



Career Transition Planning: A Checklist for Postdocs

Postdoctoral appointments are periods of professional growth to build a bridge from graduate school to a long-term career. As such, a postdoctoral appointment is temporary by design, with the expectation that postdocs will utilize their tenure to prepare for the next phase of their careers. Postdocs at Argonne have taken their careers down many paths, including research at a National Laboratory, technical support for research facilities, academia and industry. To be successful in making this transition, the postdoc must be proactive in making the necessary preparations and seeking guidance from supervisors and mentors. In turn, supervisors, mentors and the Argonne community should be supportive as postdocs seek their next position and prepare for future employment. Regardless of the next step, every postdoc should make sure their professional profile is polished and ready to go.

Job Seeker Material Checklist

- Update your master CV
 - The Master CV has your entire history from which you can pull information to make resumes and CVs tailored to specific jobs
 - Think about specific skills and accomplishments that demonstrate those skills
 - Consider who might be a good reference to address specific skills and experiences
- Create a cover letter template
 - Cover letters should be tailored to the specific company and the job to which you are applying
 - A master template may be useful to avoid starting with a blank screen each time you apply to a job
 - Academic positions will require additional statements of research and teaching philosophy
 - Tips for writing cover letters that address needs listed in job advertisement:
 - <http://tinyurl.com/jobs-ac-uk-coverletter>
 - <http://tinyurl.com/RibaudoNPA2011>
- Update your LinkedIn Profile
 - Red flags on LinkedIn:
 - No photo
 - No or very few connections
 - No summary statement
 - Tips for Creating a Profile and using LinkedIn for your job search:
 - <http://wagner.nyu.edu/files/careers/LinkedIn-Tips.pdf>
 - <https://vimeo.com/album/1752408/video/33371649>

- Outline your network
 - Who is in your immediate network?
 - Who are they connected to?
 - Who can write a good reference?

Time Line

Ideally, a postdoc should be thinking about the next career step from day one. Mentors and supervisors can help expand their postdocs' networks to enable successful career transitions. The responsibility is ultimately on the postdoc to be prepared well in advance and avoid "emergency" situations of having to find a job.

- 3-6 months before anniversary date:
 - Have a progress check with your supervisor
 - Meet with your mentor to update him/her on your progress and get feedback
 - Establish whether your appointment will be extended and for how long
 - Identify desired career path and research materials needed to apply
- At appointment extension/performance appraisal time
 - Establish goals for meeting both research objectives and career objectives
 - Update your job search materials as noted above
 - Review your contact list and network and begin making connections for potential job leads
 - Check professional society websites, job boards and LinkedIn for interesting positions
 - Make a list of potential companies for future employment
- 6 months in advance of appointment termination date
 - Evaluate where you are with your job search
 - Have you applied to any positions?
 - Connect with Argonne HR-Talent Acquisition to evaluate staff options here
 - Ask your supervisor, mentor and colleagues to make connections
 - Identify regional and national recruiting agencies that serve your discipline
- 3 months in advance of appointment termination date
 - Follow up with any outstanding job applications
 - If international status, do a check up to make sure all of your documents are in order
 - Do second round of applications, if needed
 - Make preparations for geographic move, if needed

Job Seeker Resources

- <https://blogs.anl.gov/postdoc/2013/04/17/postdoc-jobs/> --postdoc program blog with job postings and job board links
- <http://tinyurl.com/DolanSimpsonNPA2015> --presentation covering networking, online profile, Letters of recommendation
- <http://tinyurl.com/TesselCVResumes> --presentation covering resumes, CVs and cover letter tips for academia and industry
- <http://marketingforscientists.com/> --resources for science job seekers by an actual Scientist!
- <http://tinyurl.com/AAASToolkit> --How-to blog from Science Careers Magazine with links to resume, cv, cover letter and interview guides