

# Recruiting Personnel to your Laboratory

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*September 11, 2008*



**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

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**Rule #1:**

**Timing is EVERYTHING!!!**

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## Rule #2:

**ALWAYS obtain reference letters**

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## Rule #3:

**ALWAYS interview the candidates**

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**Rule #4:**  
**(most important!)**

**ALWAYS TRUST YOUR GUT!!!**

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## Research Technicians—”Green”

- No preconceived notions
- You train them to perform experiments the way they should be done
- Interested in learning about research
  - this is their desired career path
  - ultimately want to attend grad or med school
  - usually highly motivated
- Six month probationary period

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## When to advertise—”Green” Tech

- Graduation is generally in May
- Start advertising for these in March
- Write up a job description; tasks definitions
- Hook up with HR
- Find out current salary ranges for RS06 and RS07 positions in your dept., IUSM
- You want to be able to offer a fair salary based on knowledge

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# Research Technicians--"Experienced"

- Advertising timing is flexible
- Should be able to do things already
  - should require less supervision
- Can you "teach an old dog new tricks"?
- Will command a greater salary
- Why are they looking elsewhere?
  - PI's grant not renewed
  - Not happy in current job
  - Pay is not competitive
  - Looking for a new/greater challenge
- If it is a transfer at IU—no probationary period



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# Research Technicians—other thoughts

- Confidentiality of candidacy
  - if they make this request, you have to respect it. If you want to take the candidacy further (i.e., extend an offer), then seek HR's help (you need specific approvals, such as a background check, etc.).
- Seeking other references
  - if you have colleagues or other acquaintances who know this candidate, ask them about him/her (see above comment re confidentiality)
  - the more information you have about someone's qualifications, the better choice you can make
- Training schools for Lilly technicians

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# Research Technicians—more thoughts

- Whether you have a seasoned person or a fresh face with some undergraduate research experience as your technician, as a new faculty member, be VERY hands on (i.e., work in the laboratory yourself)
- When interviewing candidates, let them know you actually do work in the laboratory and that it is important to you
- Oversee AND participate in the technical aspects of your laboratory efforts!

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# Postdoctoral Fellows

## Places to advertise—go for FREE sites

- Newscientistjobs.com (NOT free for employers)
- Naturejobs.com (free to post jobs)
- *Science, Nature, etc.*
  - Not cost-effective for junior faculty
  - You'll get the same cadre of applicants as the free sites; save your \$\$\$
- Meetings in your discipline
- National organization websites (e.g., ASV)
- Luck (e.g., spouses, etc.)

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## Postdoctoral Fellows—continued:

- Their “letter of interest” to your lab should address your work and how they would fit in
  - otherwise, they are probably targeting EVERYBODY and you are just one of many (interest is questionable)
- Phone interview: difficult to gauge their candidacy
  - cannot read “body English” over the phone
  - usually, it’s the only choice for international candidates
- J1 vs. H1 (for international candidates)
  - depends on their experience
  - with an H1, you are responsible for paying their moving expenses back home if they leave
  - my experience: offer them a J1; if they’re good, you can convert to an H1 down the road

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## Postdoctoral Fellows—continued:

- Think about giving them a one year probationary period in your offer letter—it gives both of you an “exit strategy”
- Have a list of interview questions prepared (not just one or two)
  - What do you know about my work?
  - How well do you take direction?
  - Where do you want to be 5 years from now?
  - Did you ever have a problem with your boss? What kind and how was it dealt with?
- Listen carefully to their answers to your questions during the interview

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*An example of a Postdoctoral Fellow offer letter is included at the end of this Powerpoint presentation*

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## Research Associates

- “Permanent” employees
  - same benefits, etc., as you and me
- Some hold Master’s degrees
  - ”SuperTechs”
- Many already have Ph.D.s
- The same set of rules apply
  - know what you are getting
- *Etc.*

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## Assistant Scientists/Asst. Res. Prof.

- Unless you are a well-funded, tenured investigator, forget it
- Faculty-level
  - can vote on matters for department
- Usually do not teach
- Usually expected to obtain their own grants
- Often treated like an advanced postdoc
- Rules for recruiting same as for postdoc



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# Graduate Students

- Opportunities to present your research program can be limited due to new IBMG program
- You need to hook them in two minutes (or less)
- Why is your work so “cool”?
- What kind of contributions would you expect them to make in the field?
- How long should it take them to graduate?
- How many papers would they need to graduate?
- What things would be important for them in a rotation?
  - Getting along with labmates
  - Project is really exciting and/or could lead to something very interesting as a dissertation project
  - They realize your lab and you as a mentor would be a perfect fit for them in their ideal dissertation research experience

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## “Red Flags”—all levels

- “I have longed to work in your esteemed laboratory for some time...”
- Did not stay in a job at least one year (or had multiple jobs)
- Current supervisor not listed as a reference
  - if you are really interested in this candidate, you have to ask him/her about this
- Candidate gives evasive (or vague) answers
- Strong interest in position not clearly evident
- Reads from a script in a phone interview (usually quite obvious)

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**Best of luck recruiting!**

**I hope these guidelines help you in the process**



## DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
School of Medicine

March 5, 2008

Postdoctoral Candidate, Ph.D.  
Top-Notch Research Institute  
University of Somewhere College of Medicine  
1234 Double Helix Street  
Any Town, Country

Dear Dr. Candidate,

Pending final approval from Dr. John Doe, Chairman, Department of Medical Sciences, it is with great pleasure that I offer you a Postdoctoral Fellow position in my laboratory, to commence on March 5, 2008.

Based on the NIH guidelines with your number of years of postdoctoral experience, your beginning salary, excluding fringe benefits, will be \$--,000 per year. The initial appointment will be for a period of one year and further extensions will be contingent upon your performance and availability of funds.

It is clear from your background, experience, and research interests that you will be able to contribute significantly to our understanding of the role of special molecules in specific biological processes, as part of my group.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Indiana University and Indianapolis to begin your postdoctoral fellowship.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Sallie Mae Smith, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Medical Sciences  
Indiana University School of Medicine

cc: Dr. John Doe  
Ms. Jane Smith (Department Office Manager)  
Ms. Cindy Lou Who (Department Business Manager)

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