

A timeline for a postdoc plan

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	Things to consider	Questions to ask yourself	Strategy
Mid 4th year PhD	I'm getting close to finishing my PhD.	What is my career field? What do I want to do for living?	Think about what you want in life and what a "normal" day would look like in your dream job. Define what your dream job is. Do you need a postdoc? For the purpose of this exercise we will assume yes.
End 4th year PhD	I have defined my career field and I have a general idea of what I want to do. I have to prepare since I will be finishing my PhD in one more year.	What do I have to do to get my dream postdoc position?	Research labs that you admire research-wise and that you think could be a good fit for your professional interests and for advancing your career.
	My advisor and committee members have gone through this. They are good resources.	What specific questions and advice can I ask my advisor and committee members?	Ask your advisor to suggest people that could be good postdoc advisors. Ask your committee members for general advice on pursuing a postdoc.
Early summer 4th year PhD	I have to contact people to ask them if they are interested in sponsoring my postdoc proposal.	Can I video chat with them? Are we going to the same meetings this summer? Perhaps arrange a quick coffee break to chat?	Email them and suggest them to video chat or meet with you if they're going to the same meetings you are. If they are close-by

			maybe you can arrange a visit.
Mid-summer 4th year PhD	I have to start writing my fellowship applications and contacting people that I might be interested in working with.	Within my research interests, what would be a good postdoc research proposal and how would it advance my career and increase my chances of getting my dream job?	Do lots of reading, write proposals, get feedback from colleagues, advisor, family, friends, etc.
Late-summer 4th year PhD	I'm starting my 5 th year and I need to wrap up many things.	How much time will postdoc preparation take from my PhD research?	Make a plan and stick to it. Advice: writing proposals, learning new topics, emailing, and meeting people takes A LOT of time. Make
Early 5th year PhD	Submit fellowship applications.	What are my chances of getting a fellowship?	Make sure to let your sponsors know that you would like to work with them even if you don't get the fellowship. Ask them to keep you posted if they have funding for a postdoc. Advice: I told them this in my last email after I submitted the proposal that we worked on together. I thanked them for their help and support and told them to keep me posted if they had a job opening.
Mid 5th year PhD	I only have a few months left before graduating.	Chances are you're still waiting to hear back from some fellowships. What is my plan B?	Think of all your choices and act. Look for job postings and keep emailing people that you might be

			interested in working with. Apply to jobs if you think you would be a good fit.
Late 5th year PhD	I'm graduating!	Hopefully you're happy and fulfilled with how things worked out. Sometimes things work out and sometimes they don't, and you have to be prepared. It's always good to have a plan C, D, E..... and Z.	