
A Career in Academe

Design Document

4 hours, 50 slides

Version 1.0

Submitted by

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A Career in Academe: Design Document

The ACS Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Scholars and the Department of Career Management and Development are jointly sponsoring a project to update and possibly upgrade the series of modules now titled "Preparing for Life After Graduate School" (PfLAGS). The working title for this revised program is "ACS Career Pathways."

An initial Learning System Architecture (LSA) for the new learning system has been developed and is in process of final revision. The purpose of this document is to describe the instructional design for one of the "tracks" programs in the learning system, tentatively titled "A Career in Academe."

Assumptions

The workshop described in this document was shaped by the following assumptions:

- The workshop will involve about four hours of learner contact time.
- The workshop will be led by a trained facilitator, in most cases an ACS career consultant who has completed the required leader training program. One of the more experienced career consultants will be delivering the pilot version of the program.
- The optimal size of each group will be 12 to 15 participants, but the workshop will be designed to be successful with as many as 25.
- The workshop will need to be able to be delivered either as a standalone module, as a follow-up to the "core" program in the learning system ("An Introduction to Career Pathways"), or as a component of another ACS offering, such as ACS on Campus, for example.
- The two main sources of content for this workshop will be the sections in PfLAGS on the academic pathway and *And Gladly Teach*, referred to as AGT below.

Audience

- Unlike the audiences for most other components in this learning system, the audience for this component will not include B.S. level chemistry professionals. The audience will most likely have (or be about to finish) a Ph.D. in chemistry or chemistry-related discipline.
- There may be a component developed at some later date that addresses the career track of teaching science in the K through 12 system. That component is out of scope for present purposes, however.

Instructional Objectives

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Describe the main types of academic institutions and the steps in the typical academic career.

- List the main steps in the academic hiring process, and describe how a candidate can strengthen his or her position to compete for an academic job.
- Compare a curriculum vita with a resume, and list the main parts of a typical vita.
- Describe the critical success factors for surviving the first year in an academic job.
- Analyze his or her own goodness of fit for an academic career in general, and for a given type of academic institution in particular.

High-Level Overview

The workshop will be structured in terms of an Introduction and five main sections:

- A Career in Academe. The types of academic institutions and the types of academic jobs. The typical career path. Advantages and disadvantages of a faculty career.
- Crafting a Curriculum Vita. The structure of the CV, and the difference between the CV and the vita. Examples of effective CVs. How to write a statement of teaching and research philosophy. Creating a high-impact cover letter.
- *Preparing for* Making Myself More Competitive. What a job candidate can do to increase his or her attractiveness in the academic job market.
- Getting Hired for an Academic Position. What academic recruiters are looking for, and how you can better position yourself for a faculty position. Finding an opening, the recruitment process, getting and accepting an offer.
- Being Successful: Your First Year on the Job. What to expect during your first year, and how to position yourself to succeed.

A Career in Academe: Detailed Design

The rest of this document describes the proposed workshop in more detail, learning activity by learning activity.

Introduction (0:15)

- Assessing My Own Values and Interests (individual to pairs activity, 10 minutes). Participants will start the workshop by completing two fairly simple assessments: one that requires that they prioritize their values, and a second that prioritizes their interests and skills (based on their academic experience thus far in their career). These two assessments will be used during the workshop to help them determine both the goodness of fit of an academic career for them, and to help point them to what type of academic institution might be most appropriate.
- Workshop Overview (presentation, 5 minutes). The session leader will provide a brief overview of the purpose and structure of the workshop.

A Career in Academe (0:35)

- The Path and the Steps (presentation, 20 minutes)

- The types of academic institutions and characteristics of each (Research-intensive universities, master's, baccalaureate, associate and specialized (see Carnegie Classification))
- The typical career path. Tenure and the tenure process. The basis for tenure decisions. Typical academic salaries. Non-tenure teaching positions.
- The life of a typical academic. Teaching, research, and service and the relative proportions in three type of academic institutions (shown in the Academic Phase Diagram from AGT):
 - Ph.D.: Teaching, research, service expectations
 - B.S.: Teaching, research, service expectations
 - A.A.: Teaching, research, service expectations
- CPT standards
- The Upside and Downside of an Academic Career (small group activity, 15 minutes). Participants are divided into three small groups. Each group is assigned one of the three types of academic institutions. The groups are then asked to develop a list of the general advantages and disadvantages of a career in academia, and a second version of the list for their assigned type of institution.

