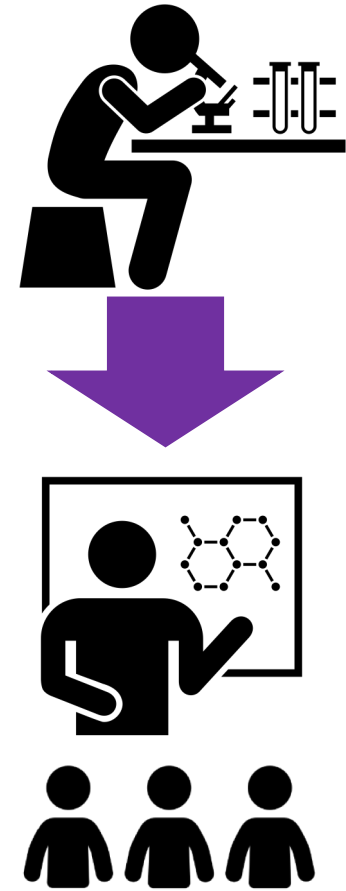


# From postdoc to professor: grant-writing experience matters

- 90% of ChemE postdocs want to pursue academia
- This transition requires:
  - Increasing **research independence**
  - Preparation on how to **lead a lab**
  - Experience **seeking grants and writing proposals**
- But time constraints and scarce opportunities outside biomedicine **limit opportunities for ChemE postdocs to practice grant-writing**
- And in interdisciplinary fields, ChemE postdocs often **must outcompete candidates with grant experience** in an increasingly competitive market



Grant support including **grant-writing workshops** tied as the **third most requested resource** for career support in the 2010 Postdoctoral Life at MIT survey.

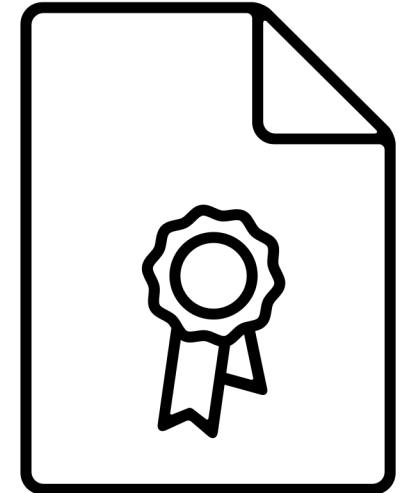
Hold more (and publicize better) **workshops** related to selecting funding sources and **writing for grants/fellowships**, etc.

For postdocs, **more emphasis and opportunities for grant-writing training**. I know some of these occur, but sometimes we cannot make them due to travel, etc. So there need to be multiple opportunities throughout the year. Also, more training on how to "start" a laboratory (supplies, personnel, planning a budget, etc.).

**Open-ended responses  
from postdocs**

# Pilot solution: Comm Lab facilitated mini-research grant contest

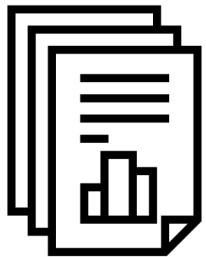
- Annual competition open to postdocs without an academic appointment.
- Modest award to be spent on research material; core facility use; travel to enable use of beamlines, off-campus research facilities etc.
- Target success rate of 5-10% with ~2 awardees/year
- Selection committee: 2 faculty, 2-3 postdoc peer reviewers, and 2-3 Comm Lab members



*Certificate by Denis Klyuchnikov  
from the Noun Project CC BY.*

# Program Milestones

Mid-June



Workshop  
announcement &  
call for proposals

Late June



Mandatory  
workshop for  
applicants & peer  
reviewers

Thursday, June 27  
2:30-4pm in 66-110

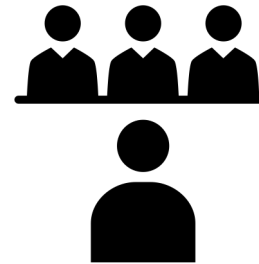
July



1:1 coaching on  
proposals

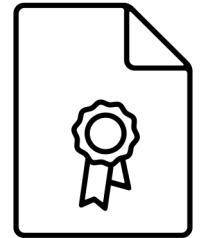
Proposals due  
Thursday, July 25 at  
10pm EDT

August



Invited chalk talks  
August 19 through  
August 30

September



Final Decisions  
Friday, Sept. 6

Postdoc  
begins project

# Grant-writing experience that walks you through the entire proposal process

- Workshop coupled with practice and coaching **trains postdocs how to write strong, tailored proposals.**
- Interview offers **experience pitching and defending** research proposals in front of a selection committee.
- Application process itself **builds grant-seeking qualifications** for CV.
- Postdoc selection committee members **learn how to assess proposals.**
- Awardees conduct small, independent research projects in **preparation for faculty careers**, and **secure a steppingstone for further recognition.**

The goal is to engage postdocs in a deep learning experience that makes them feel more empowered and effective in their research and communication—**with minimal impact on their primary research responsibilities.**