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Careers in science publishing

Kinga Hosszu
Outreach Director

University of Louisville, July, 2015

Twitter: @KingaNYC
Email: kinga.Hosszu@f1000.com

Where will a biology PhD take you?

Arrows represent annual fluxes. Circles are total current workforce numbers.



86,000

current US biology PhD students

Every year, 16,000 students start biology PhD programs

9,000 Receive PhDs

7 years

average time to degree

1,900 to 3,900 foreign-trained PhDs start postdocs

720 Leave the US

30% do more than one postdoc¹

37-68,000

current postdocs

70% (5,800) Postdoc

? years

US PhDs spend an average of 4 years, but others must spend longer to account for number of postdocs.

37% drop out

30% (2,500) Don't postdoc

A faculty job is an "alternative" career.



At this rate, <8% of entering PhD students will become tenure-track faculty. Yet, 53% rank research professorships as their most desired career.³

15% of postdocs get tenure-track faculty jobs within 6 years post PhD.²



29,000

current tenured and tenure track faculty



17,000

current bio PhDs doing non-science jobs



22,500

current industry researchers

20% get non-tenure track academic jobs within 6 years post PhD.²

25,000

current non-tenure track academic positions



24,000

current non-research, science related jobs



7,000

current gov't researchers

10% of former postdocs (up from 2% in 2010) consider themselves unemployed.¹

Sources:
 1 - Science Careers Annual Postdoc Survey (2012) <http://goo.gl/nmVYCN>
 2 - doi:10.1038/472276a <http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110420/full/472276a.html>
 3 - Sauermann & Roach 2012 PLOS ONE; DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0036307
 Unless otherwise noted, NIH Biomedical Workforce Working Group (2012)



POST-GRAD CAREERS IN SCIENCE PUBLISHING & COMMUNICATION

- Journal Editing
- Medical Writing
- Science Journalism
- Science Outreach

JOBS AT THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

Editorial duties are detailed and stretch the scientific knowledge:

- perform prepublication checks on articles
 - is this science?
 - readable?
 - adequate protocol information?
 - appropriate consent and ethical requirements?
 - plagiarism?
- liaise closely with authors
- write reports, articles, critiques and summaries
- plan and organize projects
- research and commission features and new titles

EDITORIAL CAREER PATH

Victoria Aranda

PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology



Experience

Senior Editor

Nature Publishing Group

March 2012 – Present (2 years) | Greater New York City Area



Associate Editor

Nature Publishing Group

July 2010 – April 2012 (1 year 10 months)



Assistant Editor

Nature Publishing Group

January 2010 – July 2010 (7 months)



Postdoctoral Fellow

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

September 2004 – August 2009 (5 years)



Postdoctoral Fellow

Stony Brook University

April 2004 – September 2004 (6 months)



Protein sorting mechanisms, mouse genetics of lipid receptor chaperones

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EDITORIAL CAREER PATH

Steven Lokwan

PhD in Neuropsychopharmacology

Background



Experience

Director of Operations

Faculty of 1000

April 2008 – Present (5 years 11 months)

Project Director

Faculty of 1000 Biology

January 2006 – April 2008 (2 years 4 months) | London, United Kingdom

Managing Editor

Faculty of 1000 Biology

January 2002 – December 2006 (5 years) | London, United Kingdom

Commissioning Editor

Faculty of 1000 Biology

August 2000 – December 2002 (2 years 5 months) | London, United Kingdom



SO HOW DO YOU GET AN EDITORIAL JOB?

Show that you have great communication skills

- neat, error-free, professional emails
- don't have a silly sounding e-mail
- cover letter a must

Display professional purpose

- what is special about the journal/publisher?
- you want to leave research?
- why a publishing career?

