



Argonne  
NATIONAL  
LABORATORY

*... for a brighter future*

## *Postdoc Workshop*

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U.S. Department  
of Energy

UChicago ►  
Argonne<sub>LLC</sub>



Office of  
Science

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

A U.S. Department of Energy laboratory  
managed by UChicago Argonne, LLC

## *Aren't they looking for a really strong researcher?*

- Disciplined bench scientist
- Depth of knowledge in an area
- Publications
- PhD
- Postdoc

Resume/Cover Letter/References

## *Resume/Cover Letter/References*

### ■ Cover letter guidance

[http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\\_magazine/previous\\_issues/articles/2002\\_09\\_20/noDOI.12222734545244148861](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2002_09_20/noDOI.12222734545244148861)

### ■ CV guidance

[http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career\\_magazine/previous\\_issues/articles/2006\\_10\\_27/noDOI.10341484552738357724](http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2006_10_27/noDOI.10341484552738357724)

### ■ Have two others read them

- One a grammarian
- One a science person

### ■ These serve a sorting function

## *Aren't they looking for a really strong researcher?*

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- Publications
- PhD
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And more –  
much more

## *So, why an interview (and a talk)? Listening at the edges*

- Can you describe your science?
- How do you problem solve?
- Are you able to follow science with which you are less familiar?
- Are you poised?
- Are you a good fit?
- Do you balance self-confidence with sharing of credit?

*A little discomfort now saves you from this later*

- The one minute talk -TMAY
- The interview questions
- The big red flags



# It's all part of the impression

- Your e-self
  - Facebook/linked-in/sci-link .....
- Your voice mail message
- Your e-mail address
- Setting up the interview – including travel and directions
- Think about how you are dressed
- Arrive early
- Bring hard copies that you can leave (in a labeled folder)

## *Your one-minute talk*

- Get used to saying your name
- I am currently a chemist at Argonne Lab where I'm/my group is working on xxxx.
- It's really interesting because it impacts xxxxxxxxxx.
- Most recently we've been trying to solve xxx problem.
- I'm also interested in xxxxx.

## *Handshake*

- Firmness

- Motion

- Eye contact

## *T MAY – noise – imagine you are at a conference reception*

- Introduce yourself to someone next to you
- Shake hands
- Give 1 minute of info about yourself

## *The Interview*

- Make sure you understand the question
- Answer the question – balance complexity with conciseness
  - Would you like me to explain further?
- Pay attention to non-verbals
- Behavioral interviewing

## *The interview – a practical exercise*

- Questions on notecards
- Take turns with the person next to you
- Give some feedback

## *Interview Questions*

- Find someone who will give you honest feedback
- Practice answers out loud
- Use the sheet in the back – and others

## *Questions ....and some thoughts about answers*

- Collaboration/Teamwork
- Flexibility/Change – additional areas of research interest
- Career growth/long term plans
- Proposal writing

## *Questions ....and some thoughts about answers*

- Personal discipline – multi-tasking capability
- Pre-interview homework
- Excellent taste in selecting problems

## *What if you get asked an illegal question? ...or just one that seems sort of stupid?*

- Mostly, someone just is not thinking
  - Not malice
- You have to decide...
  - Answer the question and move on
  - Answer the question – check out the place
  - Terminate the interview and walk out



- Showing a lack of interest in the interviewer's work
- Implying a greater contribution to team efforts than may be the case
- Being too needy in the travel arrangements
- Showing up late
- Giving long-winded answers to questions and not letting the interviewer ask follow-up questions.
- Making demands during the first interview.
- Unexplained gaps
- Bad mouthing former work experiences/advisors

- Have someone else review
- Rehearse
- Manage the details....it does matter
- Learn about the place and the person
  
- Everything is in play

## *At the back of the room*

### ■ AAAS Career Center

<http://php.aaas.org/programs/centers/careers/index.php>

- Phone interviewing
- Interview jargon
- Successful cv
- Successful cover letter
- Questions
- ANL scientists red flags
- AAAS Career Basics

- Science and Technology Policy Fellowships
- <http://fellowships.aaas.org/>
  - December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009 ....deadline