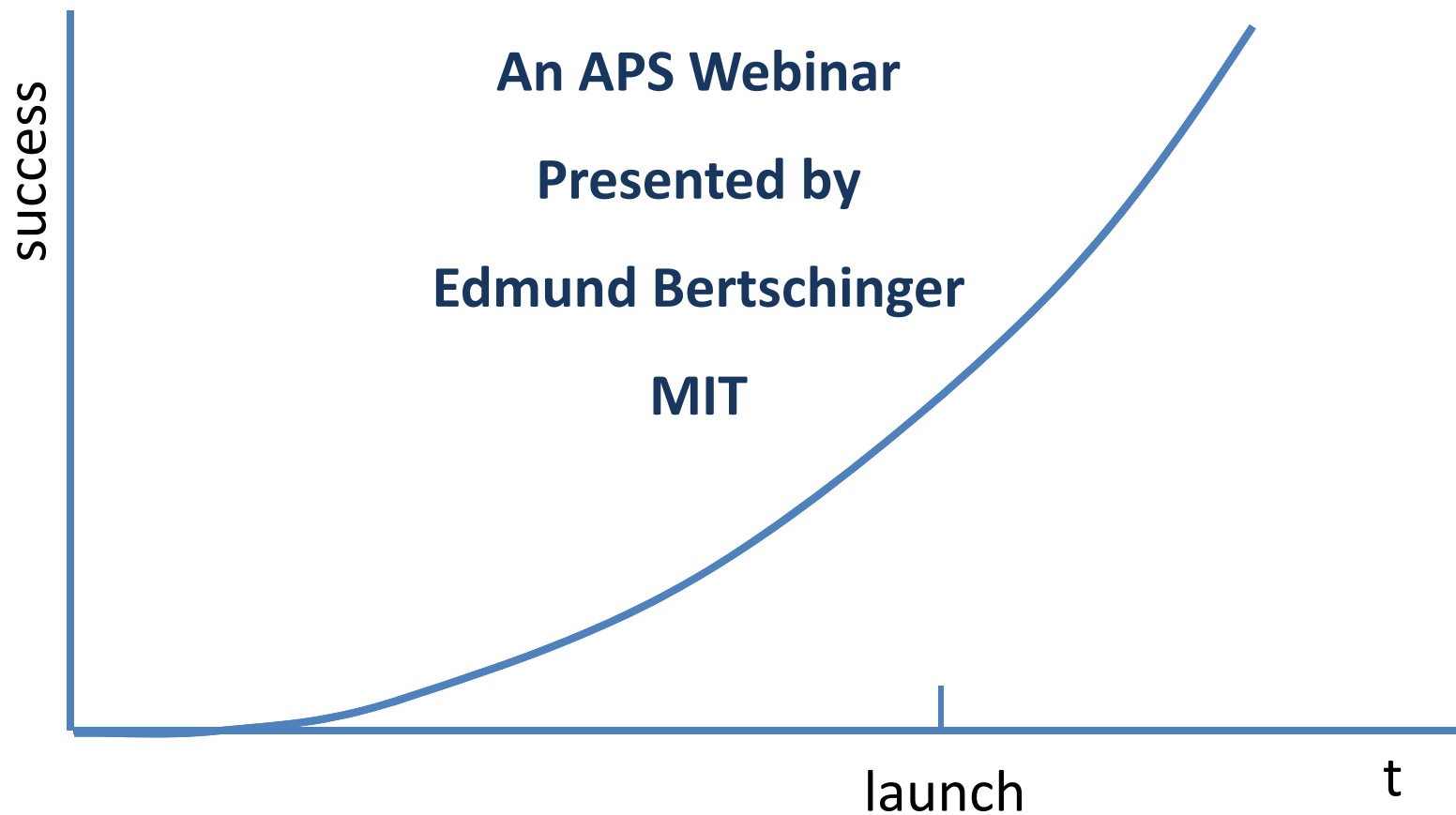


Launching Your Postdoc



Two years or more before PhD

Publish several research articles, with more than one senior scientist

Gain experience with grant/fellowships

Apply for NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, etc

Assist your supervisor with grant applications

Attend conferences/present your work/meet potential employers

One year before PhD

Assemble list of potential postdocs and non-academic jobs (visit careers office)

Make a speaking/visiting tour of potential postdoc hosts (ask your research advisor to fund)

Start your CV, publications list, research statement

Find the relevant rumor mill pages, blogs, etc. in your subfield

Types of postdocs

Prize Fellowships – arrange nomination

Berkeley Miller, MIT Pappalardo, Harvard Society of Fellows, NASA (Hubble, Einstein, Sagan), Princeton, etc. – highly competitive!

Grouped institutional fellowships

One-stop shopping at many universities

National Labs

Research Associate with faculty on grant

All are good – find the right match!

Application deadlines and numbers

Respect them!

Prize fellowships: Beware September nomination deadlines

Grant-funded positions can be advertised any time!

How many to apply for? 20 is common, >50 too many

CV elements

<http://www.ocs.fas.harvard.edu/students/gsas/cv-guide.htm>

- Contact information
- Education
- Positions/experience (including teaching, service)
- Honors, grants
- Relevant skills (languages, software, ...)

Research Statement

Respect limits; if unstated, keep to 4 pages max.

2 pages previous research

1-2 pages proposed future research

11pt font or larger, 1" margins or larger

Letters of Recommendation

Typical:

PhD supervisor

Second faculty member at same university

Faculty/senior researcher at other institution

Contact potential referees at least 2 months before earliest deadline. Give them drafts of your CV and research statement.

Keep them informed about progress, and be sure to thank them!

Prepare for interviews

Practice your elevator speech, your 10-minute summary, your 45-minute talk

Show interest and enthusiasm

Phone/skype interviews becoming more common

What to look for

Fit to research group

Independence to pursue your own ideas (ask!)

Department culture, work/life balance

Salary: > \$50K is typical outside life sciences

Research funds for your use (travel, computing, ...)

Benefits: medical/dental/vision/life insurance, moving expenses (to, not from), child care options

Good mentoring, annual review, career development opportunities

Other issues

Visa process: after offer is made, contact employer HR department to request J-1 or H-1B

Housing: Does the employer help find?

Taxes: Postdoctoral fellows are non-employees, must pay estimated taxes quarterly

Dual career couples: flexibility helps

With >1 offer, negotiate! Extra year, more research support, salary

These matters vary widely with country

Tips

Send referees reminders: 2 weeks, 1 week, 3 days, 1 day

Treat every talk like a job talk – rehearse well!

Talk with recently hired postdocs

Try not to let the application process take all your energy
– you need to finish your thesis!

Resources

<http://www.nationalpostdoc.org/graduate-students>

<http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/>

<http://www.physicstoday.org/jobs>