

Life after the Ph.D.: applying for jobs and establishing your career

G.S. Lynch, Basic and Clinical Myology Laboratory, Department of Physiology, The University of Melbourne, VIC 3010, Australia.

While training for a Ph.D., much of your focus is rightly placed on your laboratory research and your writing skills become honed for the specific purpose of completing a thesis and publishing scientific papers. But there are other aspects to your career development that are perhaps often neglected, despite being some of the most important skills you are likely to have – namely, knowing how to write job applications and knowing how best to prepare for job interviews so as to secure your career in research.

Understanding how best to prepare your *Curriculum Vitae* and cover letter for your prospective employer will optimise your chances of being short-listed for interview. There are also important things to consider when choosing a laboratory, addressing selection criteria for advertised positions, and selecting appropriate referees that will provide a fair and balanced assessment of your capabilities.

If short-listed, there are some important do's and don'ts when it comes to preparing for interview. Most importantly, do your homework on the laboratory of choice and identify what skills you can bring to the group as well as how that group can help you meet your goals. If research is your passion and you are keen on pursuing a research career, goal setting will be important for your future success.

Personal and professional goals are not 'one size fits all' but unique and individual journeys. Regardless, there are some general principles that can help in setting short- and long-term goals that are realistic and achievable. High on the list should be a clear plan for productive research and a realisation of your research independence. This could involve ultimately leading your own laboratory or being a key researcher in a larger team. Despite its ups and downs, a career in research and education can be highly rewarding and, most of all, enjoyable!