Crafting a Curriculum Vita (1:20)

- Who Makes the Cut? (opening activity, 10 minutes). Participants are given three vitas in the PG. They are allowed one minute per vita and have to pick the one they would call in for an interview. One of the vitas will serve later in the module as the "right way" example, another will be a wrong-way (structure) and the third will be wrong-way (style and format). At the end of three minutes, the facilitator calls for a vote through show of hands. The activity is debriefed in terms of how quickly they needed to make the decision, and what made them decide one way or the other.
- The Structure of a Vita (presentation, 15 minutes). This presentation describes the main sections of a vita, and what information each contains:
 - Personal information
 - Education
 - Research experience
 - Teaching experience
 - Other employment experience
 - Other professional activities
 - Honors and awards
 - Publications

*Does academic
classroom this fast?
Need dept description
as well*

- Presentations
- Proposals submitted
- References

The facilitator will use the right-way vita to illustrate all of these structural issues.

- Critiquing an Ineffective Structure (small group activity, 10 minutes). Participants return to the wrong-way example from the opening activity that had structural problems, and discuss with the group what the structural problems are, what effects they have on the reader, and how a job seeker would correct those defects.
- The Format and Style of a Vita (presentation, 10 minutes). Guidelines for format and style. How to format a vita for electronic submission. General appearance issues: white space, fonts, margins, length. Style issues include writing for clarity, being specific, point of view (implied first person, but without first-person pronouns). The facilitator will use the right-way vita to illustrate all of these structural issues.
- Critiquing an Ineffective Format (small group activity, 10 minutes). Participants return to the second wrong-way example from the opening activity that had formatting and style problems, and discuss with the group what those problems are, what effects they have on the reader, and how a job seeker would correct those defects.
- The Vita Portfolio (presentation, 15 minutes). The contents of a typical vita portfolio: cover letter, research proposal, statement of teaching philosophy. The session leader then goes into more detail about each:
 - The purpose of the cover letter (vs. the vita). The structure of a cover letter in terms of its main sections. Example of a cover letter.
 - Research Proposals and Statements of Teaching Philosophy
- Getting Started (pairs application activity, 15 minutes). Some participants will have a vita, others will need to start one. The facilitator pairs up to the extent possible, people with and without vitas. Pairs with vitas critique each other's work and make suggestions for improvements. Pairs just starting on their vitas use a Vita Preparation worksheet in their Participant Guide. Participants get with a partner, and Partner A interviews Partner B about his or her job objective, background, and supporting accomplishments. Partner B takes notes on his or her answers on the worksheet. After about 7 minutes, the facilitator calls time and the partners switch roles, with Partner B interviewing Partner A in the same way.

Making Myself More Competitive (0:25)

- What Counts? (presentation, 15 minutes). The session leader describes what academic recruiters are looking for, and how participants can better position themselves for a faculty position. Reference to the table from AGT. Specific strategies will include:
 - Teaching assistant experience. Special teaching responsibilities and awards. Classroom visits, volunteer tutoring in K-12.

- Broaden your expertise. Taking courses beyond your doctoral requirements in other related areas, especially if you are considering a career outside a research university.
- Preparing Future Faculty Program
- Postdoctoral position. 40 to 50% of new Ph.D.s take up postdoctoral appointments. Essential for a position with a research university. Establish yourself as an independent investigator. Weighing the merits of a postdoc vs. a full-time temporary teaching position
- Strengthening My Position (individual application activity, 10 minutes). Given the kind of institution each participant is focusing on, participants develop strategies to increase their attractiveness to academic employers. They then share those strategies with a partner, and then with the large group.

Getting Hired for an Academic Position (0:35)

- The Academic Hiring Process (presentation, 20 minute). The session leader describes the academic hiring process in terms of the following main phases:
 - Finding an opening (*C&EN*, *Chronicle*, networking). Timing of job announcements (fall for following year)
 - Telephone interview
 - Campus visit
 - Individual and group interviews
 - The research presentation
 - The research proposal presentation
 - Teaching a sample class
 - Exit interviews and after the visit
 - The offer
- Difficult Decisions (small group activity, 15 minutes). Each group is assigned one short scenario about making a difficult decision about accepting an academic job. The group analyzes the scenario in terms of some focusing questions and prepares a report to the other groups.

Being Successful: Your First Year on the Job (0:20)

- That First Year (presentation, 10 minutes). What to expect during your first year, and how to position yourself to succeed (this content comes from AGT):
 - Teaching tips
 - Getting started in research