

Early Career Researchers

Benefits, Challenges & Lessons Learned

We asked ... they answered!

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What is the most useful advice you have received?

- To take advantage of “cross-pollination”. Learn about other fields and go to talks that are outside of your comfort zone. There are exciting ideas in other areas that you can apply to your work.

What are the 3 main things that contributed to your success?

- Mentorship, hard-work and determination.

What is one thing that you would do differently?

- I've learned from everything I've done but I could've gotten to where I am easier and faster by focusing my research sooner.

What are the biggest challenges an early career researcher faces in today's research environment and what are your suggestions for ways in which a mentor can help them address these challenges?

- Expectations! Early career researchers are often expected to fund 50% if not all of their salary. It is critical to have good grant writing skills and to focus your research and grants in fundable areas that happen to also relate to your passion. Regular meetings with a mentor who is an expert in the field you are studying and who has been successful getting extramural funding is important. A mentor can help by teaching grant writing skills and by being honest and quickly sharing if they think a line of research isn't fundable.