



## Getting a Postdoctoral Research Job: From References to Interviews

When a student has earned a PhD, the top degree in his or her chosen field, he or she is immediately faced with the question of what to do next. Having a doctorate will open many doors that were previously closed. The person who has studied intensely for the last six to eight years must now go on a search for postdoctoral jobs. Many of these people will look for work in academia as professors, while others will look into [postdoctoral research fellowship](#) positions that will require them to further their study in their field as well as make a difference in how the field is taught. Whatever a student decides to do after earning his or her doctorate, he or she must start with a job search.

A postdoctoral job is usually a great position in the research laboratory of a scientist who has earned the right to start a particular research program. Through a grant given by some scientific organization or private scientific investment corporation, these individuals will have a need to hire other qualified persons who have earned a doctorate and are now searching for jobs as postdoctoral research fellows.

If you choose to apply for these [research jobs for PhDs](#), you will need to do so while you are still working in school. The ideal time to apply would be during your dissertation period, because the earlier you apply, the more likely you are to be chosen. It is also important that you take this time to network with professors and other professionals who may have the inside scoop on postdoctoral opportunities. You may also find that some of these [fellowship jobs](#) are listed in advertisements in the school and local newspapers as well as on the bulletin boards of the departments offering these research jobs for PhD students.

Once you have found a postdoctoral job, you will need to do your homework on the position. The more information you have regarding this opportunity, the more likely it is that you will be properly prepared for what is expected of you. When looking for these jobs, you will find that the organization or association is typically very specific about its needs and will let applicants know quite clearly about what those needs are. In fact, the organization will typically advertise for their prospective employees in professional publications that cater to people who are doctorates or have a profound interest in those fields. You will also find that many of these programs post openings for such positions on the Internet, where they can reach doctors and people working on their doctorates all over the world.

[Fellowship jobs](#) may also be found among other postdoctoral positions such as faculty and administration jobs and other academic positions. A large number of postdoctoral research fellowship positions are found in the scientific and the

psychological fields, as well as in the areas of mathematics, religion, humanities, communications, social sciences, and history. This gives the postdoctoral individual a wide range of opportunities for possible fellowship jobs.

While preparing for a postdoctoral position, it is important that you have the proper documentation and have practiced what you will say in your interview. There are very specific items that most organizations ask for, such as letters of recommendation, your comprehensive curriculum vitae, your essay (if one is required), and an interview. By simply preparing this documentation in advance, you increase your chances of being chosen, because you will be able to focus on the additional requirements the organization may have and you will be among the first to deliver your application.

The process of obtaining letters of recommendation starts before you even attend graduate school. Along with your grades, any standardized test scores, and essays, you will need these letters before you are accepted to any graduate schools you want to go to. If you have a letter that is not particularly strong, you may want to replace it during your graduate school years. This is very important for your postdoctoral job -- having a well respected professional take the time to write a well thought out and detailed description of your qualities, the experiences you had or were a part of, and any unique skills you may possess, will go a long way towards getting you the position you desire.

The next step is creating a fantastic, professional curriculum vitae (also known as a CV). You will want to start as soon as possible on recording your academic accomplishments, awards, and distinctions. This document is like having a resume that documents more than just your life in general on two pieces of paper; it chronicles the life of your academic and sometimes professional career. It will contain detailed information, which includes your major, thesis, dissertation, published works, committees you served on, and any teaching experience you may have had. There may also be



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some additional information such as computer experience, job experience, grants you have won, research papers and projects, conferences you have attended or given, and any professional affiliations you may have. Many postdoctoral research fellowships place a great deal of emphasis on a person's curriculum vitae in their determinations of the best candidate for [research jobs for PhDs](#).

Another thing that will make your postdoctoral job process easier is preparing an essay and practicing for the interview.

While one or the other may not be required, you should be prepared for both, should they be needed. The essay is a great way to break a tie between two evenly matched candidates, as it shows which will be able to express himself or herself adequately. The interview, meanwhile, allows the program to see how you handle yourself in front of others. These steps are both a test of your communication skills and should be practiced and thought out long before you are required to do either.

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