



Post-Doctoral Researcher Jobs in the Researching Industry

Postdoctoral research jobs in industry and national labs tend are often lumped into a one category, however this is a mistake. Academics tend to deride these options as venues in which science can take place but in which researchers have no freedom, are unable to publish their work and are controlled more than anything by business imperatives and corporate agendas. However, such blanket beliefs are full of holes.

Firstly it is important to point out that a national lab and an industry lab are not the same thing. They are quite different from one another. Secondly, government laboratories and industry laboratories employ the majority of postdoctoral researchers and [science PhD jobs](#) in America. This means that ignoring research opportunities in these sectors significantly limits your employment opportunities.

In many ways, there is no real difference to the postdoctoral research conducted in industry and government labs to that conducted in university laboratories. All researchers in these varied environments utilize science and technology to find solutions to problems and seek answers to important questions. The difference lies in the questions asked and the purpose of these questions. In industry, the activities are usually involved with product creation whereas in a government laboratory the projects will be governed by the agency sponsoring them. Despite the high mindedness of many academics who feel they have greater intellectual freedom to do pure research, they too are under funding constraints. They may not have to answer to management but they do have to answer to funding agencies.

The organizational structures in each of these research environments are actually similar to each other. It is common for post docs to work along side junior research staff and to be supervised by a senior researcher. However, in industry and national labs, the principal investigators have to answer to a superior such as a chief technology officer (in industry) or a division leader or lab director (in a government laboratory).

It is important to understand that while the research priorities may be defined for you if you take [PhD jobs](#) in an industry or government lab, you can still have a lot of freedom in how you approach the subject. In fact, you may well be encouraged to take greater risks in these environments than you would in a typical academic environment.

However, some of the criticisms of industry based research

post docs are valid. Industry and government labs approach the role of publishing differently to academia. There is no doubt that a solid record of being published will help your career in national labs and academic environments, although the type of publication and articles that are valued can differ significantly. However, for industrial research getting published may not be as important depending on the industry. For example, the biotech industry tends to reward scientists who publish regularly in relevant journals because it draws attention to company research efforts and attracts new scientific talent. However, publication in other, older industries may be less important. These industries may prefer to encourage their scientists to present papers at their own conferences which tend to be heavily booked by scientists interested in learning of new developments in their field. In other words, your career path in many industry environments will not be determined by your publication record, whereas it can be in government research and it definitely is in academia.

A distinct advantage of choosing an industry environment in which to do your postdoctoral research or obtain permanent employment is the availability of funding for the research. As long as your research fits the requirements of the company you will usually be able to gain additional money by simply just asking for it. In industry research environments, if you are a top quality scientist you should have no difficulty accessing the necessary resources to conduct your research.

The downside of doing research in an industry lab is that you will have less freedom to do your own research. This is also the case in national laboratories. The reason is that companies with research and development departments are producing and improving products and government laboratories have agendas. Your research needs to meet the needs of these organizations.

However, it is a bit of a misconception to say that academic research is without constraints and researchers can do whatever they want. All research needs funding and academic



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researchers depend on funding programs or awards from granting agencies. They too must adhere to the stipulations for the funding. In other words, very few researchers can do pure research for the sheer intellectual pursuit of it.

One of the reasons that academic researchers look down on their colleagues employed in industry is that they tend to have lighter workloads. It is common for university based researchers with their various academic requirements to work an eighty hour week. Scientists in industry and government labs, on the other hand, are more able to sustain a balanced life and are on the whole better paid to do it. The question you need to ask when choosing [PhD jobs](#) is whether or not you wish to teach as well as research. If you do, choose academia. However, if you wish to primarily pursue a research career then seriously consider industry and national labs as well as

the academic option. It is also important to be aware that both industry and government often contract work out to private contractors many of which are universities. In these cases, you can have the best of both worlds.

The choice of where to look for [jobs for PhD](#) or post graduate employment comes down to your personal priorities. In some scientific fields you will not have a lot of choice as employment is mainly in one area. In others, you will have reasonable choice between the three research environments and will need to consider your future career plans, income, expected work obligations, quality of scientific staff, types of research and intellectual independence. This is a personal choice which should be based on getting to understand the true employment possibilities available to you. Don't let yourself be influenced by someone else's bias.

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