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School of Graduate Studies

iJOBS Workshop Series: Applying to Biomedical Faculty Jobs

Research Level 1 Institutions

Panel 1

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Topics to be covered today:

How to select a postdoc that will eventually help you land an academic career
Discussing with your postdoc PI the project that you will take with you and getting them to help you advance your career
What other things you should be doing during your postdoc to be ready to apply for faculty jobs
Deciding R1 vs PUI
Finding academic jobs to apply to
Preparing the research statement
Preparing the teaching and diversity statements
Preparing the job talk
Preparing the chalk talk
Preparing for the interview itself and tips
Negotiating offers
Setting up the lab
Filling your lab with students, postdocs and techs
Teaching for the first time and preparing classes
Service to the school
Preparing for tenure and expectations
Applying for K99/R00 grants

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How to select a postdoc that will eventually help you land an academic career

1. Research the lab
   - Has the PI successfully mentored postdocs to get academic jobs?
   - Use your network & ask
   - These factors do not always correlate with brand name, funding.
   - Is the institution eager to help?

2. Determine the fit during interview
   - Does the PI show close mentorship?
   - Do lab members have fellowships?
   - Are lab members happy?

3. Develop success-promoting relationship with your PI
   - Open discussion about your career goals

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Discussing career advancement and taking projects with you

- Your postdoc PI benefits from your success; it's a 2-way relationship

- From the start, discuss and plan for your career development needs
  - Reserve time to attend career training workshops, etc
  - Plan ways to develop additional skill sets you need for your career

- Project ideas will evolve throughout your postdoc
  - A single project will not get you a job, you need an overall direction for your lab
  - You will *lots* of ideas that you do not have the time or resources to pursue
  - Compromise. What aspects of your project is your PI most attached to?

What other things you should be doing during your postdoc to be ready to apply for faculty jobs

1. Project development
   - Think your own niche
2. Publications
   - Start early to build a story for publication
   - Help other projects for publication
3. Apply fellowships
   - Search fellowships
   - Involve PI/mentors for feedback
4. Participate in career programs
   - Polish your resume
   - Grant writing

Applying for K99/R00 grants

1. Eligibility
   - K99/R00 applicants must have no more than 4 years of postdoctoral research as of the application due date regardless of whether it is a new or resubmission application.
   - Individuals must be in mentored, postdoctoral training positions to be eligible to apply to the K99/R00 program.
   - Parental, medical, or other well-justified leave for personal or family situations of generally less than 12 months duration is not included in the 4-year eligibility limit, nor is clinical training with no research involvement (e.g., full-time residency training). NIH will approve an extension of one year for childbirth within the 4 year eligibility window. Must request an extension!
   - There is no citizenship requirement for applicants.

- **NOT eligible:** hold an independent research faculty or tenure-track faculty position, more than 4 years of postdoctoral research training at the time of initial application or resubmission, already have NIH independent grants, other NIH career development awards, grants over $100,000 direct costs, Ph.D. candidates, Clinicians working not as postdocs.

2. Look for other career development fellowships
   - National Multiple Sclerosis Society, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Dermatology Foundation etc.
3. Reach out to ”program officers”, have them hear your proposal, get feedback.
   - Have your outline (story) ready in writing, or powerpoint, schedule a meeting.
4. Use grant writing resources to get feedback

Deciding R1 vs. Primarily Undergraduate Institution (PUI)

- Balance between research and teaching
- What type of financial/personnel resources does your research require?
- Range of research resources available at different PUIs
- Grants/fundraising for research and salary for self

Finding academic jobs to apply to

- Get to know the jobs cycle for your field/region
  - Most positions are posted in the summer/fall
  - Applications are due fall/winter

- Look for postings
  - Journal career sites: Nature Careers / Science Careers / Cell Career Network
  - Independent job posting portals/databases: jobRxiv
  - Social and peer networks
    - Twitter – are there accounts/hashtags for your subfield? (e.g. @NeuroRumbler and #neurojobs)
    - Conferences

Preparing the research statement

- Three components:

  (1) Background/past research

  (2) Current research

  (3) Future directions

- What is the overarching theme of your research program?
- What is the current state of your field? What is the biggest knowledge gap and why is your research important?
- What are the tools and/or unique approaches you will use to answer the questions?
- What is your next research direction, what new questions do you plan on addressing short- and long-term?
- Get some examples from the faculty who are willing to share
- Tip: Instead of writing a different statement tailored to each application, have 2-3 versions of your statement highlighting specific research projects/skills
- Get feedback on your research statement from faculty/scientists within and outside of your field!

