

Postdoctoral Career Planning and Preparedness:

Job resources and application advice

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To search for jobs

Science career job search from AAAS: <http://jobs.sciencecareers.org/>

Opportunities for postdoctoral researchers from the National Postdoc Association:

<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/?Opportunities>

American Meteorological Society job postings:

<http://careercenter.ametsoc.org/jobseeker/search/results/>

American Geophysical Union job postings: <https://careers.agu.org/jobs/>

Government positions: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

Positions in non-profits and foundations: <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/jobs>

Career Center of the American Association of Geographers:

<http://www.aag.org/cs/careers>

Chronicle of Higher Education Job Postings: https://chroniclevitae.com/job_search/new

To subscribe to job email lists:

UCAR Opps list: <https://groups.google.com/a/ucar.edu/group/oppslist/>

Earth Science Women's Network job list:

http://mailman.ucar.edu/mailman/listinfo/es_jobs_net

Met-jobs list: <https://www.lists.rdg.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/met-jobs>

Preparing a curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé:

CVs are for research or academic positions and can include all of your academic accomplishments. There is no page limit for a CV. For the CV, update it with all of your research positions, leadership, awards, committees, teaching and outreach, etc.

Résumés are commonly 1.5 - 2 pages long, and highlight those skills that are sought for in the job posting. You can rename and reorganize sections in the résumé so that it is a good fit with the job description. One-page long résumés may be requested at job fairs or specifically in a job ad; otherwise it is okay to use 1.5 – 2 pages.

Suggested resources for CV preparation:

Academic CV guidelines – from “The Professor is In”

<http://theprofessorisin.com/2016/08/19/dr-karens-rules-of-the-academic-cv/>

Industry or non-academic résumé guidelines at cheekyscientist.com

<http://cheekyscientist.com/industry-resume/>

and at Princeton University:

<https://careerservices.princeton.edu/graduate-students/exploring-options-outside-academy/non-academic-job-search-toolkit>

Preparing a research statement: These are for academic/research scientist positions. This document is typically 1-2 pages long and should describe your prior research from your Ph.D. and postdoc and lead into future research directions. It is important to provide a long-term perspective on where the field is headed and your vision for your future research career. Be sure to learn about the department or lab where you are applying and talk about how your work can tie in with that of your future colleagues.

Suggested resources for research statement preparation:

<http://theprofessorisin.com/2016/09/16/dr-karens-rules-of-the-research-statement/>
<http://www.academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/academic-writing-blog/vi-writing-the-research-statement-how-and-why-you-research-what-you-do/>

Teaching statement/philosophy: These are for academic positions at colleges or universities. This document is typically 1-2 pages long and should describe your general approach to teaching, philosophy about teaching, teaching experience, and what you hope that students will learn, in terms of skills as well as content. Including perspectives on new teaching approaches to reach underrepresented populations in STEM (e.g., flipped classrooms, active learning, etc.) can help show that you are aware of these new techniques, even if you have not used them yourself.

Suggested resources for teaching statement/philosophy preparation:

<http://theprofessorisin.com/2016/09/12/thedreadedteachingstatement/>
<http://theprofessorisin.com/2013/01/18/the-weepy-teaching-statement-just-say-no/>
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/tat/pdfs/teaching%20statement.pdf>
<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-statements/>
[Example of a teaching statement #1](#)
[Example of a teaching statement #2](#)

Cover letter

Do not underestimate the cover letter in job applications, in any sector – research, government or private industry. This document is extremely important and could be the difference in your application making the cut for further consideration. The cover letter should be no longer than 2 pages and should address how your experience and skills meet the requirements that they are looking for. It should not repeat your CV or résumé, but should be tailored to the job ad and show that you are a good match.

Suggested resources for writing an effective and concise cover letter:

<http://theprofessorisin.com/2016/08/26/why-your-job-cover-letter-sucks/>
<http://theprofessorisin.com/2014/09/05/those-12-sentences-evaluating-cover-letter-advice/>
<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/11/04/essay-cover-letter-academic-jobs>

Applying for a job

When conducting a job search, apply for any and all positions that you are interested in. Apply early and do not wait until the last minute to apply.

Learn as much as you can about the employer and what they aim to do in their work. Thoroughly read the website of the department or employer, and find out what they do and care about.

Tailor your documents to the specific job that you are applying to – to the institution and the position itself. For example, if the college cares a lot about teaching and asks for a teaching statement but not a research statement, find out what other faculty members are doing in their courses. If you are applying to a private sector job, learn about the employer, reference it in your cover letter, and speak to the skills that they are looking for, giving examples of where, when, and how you demonstrated those skills. Modify your résumé to fit the skills required and preferred.

Job interviews

For academic, research scientist, and industry positions, the job interview is very important in securing a job offer. Here is some advice from Kristen who went through this process recently:

Job talk

The job talk is an important component of the academic and research scientist interview.

First, you need to demonstrate proficiency in technical scientific research. Your talk will likely be a combination of your Ph.D. and postdoctoral research.

It is important to include a perspective on where your field is headed (emerging research, critical research problems, etc.) and your vision for your research career over the next 5-15 years. When preparing my job talk, I spent ~50% of my time constructing a story on the vision for my future research career.

The job talk is also a demonstration of your science communication and teaching skills. Make sure your talk is clear and logical. Speak loudly and clearly and do not go too fast. Show that you are excited about your research and cannot wait to tell your audience about it. When creating your job talk, make sure you are telling a compelling story and not just a walk-through of your prior research papers.

A final perspective from experience: During my job interviews, the job talk usually came in the later afternoon (~3:00 or 3:30 pm) after a long day of interviews/lunches with faculty/research scientists and students. Thus, my unofficial opinion is the job talk is a test of stamina as well. Before your talk, make sure to drink some water/coffee and get ready for an energetic and engaging presentation even though you may be tired after a long day of answering questions.

Faculty/scientist interviews:

At some point during your interview, you will sit down with groups or individuals of scientists/faculty members and they will ask you many questions. An example of some questions you may be asked include the following:

- How do you plan to get funding for your research group/students?
- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10, and 15 years?
- What is the most important emerging research topic in your field?
- What courses in our curriculum are you comfortable teaching and what new courses would you develop?
- Why do you want to be a professor?

Meetings with students:

If you are applying for a faculty job, you will probably meet with students in the department at some point. For me, this was the most informal part of my interview and was enjoyable. However, some things to think about are the following:

- What is your advising style (e.g., hands-on, hands-off)?
- How large of a group do you plan to have?
- Why do you want to be a professor?

Non-academic job interviews

Tips on how to best prepare for an interview, anticipate those tricky questions and negotiate salary <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/how-prepare-interview>

Resources for the job search, application, and interview process:

I highly recommend this book to all postdocs/graduate students looking for jobs in academia: *The Professor is In* by Karen Kelsky. I read through this entire book during my job search/application/interview process and it was immensely helpful. I have provided some links above to blog posts that eventually became her book, but I would recommend purchasing the book because there are many chapters in the book that are not on her blog.

<http://theprofessorisin.com/>

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0553419420>