



Assisting with Research in a Postdoctoral Fellowship

If you are pursuing your doctorate, perhaps you have been considering or have already been talked to about a postdoctoral research position. Depending on your area of expertise, postdoctoral fellow research can be of benefit not only to you, but also to your field in general. In a cancer research postdoctoral position, for example, you can use the research not only to your own benefit by advancing your professional career, but of course you can also help those with cancer beat their disease.

Should You Apply for a Postdoctoral Fellow Research Position?

Whether or not you apply for a [postdoctoral fellow research](#) position really depends on your interests and your area of expertise. It also depends on what you want to do with your career path. There are advantages and disadvantages to pursuing a postdoctoral fellow research position immediately after graduation, and this needs to be weighed against going on in your field without pursuing a fellowship position.

Where to Find Postdoctoral Research Positions

There are many different places you can look for postdoctoral fellowship research positions. In fact, one of the best places to look is right where you are going to school. Begin to research the opportunity for fellowships before you graduate. Network with your advisor and/or colleagues to determine where suitable fellowship positions might be. In fact, your advisor is one great resource you can turn to, since he or she can certainly vouch for you as someone who is truly dedicated to becoming an expert in your field. He or she may also be able to point you to positions that are available but not yet publicly posted.

If you cannot do this, or there are not any opportunities available via this type of networking, there are still many positions to be had if you look on the Internet and in professional journals. In fact, Internet job sites list positions that are available all over the country, so that not only should you be able to find a position within your area of specialization; you should also be able to find one close to the location you want to work in.

Keep in mind that these positions are quite competitive and that you may not get a position simply by applying for it. Nonetheless, they are available and you should apply for them if this is what you want to do as your next step in your career.

Advantages to Doing Postdoctorate Fellow Research

There are distinct advantages to doing postdoctorate fellow research in many fields, although this varies depending on your profession. For example, if your area of expertise is in cancer research, a cancer research postdoctoral position may or may not be of benefit to you, since your job as a whole may already focus on research.

Postdoctoral fellow research positions have an advantage, depending on your field of expertise, over other full-time employment simply because it does concentrate almost solely on research and nothing else. Therefore, a postdoctoral fellow position may be of benefit to you if, for example, you are in the field of academia. If you are in the field of academia, pursuing a full-time position as a professor will necessarily give you other job duties in addition to research, such as counseling students. By contrast, obtaining a fellowship in this particular field lets you focus almost solely on research for the time you are a fellow, usually six months to five years. This is certainly a luxury to be taken advantage of in this case.

Cautions

In other fields, the advantage is less clear. One of the reasons is because fellows make significantly less than their fully employed counterparts, even though the work that they do might be completely equal to that of full-time colleagues. Usually, a fellow makes about \$40,000 per year, depending on the field in question and the location. This is significantly less than other full-time colleagues in most fields. Sometimes, such as in the field of engineering, it is significantly less. In that case, it may be advisable to move on into full-time employment immediately after graduation.

In addition, some fields focus almost solely on research anyway, such as if your area of expertise is in cancer research. Therefore, if your particular passion is research, pursuing a postdoctoral fellowship in cancer research is not going to give



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you significant advantages, at least as regards research time when compared to a full-time position.

That said, though, you may have the opportunity as a fellow to pursue self study in other arenas, such as attending conferences or doing other areas of complete self study not limited to the lab. Opportunities vary and you will have to compare the advantages of doing a fellowship in your field of expertise versus taking a full-time position immediately after obtaining your degree.

Finally, it is likely that you will be at the mercy of your employer to the extent you will not be in a full-time position if you become a fellow. You may also not get the credit you deserve for the research that you do, since it may be published with other colleagues' names attached to it. That

said, though, this type of research-only position does give you the opportunity to have the resources to publish on what you have learned for years to come, even after you complete your fellowship. Obtaining a fellowship also can usually mean that you have the qualifications to advance further and faster in your career as compared to a colleague who has not had a similar fellowship.

Finally, if you should go the fellowship route and find it is not your liking, it will usually only last for between six months to five years. After that, you can move on into full-time work and use what you learned during your fellowship time to your advantage as you go through the rest of your career. Whether or not you decide to pursue a fellowship, of course, is your choice in the end.

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