

UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET

**EWB HUB X GRIPS – SESSION I 2019
6TH SEPTEMBER 2019**

TODAY

- Focusing entirely on where to look for academic jobs
- What are some of the things you need to know about
 - Australian post doc positions and the ladder up
 - USA and other international postdoc and lecturing positions
- Session 2 will cover applying for academic jobs
- Session 3 will start discussing non-academic pathways

- Open discussion!
- This topic is not new and I am not the expert. Others have done great talks on this too so do your research.

TERMINOLOGY

- Postdoc – postdoctoral (post PhD) researcher / research fellow
 - Pursue additional research, training, and teaching, in order to better your skills to pursue a career in academia. A chance to increase your expertise in a particular area.
 - Time limited – 2 maybe 3 years depending on funding
 - Some teaching but depends on the institution. Can also get research only positions (harder to come by). Will also likely supervise honours students
- Assistant Professor (USA and Continental Europe)
 - Not a full professor.
 - Contract lengths vary greatly – less than a year (gap fill) to indefinite but can lose position if you do not get tenure
- Lecturer (AUS and UK)
 - 40/40/20 split – research, teaching, and service. AUS university models are set up for combined positions (research and teaching). Rarer to find teaching only positions here

TENURE

- Tenure is a category of academic appointment existing mostly in the USA but other countries have similar terms / positions
- Continuous positions are similar to tenure.
- A tenured post is an indefinite academic appointment that can only be terminated for cause or under extraordinary circumstances. A somewhat guaranteed position.
- The holy grail!

AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC RANKS

- Level A - Tutor/Associate Lecturer/Research Associate
 - Most common entry for postdocs
 - Level A.6 is minimum for a person with a completed / conferred PhD
 - Level B - Lecturer/Research Fellow
 - Level C - Senior Lecturer/Senior Research Fellow
 - Level D - Associate Professor
 - Level E - Professor
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- Anything on a HEW (Higher Education Work) Scale is a professional, not academic, position!

POSTDOC

- You need to consider moving internationally
 - You won't definitely get to choose what you work on (that may be up to your potentially advisor) but you have more control over the positions you apply for and their topic area than you do over where those positions are.
 - Know what you will be hired for
 - Are you expected to work on a specific research project?
 - If so, will you have any time to spend on your own current lines of research?
 - Do you have any scope to shape the project?

If you find the ideal position at your current institution, go for it! You do not need to move for the sake of moving but you do need to explain your circumstances and choices.

- Know your potential supervisor
 - Speak to current / former students / postdocs / staff and ask around your network
- FIT
 - What can you bring that fits the project or lab?
 - What do you know that can add something new?

WHEN TO APPLY

- You do not necessarily have to have your PhD in hand to apply for jobs. You can apply early but note any visa requirements for an international move or pay differentiation.
- In Australia there isn't really an academic job "season", although for lecturers things are more likely to happen towards the end of a year for the next academic year, and for postdocs you might be best off looking at the beginning of the year as people tend to kick off their ARC grants.
- In the US, there is a tenure- track job "season" – most applications are due around September (or a little before or after), and most people apply for lots of jobs. Postdocs tend to be advertised there in Feb/March so that they can recruit people who missed out on the tenure-track market

SALARY

AUS POSTDOC WAGE

AUS

- The median salary of AUS postdocs is AU\$ 79,500.
- DECRA, Future Fellowships, Discovery Indigenous Awards, pays more with salaries starting from AU\$78,000 up to AU\$120,000
- UoM has a PhD entry point for Level A.6 positions at ~AU\$ 90,000.
- 8 steps in Level A. 6 steps in Level B and C. 4 steps in Level D.

USA POSTDOC WAGE

USA

- The minimum wage set by the USA Fair Labor Standards Act is US\$ 23,660.
- The median salary of USA postdoctoral researchers is US\$ 47,500 a year. (AUD \$70,000). Close to the starting salary set by the US National Institutes of Health for postdocs receiving their grants.
- Women tend to have worse postdoc salaries than men. Some evidence to suggest this is because women are less likely to negotiate more money when signing a contract.
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00587-y>

UK POSTDOC WAGE

UK

- The median salary of a UK postdoc is £30,000
- Someone who worked in England had a salary of £35,000 only increased to £38,000 (AU\$ 67,800) with industrial negotiation
- Multiple postdocs are common across all three countries but appear to be a bit more prevalent in the UK. Pay does not increase with more postdocs.
- https://www.glassdoor.com.au/Salaries/london-postdoctoral-research-associate-salary-SRCH_IL.0,6_IM1035_KO7,38.htm
- Cost of living is lower in the USA and UK

TIPS AND RESOURCES

ACADEMIC JOB WEBSITES

SPSP - social and personality jobs worldwide: <https://my.spsp.org/Careers/Job-Search>

Jobs.ac.uk – UK academic job site across all disciplines, sometimes will have Aus and EU stuff: <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/>

