

How to get a postdoc

Robert McGehee



Forum on early career development
PHENO 22, 5/9/22

Disclaimers

I'm not an expert!

A **lot of info** on these slides (and too many words)

But, far from comprehensive

Hopefully, these will be useful “notes”

Please ask questions!

How to get a postdoc

The **Prep**

Research

Network & Engage

:

:

The **Process**

General Info

Application Components

:

:

How to get a postdoc

The Prep

~~Research~~ → easy!



The Process

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⋮

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Network & Engage

Conferences ([PHENO](#), [DPF](#), [PPC](#), [April meeting](#), [SUSY](#), ...)

iNSPIRE has a [list](#)

Talks (@ conferences, seminars, workshops, ...)

“I’ll be on the market this Fall...”

Collaborations

Mutual contacts to **cold emails**

Network & Engage Case Study: Snowmass

“Snowmass...will define the most important questions for the field of particle physics and identify promising opportunities to address them...over a 10 year timescale, in the context of a 20-year global vision for the field.” –[Snowmass21 website](#)

Network & Engage Case Study: Snowmass

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Q: Why does Snowmass **attract** so many physicists?

Network & Engage Case Study: Snowmass

“Snowmass...will define the most important questions for the field of particle physics and identify promising opportunities to address them...over a 10 year timescale, in the context of a 20-year global vision for the field.” –[Snowmass21 website](#)

Q: Why does Snowmass **attract** so many physicists?

A: Because it's **s(n)o(w)mass-ive!!!**

Network & Engage Case Study: Snowmass

LOIs, studies, **white papers**

Frontier meetings, Seattle community summer study workshop

Snowmass Early Career ← **the place for you!**

Snowmass coordination (liasons)

Core Initiatives

Core Initiatives Highlights

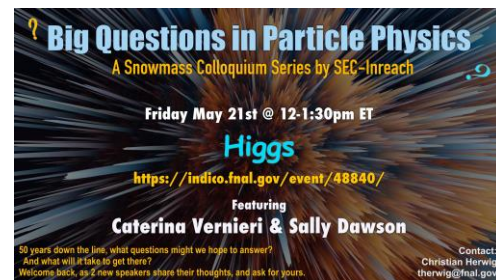


Survey

- Collecting opinions/experiences on careers, physics outlook, workplace culture, visa policies, COVID-19, & more [[FNAL News](#)]
- Wrapped in August, synthesized results to come
- New survey from Snowmass Particle Physics Education group !

Inreach

- Very successful & well-attended “Big Questions” Colloquium Series
- Ex. Higgs physics, neutrino low energy excess, Muon g-2, future colliders, dark matter [[YouTube channel](#)]



DEI

- Co-organizing DEI Town Halls with Community Engagement Frontier
 - June 2021: “[Navigating Mentor/Mentee Relationship](#)”
 - Sept 2021: “[Supporting Early Career People in Academia](#)”



Dr. Marcela Hernandez



Dr. Cagliyan Kurdak



Dr. Brooke Russell



Dr. Sara Simon



Dr. Sweeney Windchief

LTO

- [LOI](#) submitted in Comm. Frontier & white paper underway
- Continuing “Big Questions” with a model for highlighting EC issues/topics/speakers

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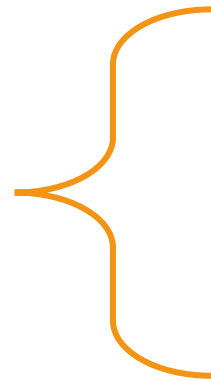
General Info

