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Make a career in research



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24 August 2017

Today's goals

- Understand the career landscape for researchers
- Learn strategies for your career transitions
 - Considering options
 - Taking action
- Recognize the importance of networks for career knowledge

About us

We come from totally different backgrounds and experiences, we both currently work with researchers (and have had experience ourselves in research!), and we have each experienced a number of career transitions and decision points

The career development process

- Understand options
- Understand the market
- Understand self
- Take action

Understanding options

- Where do I start?
 - What do I already know?
 - *Who* do I already know?
- Use all available resources for occupational exploration
 - Don't just read online, talk to people

Resources for Occupational Exploration

- Professional Societies
- [myIDP](#)
- [ChemIDP](#)
- [AAAS/Science Careers](#)
- [National Institutes of Health Career Service Center](#)
- [BioCareers](#)
- [Versatile PhD](#)

The versatile PhD



Even more resources for Occupational Exploration

- [New York Academy of Sciences](#)
- [Physics Today](#)
- [New Scientist](#)
- [Biospace](#)
- [Cell & Molecular Biology Online](#)
- [American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Careers](#)



Understand the market

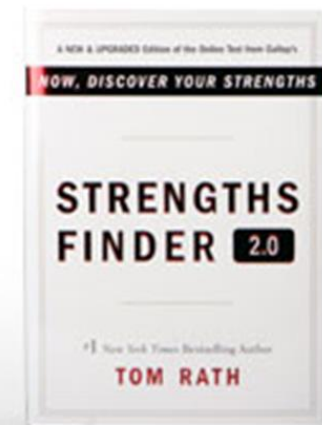
- Academic careers and ‘Plan B’
- Competitiveness of tenure-track roles
 - The ‘currency’ of academic job search
- Where are people with my background working?
- What is ‘valued’ about a PhD or a research background?
- Beyond academia: career options and personal choices

Know something about yourself

- Transferable skills
 - Peter Fiske: 'Put Your Science to Work'
- Skills you choose to use
- Work environment and culture
- Priorities
 - Can include: family, geography
- Values (includes compensation!)

Resources for self-awareness

- myIDP
- MBTI
 - (16personalities.com)
- [StrengthsFinder](#)
- SkillScan
- Birkman
- Individual career advising
- Experiential learning opportunities



Job search strategy and skills

- This is where ‘taking action’ happens
- Many researchers jump right to this step – whether it’s responding to a posting or hearing that a career is ‘something researchers can do’
- The earlier you begin investigating options, the better prepared you will be when it’s time to take action
- Pick a few fields to focus on
- Conduct informational chats

Job search strategy

- Remember quantitative (understanding your career options) and qualitative (determine careers where you will best fit)
- Important considerations: timing, visa, are you **mentally prepared?**
- Overcome any knowledge or experience gaps
 - Activities, education
 - Experiential learning (*maybe* internships, maybe something else!)
 - Understand what is right for you/find a balance
- Define your (SMART) goals:
 - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely

Job search strategy

- more questions from Peter Fiske

- "Will this change be any better than sticking it out where I am now?"
- "Am I taking a big risk?"
- "Will I have a problem getting a new job?"
- "Will my family, friends, advisors think that I have failed if I change directions?"
- "Will I think that I have failed if I leave current role?"
- "Will I have to go through this period of transition again at a later point in my career?"

Job search strategy

- Optimize any social media/profiles
- Update materials: CV. Resume. Hybrid CV/resume. Research statement. Teaching statement. Cover letters. Other documents
- You don't always have to perfectly fit the job description
- But you do need to tailor and target your materials
- Know what (and who) your resources might be

Decoding job descriptions

Policy and Projects Officer, Science & Technology Australia

Selection Criteria:

- Proven ability to take a strategic approach to successfully influencing government policy or decision-making.
- Highly developed communication skills, with experience preparing submissions to government inquiries, policy position statements and similar.
- An understanding of and enthusiasm for the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sector.
- Demonstrated ability to form and nurture successful relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to perform well both independently and as a member of a small team.

