

PREPARE FOR THE FAIR

A multi-step plan for doctoral students and doctoral degree holders taking part in the **JOB MARKET FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS**.

Much like the workplace, the **Job Market for Young Researchers** provides opportunities first and foremost to those who are driven to succeed!

BASIC DO'S & DON'TS:

- Take the job fair seriously. The **Job Market for Young Researchers** is a business event and should be treated as such.
- Pre-register in order to receive all event-related information (start and end time, floor plan, etc.)
- Research the companies and their vacant positions: a continuously updated list of participating employers is posted on the *Doctoral Schools* [website](#). Investigating companies allows you to identify (and eliminate) potential employers and prepare for an initial, pre-screening interview. Employers greatly appreciate enthusiastic and well-informed applicants.
 - Make an A- and B-list of companies and organisations. The A-list includes those companies and organisations you want to talk to first; the B-list contains those companies and organisations you want to talk to if you have enough time.
- Even if you uploaded your CV in advance, always take with you an appropriate number of polished and well-thought-out (and proofread!) CV's that show off your expertise, skills and experiences. In addition to the CV's, your job fair kit should contain a quality pen and a notepad to write down extra information.
- Arrive early at the **Job Market for Young Researchers**:
 - Make sure you arrive before the fair officially begins to give yourself extra time to park, check in and survey the layout of the fair. On occasion companies leave before the end of the fair and you want to make sure you are able to speak with your choice employers. Moreover, recruiters are known to be more attentive and focused at the beginning of the fair.
- As you may only have a brief face-to-face meeting with a recruiter, prepare an effective elevator pitch to introduce yourself. However, avoid sounding like a broken record! Impress recruiters with your seriousness, focus and strong credentials and ask pertinent questions that will yield relevant information.

For example,

- What qualities and characteristics do you look for in an applicant?
- What are common career paths for doctoral degree holders within your company?
- What kind of projects are newly-employed doctoral degree holders typically involved with?

Recruiters will want you to expound on your career objectives, strengths, willingness to relocate, relevant skills, etc. Carefully consider these commonly asked questions in advance. Keep in mind that not all recruiters are trained scientists. Communicating technical information to a non-technical audience is an essential career skill.

- Collect relevant brochures and information. Do not go overboard with your consumption of promotional giveaway items.
- Remember, first impressions count:
 - Dress well: you do not want to be the only person in jeans and a T-shirt
 - Switch off your mobile phone
 - Do not walk into the job fair eating or drinking
 - Watch your manners and mannerisms: stand up straight, do not fidget, speak up and speak clearly, make eye contact and shake hands firmly
 - Be assertive and approach each recruiter with fresh enthusiasm
 - Always smile. Smiling shows gusto and confidence
 - Ask for business cards
 - Thank recruiters for their time

The **Job Market for Young Researchers** is your chance to be evaluated on more than just your CV. At the fair you will be able to stand out in person in a way that you might not on your CV. Effective communication skills as well as appropriate work-related social skills are critical. The job fair is the recruiter's first opportunity to judge you not only as an expert scientist, but also as a potential colleague.

- Do not cruise the company booths with friends. Interact with the company representatives on your own.
- Network during any extra time you have:
 - Talk to other job fair attendees while waiting in queues, during workshops and receptions and share information, job-hunting ideas, job leads, etc.
- Follow-up is crucial:
 - Send polite and professional follow-up letters expressing your interest in the company and desire for a second interview. These letters should be sent within 2-5 days after the event.
 - If necessary, include an updated CV.

GOOD LUCK!

The Ghent University Doctoral Schools