

The 1st IFT PhD student/postdoc mentoring event



EXCELENCIA
SEVERO
OCHOA



Instituto de
Física
Teórica
UAM-CSIC

Our panel



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Questions related to grant writing/applications:

1. What are the main characteristics of a good postdoc/RyC/ERC application?
If you are in a panel, what do you expect to see in a good application? What should one avoid writing?
2. Into how much detail should one go into the research statement?
How realistic/detailed should a research proposal for a grant application (~5 yrs) be? Is it rather important to show coherence and innovation or do you have to give a detailed research plan for all envisioned projects for the full funding period?
3. How do you make your application stick out? What are common mistakes?

Questions related to panel decisions/inside info:

1. Are decisions in panels “random” or is there a “structure”?
Do CVs/statements/letters etc really matter or is it just papers/h-index? What do you look into when hiring someone (postdoc/tenure track/permanent)?
2. For PhD applications, what is the main criteria for selection? What are the facts that give more points to the application?
3. How do I show leadership as a PostDoc for a grant application?
How important is student supervision and lecturing experience for securing a position?
4. Many institutions affirm that some policies for equality are being applied, e.g. hiring female researchers and people from underrepresented minorities, but how much does it really matter over academic merits?

Questions related to job openings/career planning:

1. How to efficiently search for job openings/grants?
Does it really matter if you had a year or two out of academia whenever you're looking for postdocs?
2. How many papers are reasonable for a PhD thesis to give you an opportunity for getting a postdoc in a good institution?
3. Is there a clear career path in academia? Does one even exist? If yes, how to pursue it? How much mobility is too much/too little?
How to efficiently network in big conferences etc?
4. What were the “gold points”/highlights of your career and how did you get there?
How do you strategically plan your postdocs to maximize the chance of securing a permanent position in your home country/favorite country?

General questions on science/outreach related issues:

1. As theoreticians, how do you answer questions such as what is the impact of your research for society?
2. How important is outreach for an application? Does it really matter?

Questions related to personal issues (stress, mental health, 2-body problem etc):

1. How to deal with the “two body problem” in academia?
2. How did you deal with the stress in the job? Pressure to publish, short contracts.
Have you ever wanted to quit academia? What made you continue?

Prof. Smith's
RULES
For Advising
Grad Students (& Postdocs)



by B. Smith, Ph.D
A Piled Higher and Deeper Guide