Decoding job descriptions

Assistant Professor, Department of Molecular Biology and the Hamon Center for Regenerative Science and Medicine (CRSM) at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

- Tenure track faculty position at the level of Assistant Professor. Seeking interactive individuals with strong research programs focused on mechanistic aspects of gene regulation, cell growth and differentiation, and stem cell biology, including the use of cellular and animal models to study human disease. Attractive recruitment packages, state-of-the-art core facilities, and exceptional laboratory space are available. UT Southwestern has a vibrant graduate program and an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration.
- Applicants should submit a curriculum vitae containing a summary of past research accomplishments, a statement of future objectives, and names of three references

Decoding job descriptions

Principal Scientist/Fellow, Technical Development, Novartis

- The Chemical and Pharmaceutical Profiling (CPP) group is seeking a highly motivated individual to contribute to the development of preclinical formulation of compounds in the parenteral space. The candidate must be capable of executing physical-chemical characterizations, chemical stability assessments, and pre-formulation development activities for parenteral drug candidates with minimal supervision.
- The candidate must demonstrate strong team spirit and promote knowledge exchange within and between teams and able to mentor associates as needed. Furthermore, they should be proactive in managing interactions between CPP's line function and other departments inside and outside of Technical Research & Development. The candidate must ensure alignment with other functions and 3rd parties, as appropriate. The role also requires timely communication of project information to the appropriate management level and ensuring the project team objectives are in alignment with functional objectives.
- The individual will work directly with research and development project teams to select the most suitable physical forms of compounds going into development and present formulation strategies for successful delivery of compounds for in-vivo and clinical studies. Secondary responsibilities include preparation of dosing solutions, outsourcing activities, evaluating novel formulation technologies, and/or contributing to clinical-stage development projects. Strong competency in physical pharmacy, pharmaceutical manufacturing and biopharmaceutics is required.

Investigate organizational mission/values

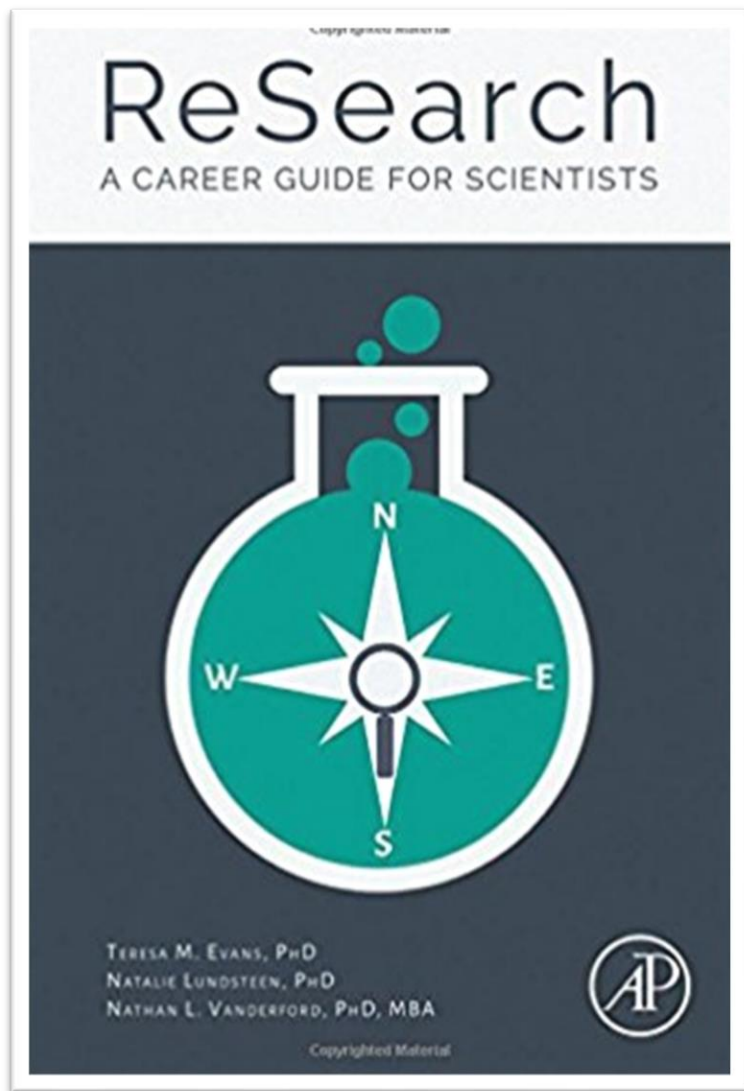
Improve cover letter with phrases, ideas that are specific to the organization/department where you are applying.

- Science & Technology Australia: 'About STA', 'News and Publications'
- University of Texas: 'Research', 'About us', 'News'
- Novartis: 'Our work', 'About us', 'News'

Prep for interviews

- Multitude of online/print resources
- People are still your best resource – they provide excellent ‘insider info’
- Back to ‘knowing self’: be able to convey true motivation and rationale for why you are applying
- Practice!

Books



- The Academic Job Search Handbook (Vick *et al*)
- The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph.D. Into a Job (Kelsky)
- Networking for Nerds (Levine)
- ReSearch: A Career Guide for Scientists (Lundsteen *et al*)
- Next Gen Ph.D.: A Guide to Career Paths in Science (Sinche)
- So What Are You Going to Do With That? (Basalla & Debelius)

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Questions?