



## Finding Available Postdoctoral Research Jobs

People undertake **doctoral research** for many reasons, they may have ambitions to become a college professor or they may be interested in applied research. Universities in particular are always looking for postdoctoral research fellows, as are some of the big research companies that are out there, and who often produce the statistics that you find in your daily newspaper – these can range from the number of voters for a particular candidate to how many calories you consume each day.

### Some Postdoctoral Jobs

If you are looking for a job as a **postdoctoral fellow**, research departments of Universities are a good place to start. Increasingly, colleges and universities are looking for lecturers who have completed their PhD, which can take anywhere between three and ten years, depending on whether you are a part-time or a full-time student. However, not everyone wants to be a lecturer, they may have an interest in pure research and publication, or depending on what broad discipline their doctoral research comes under, they may decide to go in for industrial research. Industries that rely on research to remain on top of the market, may very well be offering specific postdoctoral research jobs.

### The Work of a **Postdoctoral researcher**

During the summer months, universities often advertise research fellowships for people who have completed their doctoral studies within the last two or three years. As a fellow you may be required to undertake some teaching or supervision of postgraduate students, while you are furthering your research.

Depending on the University and that institution's particular areas of expertise you may be required, as a fellow, to undertake work on existing University projects, rather than continuing your own research. As a rule such projects would still be in the area of your expertise. Most Universities would expect you to publish a number of journal articles on the research you have undertaken, if not a book, as part of the actual contract.

If you have had enough of a University environment then you might want to apply for jobs in applied research. Some of these are put out by business companies who want someone to research the market for them and keep them up to date of anything new in that industry. There are also research agencies, which may put you on their books and

then outsource you when a particular research position comes up.

One of the problems for postdoctoral research is that most of the jobs (other than a tenured position at a University) are short-term contracts, ranging from as long as three to four years, to as little as a couple of months. If you want to gain a good overview of both local and national postdoctoral research jobs, then it is worthwhile doing an online search, there are websites that make it their priority to bring together all of the available postdoctoral jobs in the country.

### Freelance Postdoctoral Research

You may want to consider setting yourself up as a research consultant who undertakes freelance research. There are companies such as Cadburys and Joseph Rowntree, who specialize in sending out requests for research in a certain area. What this often means is that in order to apply you should be familiar with writing research bids.

When companies or Government Departments put out a call for research, they usually invite people to tender, that is to say to make a bid for the job. This is very similar, although more complicated and drawn out, to a builder or plumber giving someone a quote for the job. When you answer the tender you would need to do some desk research on the subject so that you know the context of the research, either you or a colleague should have some experience of the area of research. You would then be required to give a breakdown of how you would undertake the project, in what timescale you could deliver the report, and some estimated costing.

If you decide to go down the freelance route then you should first make sure that you are familiar with a number of research approaches and methodologies and have some experience of dealing with research reports. You should also have some experience of writing research bids, as most projects require an initial proposal. You may also need to think



## Postdoctoral Fellow Feature

about what you will do if the projects in your area are few, and far between, many freelance researchers find that they need to have a second job to carry them over the lean times.

Some of this may seem a bit disheartening, but if you are young and enjoy the process of research then there is always someone looking for a postdoctoral research fellow. You may be required to undertake pure research, i.e. academic

research that is then published in academic journals, or you may be required to undertake applied research. Applied research, is where, you apply the research principles and methodologies that you have learned, to solve a problem. Another good thing about postdoctoral research jobs, especially the freelance ones, is that there is no retirement age. Provided you can do the job, then you can carry on working for as long as you possibly can.

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