

Demystifying STEM Career Opportunities

Abstract: Research-focused graduate students and postdoctoral fellows seeking permanent career opportunities commonly encounter a STEM job market landscape that can offer a wide breadth of opportunities; however, identifying opportunities that offer the best “fit” and navigating the application process can, on occasion, seem unexpectedly challenging. This presentation aims to provide realistic and honest guidance to students and postdoctoral fellows who are either planning or within the process of a STEM career job search. First, the landscape of career opportunities and pathways available to higher education students is surveyed through a detailed contrast of the skillsets that may be sought after for positions in academia, national labs, and industry. Special consideration is then offered to illuminate the value, potential roles, and sought-after experience of higher education graduates who pursue research opportunities within industry. Finally, a detailed discussion regarding the application process is presented that provides insight into how job requisitions are created, the processes that may influence candidate down-selection, and the rigor required to prepare documents for STEM applications in academia, national labs, and industry.

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