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General Info

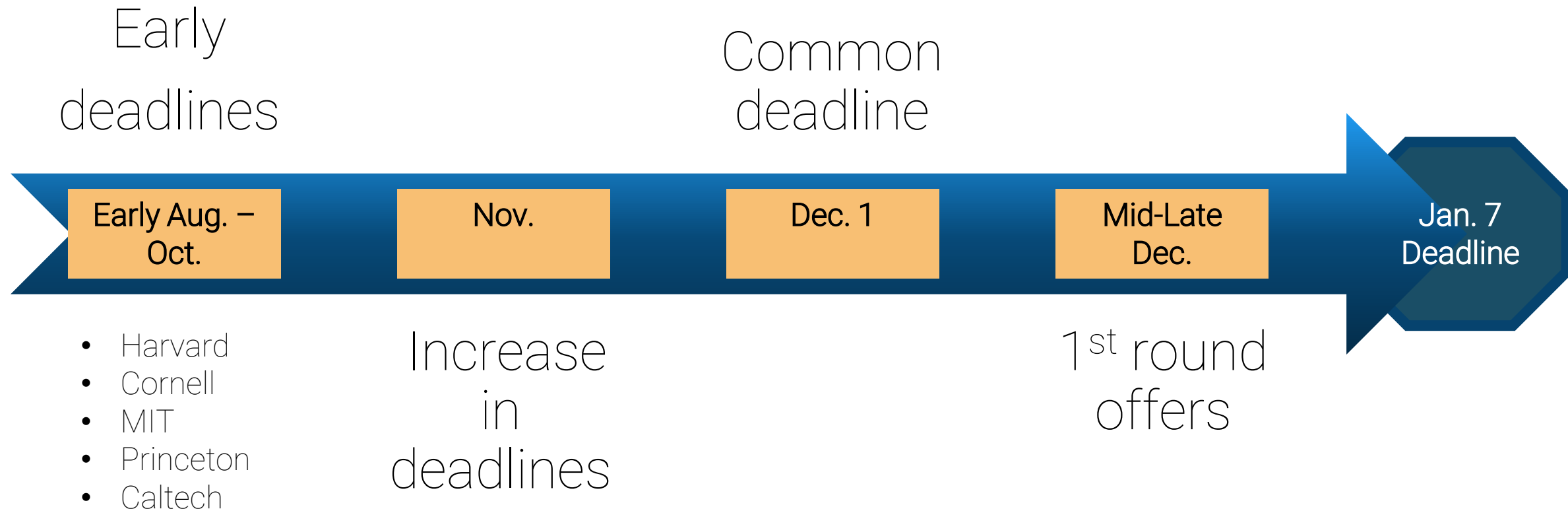


Timeline

Resources

Tips

Timeline



Resources

[AcademicJobsOnline.org](https://academicjobs.org)

Most used; postings & applications all-in-one

labs.inspirehep.net/jobs

Job postings if they don't accept apps through AJO

[HEP "Rumor Mill"](#)

Offers, declines, & acceptances

Tips

Start early!

letters, research statement, CV today

Get organized!

Could apply to 100+ places

Find deadlines early and make a calendar or spreadsheet

Search for early fellowship and non-AJO apps individually

Tips

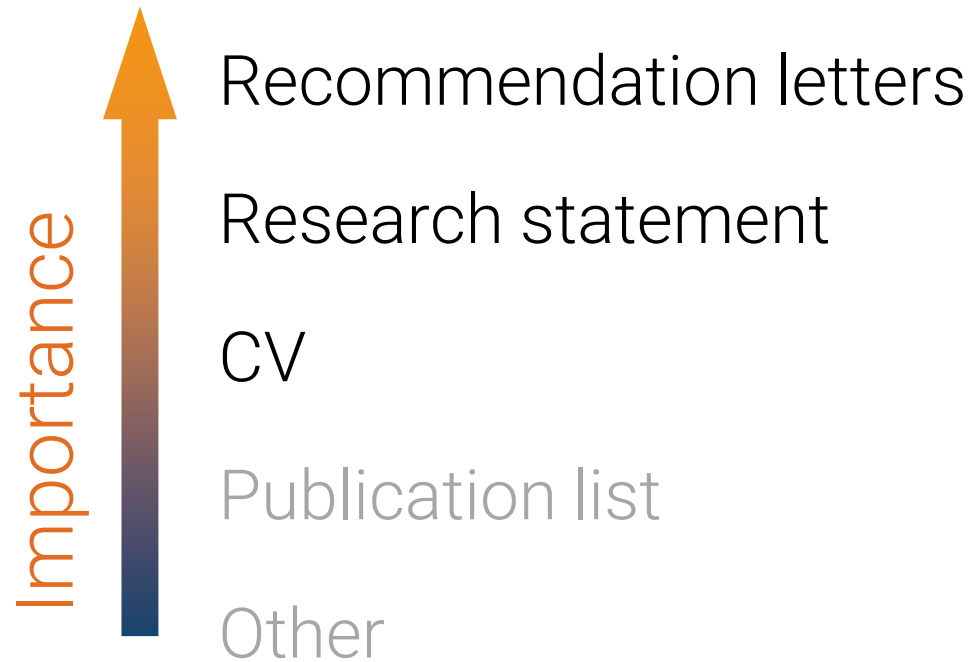
Apply early (unless you're putting more papers out)

After an offer or two, **contact your top choices**

Shortlist can convert to an offer quickly

Start comparing options early; can get offer Jan 6 or later!