Be concise and specific

- But don't write a massive essay!
- don't talk about love of writing or communicating science to the public

No experience necessary

- science writing degrees are not good for this type of career
- publisher prefers to mentor you from the start

Be ready for tests

- eye for detail test, manuscript test, writing tests, editorial test

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CAREERS IN SCIENCE WRITING

- technical writer - requires a lot of science writing expertise (grants, papers, methods, etc)
- science journalism/writing for the public
- policy writing
- consult other science writers

SCIENCE WRITING CAREER PATH

Jennifer Deleon

PhD in Molecular and Cell Biology



Experience

Freelance Science Writer

New York Academy of Sciences

November 2012 – Present (1 year 4 months) | Greater New York City Area



Doctoral Research

Stony Brook University

January 2011 – Present (3 years 2 months)

Utilized advance molecular biology techniques to identify novel roles of Class I Pi3K



SCIENCE WRITING CAREER PATH

Ed Yong
PhD in Biochemistry



Experience

Freelance journalist

Various

September 2007 – Present (6 years 6 months)

Science writer published in Nature, the BBC, New Scientist, Wired UK, the Guardian, the Times, Discover, The Scientist, the BMJ, CNN, Slate, the Daily Telegraph, the Economist and more.

Creator of award-winning science blog Not Exactly Rocket Science

Head of Health Evidence and Information

Cancer Research UK

September 2004 – July 2011 (6 years 11 months)



Leads the Evidence and Information team, a group of six people with scientific backgrounds who ensure that the charity's information on cancer prevention and early detection is evidence-based and up-to-date

Edits and fact-checks writing from across the charity for consistency and accuracy, including press releases, web content, publications, copy from corporate partners, health campaigns, policy statements and more.

SCIENCE WRITING CAREER PATH

David Saltzberg

PhD in Physics

- Thesis work on the mass of the W boson
- Postdoc at CERN
- faculty member at UCLA
- Recipient of multiple awards and fellowships
- science consultant for CBS's The Big Bang Theory: checks scripts, advises producers, writers, actors, set decorators, prop masters, costume designers etc. on scientific accuracy
- writes [The Big Blog Theory](#) blog to explain the science behind each episode



SO HOW DO YOU GET A SCIENCE WRITING JOB?

- Writing experience during PhD often isn't adequate
- Journalism training/experience is expected
- Blogging/tweeting/social media
 - Guest blog:
 - F1000 blogs
 - Sciencescape blog
- Networking

SCIENCE OUTREACH

Main goals: increase product awareness and public engagement

- plan, develop, and execute strategies to reach individual users
- develop relationships across departments internally
- Develop and lead global programs
- Travel to key meetings and site visits to deliver compelling presentations
- Attend conferences and participate as a speaker or panelist

GENERAL WORK TASKS

- Meetings and conference calls
- institute visit
- Conferences
- Organize and lead discussion groups
- Communicate to/with researchers
 - Email
 - Meetings
 - Blog posts
 - Press releases
 - Social media
- At conferences: talk to people to find out what's new in different fields

SCIENCE OUTREACH CAREER PATH

Christine Buske

PhD in Cell Systems Biology/Neuroscience



Experience

Head of Outreach & Relationship Development

Springer Science+Business Media / Papers

January 2014 – Present (2 months) | London, United Kingdom



Lead Marketer ('Papers Genius') for Papers

Springer Science+Business Media / Papers

January 2013 – January 2014 (1 year 1 month) | London, United Kingdom



SCIENCE OUTREACH CAREER PATH

Lou Woodley

PhD in Gene expression and microbiology (thesis
unsubmitted)



Experience

Communities Specialist - nature.com

Nature Publishing Group

April 2011 – December 2013 (2 years 9 months) | London, Cambridge, NYC and online



Product Manager - Nature Network and nature.com blogs

Nature Publishing Group

November 2009 – April 2010 (6 months)



Product Development Manager

Nature Publishing Group

July 2009 – November 2009 (5 months)



Graduate Intern

Macmillan

November 2008 – June 2009 (8 months)



Managing Editor

BlueSci magazine

June 2004 – October 2006 (2 years 5 months)

Managing Director / Sales Director

Loughborough High School - Young Enterprise Scheme

1996 – 1997 (1 year)



THE OUTREACH TEAM AT F1000



DO WHAT YOU LOVE!



Brian May,
guitarist of Queen
PhD in Astrophysics



**Brian Keith
"Dexter" Holland,**
guitarist of
Offspring
PhD candidate in
Molecular and
Cellular Biology



**Mayim Hoya
Bialik, actress**
PhD in
Neuroscience



Angela Merkel,
politician
PhD in Quantum
Chemistry