Inter-SECT Workbook

Interactive Simulation Exercises for Career Transitions

INTER-SECT

COLLABORATOR PACKET

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ON YOUR CAMPUS

Interactive Simulations Exercises for Career Transitions

What is Inter-SECT?

Inter-SECT stands for Interactive Simulation Exercises for Career Transitions. The purpose of the INTER-SECT job simulation library is to help graduate students and postdoctoral fellows learn about a career path by trying real job experiences via job simulations. By completing a job simulation, we hope that graduate students and post-doctoral fellows will understand the skills and tasks involved in a career of interest. This workbook may help them narrow their focus, and determine if they'd like to further pursue a career field before committing energy and time to additional training, like internships or courses. Our aim is to provide true-to-life, career-specific exercises to help graduate students and post-doctoral fellows explore careers beyond the bench.

The job simulation experience

The job simulation experience has four components:

Job Simulation → Project SMART Goals Checklist → Self-Reflection Guide → Informational Interview Guide

A short summary of each component is outlined here.

1. JOB SIMULATIONS

We designed the job simulations to be self-guided. Each simulation contains background and directions for the graduate student or post-doctoral fellow to complete a task that is related to the career of interest (aka the deliverable).

You can browse through job simulations we've created on Inter-SECT website at:

https://intersectjobsims.com/

2. PROJECT SMART GOALS

The Project SMART Goals is a checklist to help graduate students and post-doctoral fellows keep track of the different components of this project. This checklist can be filled out by entering the date they started the job simulation, and then filling out the remaining dates based on the suggested time interval from the start date. These will provide suggested guidelines for completing the elements of the simulation.

The checklist is also available online as a self-calculating Excel worksheet from the Inter-SECT webpage: https://intersectjobsims.com/

3. SELF-REFLECTION GUIDE

The Self-Reflection Guide is composed of questions that will prompt the graduate student or post-doctoral fellow to (1) consider their experience of the exercise and (2) help them articulate the impact in their career exploration. To successfully complete the self-reflection, they will broadly identify how the job simulation fits their skills and interests.

Ultimately, the Self-Reflection Guide will help graduate students and post-doctoral fellows determine if they want to spend more time exploring this career. For example, did this job simulation spark curiosities they would like to follow up on, or are they no longer interested in this career field?

4. INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

For a richer understanding of the job task(s), we encourage graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to share this product with a professional in the field, ask for feedback, and discuss questions that arose over the course of completing the exercise. This document provides guidance for reaching out and meeting with such a professional and also includes sample e-mails, questions to prompt the discussion, and information about the benefits of getting feedback from a professional. This guide will also help them understand what to expect, how to set up and close an informational interview, and of course, the Thank You note.

We highly encourage all graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to contact a professional to interview for their specific career field. In other words, if they chose to do the Medical Writing job simulation they would reach out to a Medical Writer to conduct the informational interview.

Benefits to your students and postdocs:

These simulations are real life job tasks that have been vetted and approved by PhD professionals for accuracy as simulations of a subset of daily tasks that PhD professionals say they perform in their field. Because they simulate daily tasks

and are designed to be completed in less than 8 hours, they are ideal for career exploration.

The job simulation experience is intended to help the student or postdoc test a working identity and assess their interest and potential career fit. After completing a job simulation, if they are still interested in a career field, they are encouraged to pursue additional experiential opportunities and skill building activities.

Please note that this experience is not intended to indicate the individual's ability to perform a task well. It is designed for career exploration.

Versatility of Inter-SECT-based activities:

Here are a few examples of how you could use Inter-SECT job simulations.

Career advising:

When discussing career options with graduate students or postdocs as a faculty member or career advisor, suggest performing a job simulation to help explore a specific career pathway.

In-class activity:

A faculty member at Duke University incorporated a Medical Writing job simulation in his career exploration workshop series. Students were given time to read the simulation exercise and start the process in class. Students were then encouraged to send in their completed deliverables.