Preparing the teaching statement

- What to include within a teaching statement?

(1) Courses/guest lectures you have taught or TA'ed

(2) Courses you are qualified and interested in teaching

(3) Experience mentoring students (undergraduate and graduate level) and research scholars

(4) Your teaching methods

(5) Any teaching challenges you faced and how you overcame them

(6) Feedback from teaching evaluations

(7) Include the correct school name!

Preparing the diversity statement

- How to write a diversity statement?

(1) Why is diversity important to you?

(2) Familiarize with the university's diversity goals

(3) Share your outreach or mentoring experiences either being part of a diverse group, or interacting with diverse populations

(4) If you don't have substantial past activities, focus on future plans focused on diversity, equity, climate and/or inclusion

(5) Ideas on how you will tailor your teaching and mentoring approaches to be more inclusive to under-represented and under-served groups?

(6) Take a look at some examples but make an honest attempt based on your own experiences

(7) Acknowledge your privilege and say how you are mindful of yours and other's privilege (or lack thereof)

Preparing the job talk

- Tell your best story
  - Target your talk to a broad audience
  - Edit aggressively; do NOT talk about everything you have done
  - Be enthusiastic

- Practice!
  - Get feedback early; don’t waste time on slides you will never use
  - Present to diverse audiences

Preparing the chalk talk

- Practice, practice, practice
- Practice again!
- Ask search committee about the format (on an actual chalk/whiteboard or slides?
- Be intellectually openminded and have fun

Preparing for the interview itself and tips

- Rehearse your talk
- Read faculty profiles and research papers. Think of ways you can collaborate.
- Thank you emails post interview are key – a common courtesy that show your interest in the position

Negotiating offers

- Salary
- Startup - have a clear idea about what you need to succeed. Budget for equipment/supplies/personnel
- If you have multiple offers - congratulations! You can carefully use it as leverage in negotiating
- Remember - your new dept. wants you to succeed

Outfitting your lab

- Build a shopping list
  - Record every detail of your postdoc lab: equipment, reagents, ordering records
  - Walk-through your planned experiments; what else will you need/want

- Identify the sales reps for your new institution and send them your list
  - Many suppliers offer new-lab discounts
  - See if you can place orders before your even arrive

Filling your lab with students, postdocs and techs

- Graduate students

  (1) Actively participate in graduate student recruitment events

  (2) Advertise through your program/department and colleagues

  (3) Consider becoming a member of the Admissions Committee

- Postdocs

  (1) Engage with students at meetings/conferences (local and outside of your institution)

  (2) Advertise on job boards/websites/social media (university+field-specific portals, nature jobs, science careers etc.)

  (3) Notify colleagues of the opening(s) and advertise through them

  (4) Use telephone/Zoom to do a first interview, before an in-person; call and talk to the references

- Techs

  (1) What level of tech is best suited for your lab? Which skill sets are you interested in?

  (2) Put up an ad through the institution and circulate through the program/department and colleagues

Teaching for the first time and preparing for classes

- Don’t develop a fresh new course if possible
- Familiarize yourself with the typical teaching loads for your department
- Talk to colleagues and/or previous instructors about their teaching experience
- Prepare notes for yourself in advance for each lecture
- Prepare a clear and detailed syllabus outlining various policies on attendance, class participation, late submission of assignments, plagiarism etc.
- Hold regular office hours and create discussion forums so you can encourage more student engagement
- Have realistic expectations when teaching for the first time. Don’t reinvent the wheel. Make sure you are get fully comfortable with the material before making changes/improvements to the syllabus
- Attend teaching workshops that are helpful in learning effective teaching methods, new technologies, and new ways of assessing student learning, which you can integrate into your philosophy over time (summerinstitutes.com/conferences/)