more driven.

Tips on how to get a job at a CRO

- CROs have less stringent requirements for hiring than big pharma which often require 5 years of experience. CROs do not expect that much experience and they are hiring all the time.
- A postdoc is not necessary to get hired in CRO because they it may be harder for a postdoc to shift gears and try different things. Plus they have to pay someone with a postdoc a higher salary. However, postdocs do get hired as well at CROs.
- It is a good idea to weave the job description into the resume to highlight your skills that fit and also tailor a cover letter to the job.
- Some CROs (e.g. Genewiz) do hire international employees who are on Optional Practical Training (OPT) after their student visa.

Qualities CROs are looking for:

- Good communications skills
- Excellent organizational skills
- Ability to multitask since you are often dealing with 10 clients at a time
- Customer service experience such as working in a restaurant, interacting with sales reps to purchase reagents and get discounts, or managing a collaboration
- Extracurricular activities and being involved in the academic or surrounding community in a leadership role
- Critical thinking skills and ability to troubleshoot
- Ability to improve processes by thinking outside the box
- Ability to adapt to change
- Ability to work in a team environment

Gregory Bannish
VP Biopharmaceutical Development
Huntingdon Life Sciences
BannishG@Princeton.Huntingdon.com



Greg gained a Ph.D. in Immunology at Cornell University in 1997, then studied lymphocyte development at the University of Pennsylvania. He accepted a Research Scientist position at Centocor (now Janssen, J&J) in 2002, focusing on stress response in the immune system and leading a biocomparability effort to monitor variability in biopharmaceuticals using cell-based assays.

Greg joined Huntingdon Life Sciences in April 2007 as Associate Director, department of Cell Biology and Immunology, to run the department and expand U.S. support of regulatory immunopharmacology studies. He has helped develop assays that are used to determine relative drug potency in multiple species, that act as pharmacodynamic biomarkers and that identify samples containing neutralizing antibodies.

Since 2011 Greg has worked within the Biologics Team, currently as Vice President of Biopharmaceutical Development, to support the growth of biologics in the therapeutic product pipeline. The primary function of the role is to prepare product development strategies for customers, combining knowledge of biopharmaceutical drug development and regulatory requirements. In addition, the position includes strategic input for success of biologics, operational interactions to advise our key scientists on study related matters, and a member of senior management to keep an integrated approach to biologics safety assessment, and customer facing to meet or exceed expectations.

Lisa Hague, PhD
Associate Manager Technical Support
GENEWIZ
115 Corporate Blvd
South Plainfield NJ 07080.
Lisa.Hague@genewiz.com



Lisa Hague is the Associate Manager of the Technical Support department at GENEWIZ. She received her BS degrees in Biology and Biochemistry from Seton Hall University in 2002. Then she went to UMDNJ – Newark (now Rutgers) where she studied in Dr. Carol Lutz’s lab in the field of RNA biology. The lab studies polyadenylation of mRNA and regulation of this event. She obtained a PhD in biomedical sciences in 2010 with the thesis: “Alternative Polyadenylation of PABPN1 and CstF-77: Insight into tissue specificity, differentiation, and miRNA regulation.” She worked briefly as a field sales representative for MP

Biomedicals, LLC before obtaining her job as Scientist I in the technical support department at GENEWIZ in 2011. She has been at GENEWIZ ever since and was promoted to Associate Manager of Technical Support in 2012.

Damain Uruena
GENEWIZ
Business Marketing Leader
damian.urena@genewiz.com



Damian Uruena is a Business Marketing Leader for Gene Synthesis Services at GENEWIZ. Since joining GENEWIZ in 2010 as a Scientist I – Project Management (PM), he has been promoted to Team Leader (PM), Assistant Manager (PM), Associate Manager (PM), and Manager (Marketing). Within his current role as Business Marketing Leader, he is responsible for leading new market entry and sales/marketing strategies as well as assessing return on investment of key GENEWIZ initiatives.

Damian grew up in central New Jersey, and was an undergraduate at Felician College where he obtained his B.S. in Biology in 2002. In 2010, he obtained a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Delaware where he studied DNA-protein interactions related to DNA repair.