Application Components



Recommendation letters

3+ letters; ideally, 3 from **“senior scientists”**

People **familiar with your work** and abilities

Ask early! 1st deadline in Aug

Provide research statement & CV

Provide **links & instructions** early, especially for specialized applications

Research statement

2 pages, single spaced (not including refs)

Brief intro: your research, interests, and selling point

Body: 1st past research, 2nd future directions & interests

OR address future directions alongside past research

Brief summary to recap all research interests

Research statement **Start Early**

Ask postdocs for their **past statements**

Takes time to **critically assess** your research and strengths

Why was your work **interesting**? What are your **skills**?

Get feedback from senior scientists and even fellow students

Go through **several drafts**

CV

Name & contact

Education

Fellowships & Honors

Talks (invited, conference, public)

Publications (doesn't hurt)

Teaching

Schools or Workshops

Community or Professional

Activities

Professional Skills

CV

Look at CVs of people in your field (e.g. faculty websites).

Important & necessary info **first**

Make it **easy to read** & find info the committee wants

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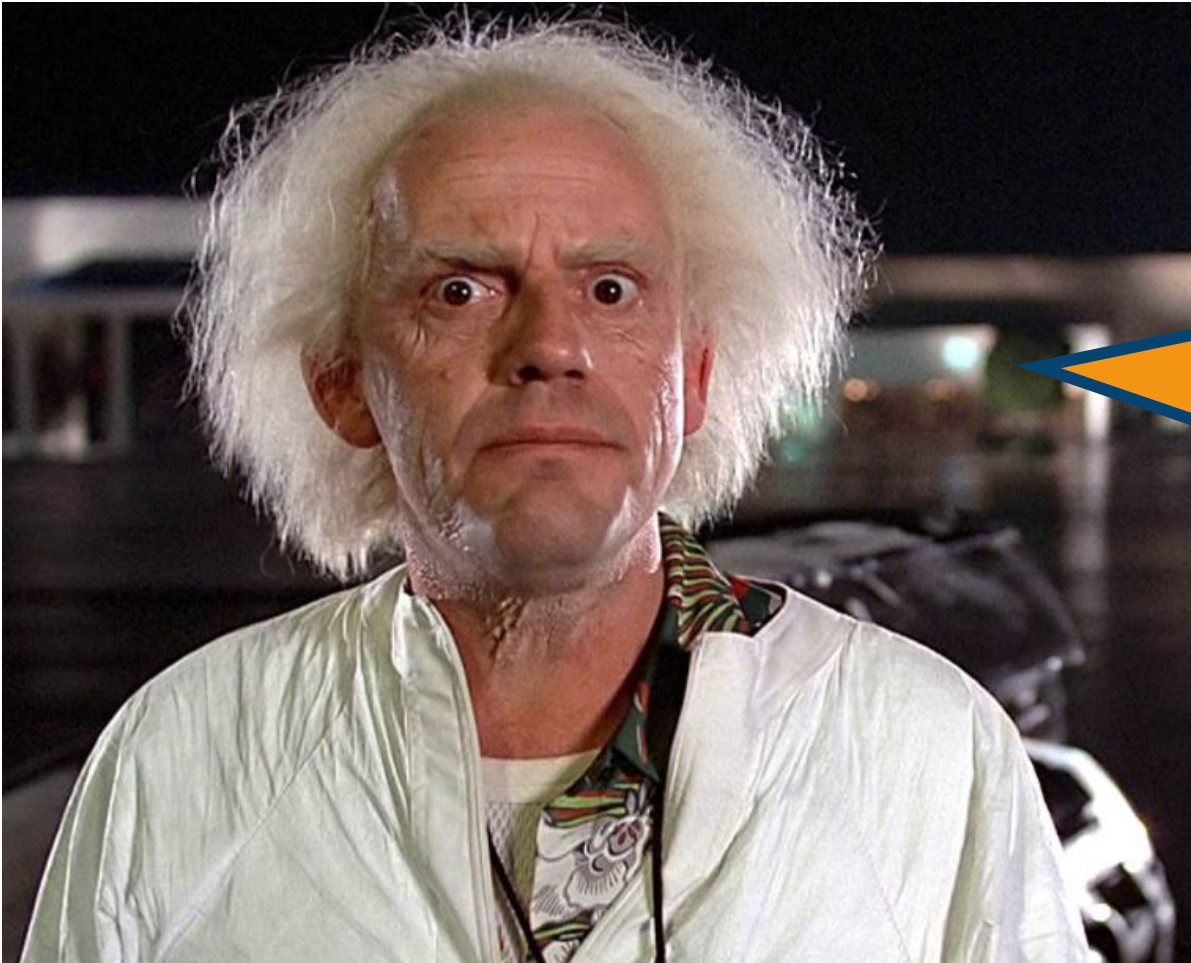
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Good
Luck!

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

title: "The Post-doctoral Sense, pt. 3" - originally published 11/26/2008