Industry Researcher

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What is Biotech Industry Research?

Do you love research but aren’t sure about continuing to do research in academia? Biotech Industry Researcher positions allow you to continue to work at the bench, but instead you work for a company. These positions tend to be a great opportunity to continue scientific research and make a contribution to the development of new drugs for patients. For a brief overview of how the biotechnology industry emerged, check out this article by Paul Diehl [1].

Toby Freedman’s book ?Career Opportunities in Biotechnology and Drug Development [2], provides a great overview of the biotechnology industry and the types of positions available, including researcher positions. A shorter guide to some of the biotech positions can be found from PhD Career Guide [3]. For more information on all of the non-researcher jobs that surround the bench work in the biotech industry, see our Business of Science [4] page.
What does a career in Industry Research look like?

If you are considering making the transition to a biotech industry researcher position, you will want to know what it’s really like to work in this field. Check out this article from Lisa Belmont [5] to find out more.

There are many reasons why people love working in biotech, from the applied nature of their work to the team-based atmosphere. In this article, Lauren Friedman provides some insight into Why People Love Working in Biotech [6].

Thinking about making the switch? Here’s a look at how to break into biotech [7].

How does research in the Biotech Industry compare to Academia?

Choosing between industry and academia [8] can be a tough choice [9]. In this article from ScienceMag Mythbusting for Academics: Considering a Job in Biotech/Pharma [10], Emma Hitt tackles some myths about the biotech industry such as industry being the easy road, lack of opportunity to publish in industry, lack of intellectual freedom and curiosity in industry, and the potential of biased results in industry. Mark Terry also tackles this question in the article Industry vs Academia: Which is the better place to work as a life scientist, [11]? In this editorial, David Searls provides Ten Simple Rules for Choosing between Industry and Academia [12].

To explore where you might fit, download the Science Career Trends eBook [13]. Certain types of people will enjoy working as an industry researcher. Here are 10 signs you’ll like Biotech [14] from Susanne Kennedy. Hear from Klodian Stafa [15] and Erika Check Hayden [16] about several people’s journeys from academia to careers in industry.

How are startups different from established companies?

Scitable by NatureEducation says Large companies tend to have more funds available, are often more stable, and hire people with a wide range of skills. Small companies are often looking for very specific skill sets to complement their small teams. If you are thinking about working in a startup, here’s 7 things you should know [8]. Is a job at a startup right for you [17]?

Should you do an Industry Postdoc?

When deciding between a postdoc in industry versus academia, there are many factors that must be considered, for example, the best way to break into industry, whether you might be
closing yourself off from academia, resources availability at a company, and salary. In this article [18], Laura Bonetta discusses these issues and more. If you want to know what a postdoc industry might be like, check out this article by Beryl [19] Lieff [19] Benderly [19] from ScienceMag and consider reading more from Grace Wong about why you should consider post-doctoral training in industry [21].

What are some job titles for Industry Researcher positions?

In a few companies the job titles are analogous to the professor hierarchy in academia. In other companies, they have created more descriptive titles for researchers. You must do your homework regarding the company by searching their website, their publications, LinkedIn [22] and UCSFConnect [23] entries and by talking with your contacts. Here are some common titles:

- **Scientist titles:**
  - Associate Scientist, Scientist, Junior Scientist, Senior Scientist, Principal Scientist
  - Scientist I, Scientist II, Scientist III, Scientist IV
- **Other titles:**
  - Senior Scientific Researcher
  - Postdoc

For additional job titles and descriptions check out MassBioEd's Departments and Job Descriptions in a Biotechnology Company [24].

Get experience

Many companies hire interns, which can help boost your skills [25], although this isn't a requirement for getting a position in industry.

Here is a list of some of the internships available:

- Amgen [26]
- Becton Dickinson and Company [27] (BD)
- Boeing [28]
- Genentech [29]
- Genzyme [30]
- GlaxoSmithKline [31]
- Merck [32]
- Novartis [33]
- Biotech-careers [34] can be used to search for internships

Examples of Organizations that hire PhDs
All of the organizations listed above, and many more. For more, see TheLabRat.com and BioPharmaGuy.

Find your community

- Biospace
- Ernst and Young: Global biotechnology reports
- LinkedIn
- Women in Bio (WIB)
- Women in Life Sciences (WILS)
- Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)
- UCSF Startup 101
- UCSF Investment club
- UCSF Biotech Connection Bay Area (BCBA)
- Xconomy
- Know of another? Let us know! Email Allyson Spence

Is an Industry Researcher position a good fit for you?

Good question! Find out by completing the AAAS's My Individual Development Plan Assessment Tool, which OCPD co-created. Answer three assessments and it will calculate and compare your skills/interests/values responses to key factors for 60 different career paths within 20 different career categories that are options for you as a scientist (including consulting!). Click on the image to the left to see a sample report.

Ready to start your job search?

Here are some tips to get started. You also want to look for available jobs on a Job Board:

- OCPD Job Board
OCPD has more resources to help you with your job search here and here.

Take a look at some example job descriptions:

Scientist I, Medimmune.docx

Scientist ? Oncology, Amgen.docx

Senior Scientific Researcher- Personalized Cancer Vaccines, Genentech.pdf

**these are meant to serve only as examples. Actual job listing may be closed.

Applications and Interviews

Additional resources to help you with your application here and interviews here.

Biotech industry researcher workshop series

Check out our resources for job hunting, networking, resume, interviewing, job talk, and negotiation

Want more help? Talk to a career counselor

Schedule a 1:1 counseling appointment for PhDs