Chronicle of Higher education -

https://chroniclevitae.com/job_search/new?cid=UCHETOPNAV

THE unijobs – has an Australian academic job board:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/unijobs/listings/australia/>

Psychjobwiki – a crowd-sourced job posting website that refreshes each year. North-American focused, but will have international jobs as well:

<http://psychjobsearch.wikidot.com/>

Psychoneuroxy is an email list with academic psychology jobs:

<http://www.psychoneuroxy.com/>

ACADEMIC JOB WEBSITES

Set up a tailored search on Seek. Many Aus universities post there:

<https://www.seek.com.au/>

Sign up to university job mailing lists / notifications

SASP list / twitter will sometimes advertise jobs but don't have a dedicated website

Create a LinkedIn profile and look for jobs (unis advertise there too) also 'save' jobs you are interested in (even if not applying)

TWITTER

- #academicjobs #postdoc
- Make new friends and networks in the areas you are working.
- Collaborate with people you have never met face to face (but meet them at conferences!)
- Showcase your work more widely than pay-walled journals
- Job ads! Follow people you want to work with as jobs are now posted so frequently there!
- Twitter analytics is also a useful tool to know where you are getting exposure
- Word of mouth and networking is very helpful in getting jobs. Ideally you want the person you're applying to work with to know your name and work

GOOGLE ALERTS AND ANALYTICS

- Alerts
 - Set up a search term, e.g. “president jobs” and how often you want to be notified (once a week, every day) and when something new matches those terms, you will be notified.
 - Set up these terms for yourself, labs you are interested in, other researchers, etc so you can be notified when they do something new or something random is published about you
- Analytics
 - If you have a personal website or lab page, you can enable Google to track searches and clicks there
 - Will let you know how long people spent on each page, where they came from (IP address), how they got there (search or linked from elsewhere)

GRANTS AND FUNDING

- Most potential supervisors will welcome you applying for a grant with them
- Your options are dependent on country and university though so it is worthwhile deciding on who you want to work with first to see what options are available
- Do not just rely on postdocs being advertised. They get their money from grants too!
- Look into university grant offices, discuss with potential supervisors, google the country and postdoc grant.
- Be selective in who you contact! This will take work so be picky and tailor your emails to make sense to the work you are doing

GRANTS AND FUNDING

ARC DECRA (AUS)

You can look up successful grants via UoM

Open to ECRs 5 years post PhD. Only two shots at applying and more success the further out from your PhD (years 3 and 4)

<https://research.unimelb.edu.au/support/funding/arc/decra>

McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowship Program -

<https://research.unimelb.edu.au/support/funding/internal/mckenzie-fellowship>

UQ Amplify - <https://research.uq.edu.au/research-support/research-management/funding-schemes/uq-internal-initiatives/uq-amplify>

Most universities have their own open, postdoc funding. Look at the uni you are interested to see!

Fulbright Australia

<https://www.fulbright.org.au/applicants/australian-applicants/>

GRANTS AND FUNDING

Marie Curie Fellowship (Europe)

Competitive but a prestigious award and not solely dependent on publications, but more on development trajectory. More about explaining your research.

https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/actions/individual-fellowships_en

Post Doc Opportunities (USA)

A lot of grants can be tied to US citizens but look at ones that only require the PI to be a USA citizen (your supervisor) or ones that encourage international collaboration

<https://www.nsf.gov/funding/>

https://research.fas.harvard.edu/postdoc_opportunities

THE MORE YOU KNOW

- Demystifying the job market - <https://www.slideshare.net/JayVanBavel/2019-demystifying-the-job-market>
 - USA context only by Jay van Bavel and Neil Lewis Jr.
 - The Professor is In: <http://theprofessorisin.com/>
 - Has a blog with useful tips and insight. Book is a very good resource too
 - Chronicle Vitae: <https://chroniclevitae.com/news>
 - A blog with articles about academic career things
 - The Thesis Whisperer: <https://thesiswhisperer.com/>
 - Career and thesis tips tailored to an Aus context
 - A collection of Science articles on postdocs: <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2015/06/choosing-your-postdoc-position>
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ASK QUESTIONS!

- Don't be afraid to actually contact the contact person for the job for more information! Doing so might actually work in your favour.
- Sometimes open area jobs will mention what they're looking for, often saying something like "applicants with strengths/research interests in X,Y, Z are particularly encouraged to apply." This does NOT necessarily mean that you won't be considered if you don't meet those criteria and that you shouldn't apply, there is probably just a bit more of a hurdle for you to jump.

Cold-contacting for postdocs: People have gotten postdocs by cold-emailing potential advisors (or meeting them at a conference) and indicating that they would love to do a postdoc. If you do this, be tailored (don't send heaps of these, make sure it's clear how you fit that particular lab) and ask if you could apply for a grant together to fund your position.

**WITH THANKS
TO:**

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THE INTERNET

GOOD LUCK!