Engage alumni:

Modeled after Georgia Tech and Emory's NIH Best Program, Inter-SECT could be used in a flipped learning activity coupled with alumni conversation on their career:

- Participants complete a job simulation in a specific field prior to the workshop
- An alum gives a brief career field overview, discusses skills needed to succeed, and experiences that helped them get hired
- Participants get into groups and discuss their deliverables and experience performing the job simulation
- Groups share their summaries and discuss the challenges of completing the task
- The alum holds a Q&A about their career field

Inter-SECT job simulations can be paired with panel discussions:

- Participants complete a job simulation in a career field prior to the seminar; select one to four different career fields depending on the panelists you can secure for the event.
- A panel of alumni discusses their career fields, skills needed to succeed, and experiences that helped them get hired
- Participants use the Q&A period to ask alumni about their job simulation experience

QUICK GUIDE TO INTRODUCING INTER-SECT TO YOUR INSTITUTION

Use the following slides to introduce Inter-SECT to your colleagues.

Inter-SECT is adaptable

The Inter-SECT job simulation experience is meant to be adaptable.

We recommend having a discussion after the presentation on how best to adapt Inter-SECT to meet the needs of your graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and campus.

THESE SIMULATIONS ARE REAL LIFE JOB TASKS

SIMULATE A SUBSET OF DAILY TASKS THAT PHD PROFESSIONALS SAY THEY PERFORM

IDEAL FOR CAREER EXPLORATION

ARE DESIGNED TO BE COMPLETED IN LESS THAN 8 HRS

THE JOB SIMULATIONS ARE VETTED AND APPROVED BY PHD PROFESSIONALS FOR ACCURACY

USE IT IN CAREER ADVISING APPOINTMENTS

FOR A STUDENT OR SCHOLAR WHO:

1. Has read about journal editing, but still doesn't know what's involved in journal editing...	...a job sim could be a next step to understand what's really involved in a career pathway. Then schedule a follow-up appointment to discuss their self-reflection sheet.
2. Isn't sure they want to spend a semester taking a course on intellectual property...	...a job sim could help individuals identify tasks of interest and the skills they like to use, so they decide to pursue more time intensive experiential opportunities.
3. Has selected a career field of interest...	...a job sim could be used to build a skill set or prepare for an interview.

USE IT TO ENHANCE PEER GROUP INTERACTIONS

THESE ARE THE STEPS THAT SHOW HOW THE JOB SIMULATIONS WERE USED IN A GROUP ACTIVITY FROM UCSF.

EACH GROUP MET OVER 2-3 WEEKS, AND THERE WERE 3-7 PARTICIPANTS PER PEER GROUP.

1. Graduate students and postdocs interested in trying a career-specific task were invited to attend an info session about job sims.

2. Following the presentation, sign up sheets organized by career field were passed around, and individuals opted in.

3. A staff member from the career center introduced the peer groups via email to any sign-up that had more than 3 individuals.

4. A staff member facilitated the group interactions and answered difficult questions.

USE IT FOR IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A SIMULATION WAS INCORPORATED INTO A CAREER SKILLS EXPLORATION SERIES RUN BY A FACULTY MEMBER AT DUKE.

THIS SERIES WAS COMPRISED OF 6 SESSIONS WITH 12 PARTICIPANTS EACH WEEK.

A faculty member incorporated a Medical Writing Job simulation in his career exploration workshop series. Students were given time to read the simulation exercise and start the process in class.

Students were encouraged to send in their completed deliverables.

USE IT TO
ENGAGE ALUMNI

THESE ARE THE STEPS THAT SHOW HOW JOB SIMULATIONS CAN BE USED IN AN ALUMNI-LED WORKSHOP. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF A "CAREER LAB", CREATED BY EMORY & GEORGIA TECH'S NIH BEST PROGRAM.

EACH PROGRAM WAS 2 HRS, AND HAD 20-30 PARTICIPANTS PER PROGRAM.

THE INTERSECT JOB SIMS COULD BE UTILIZED IN A SIMILAR WAY, AS A FLIPPED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY.

1. An alum, who is a medical science liaison (MSL), was invited to give a brief overview on the MSL field, skills needed to succeed, and the types of experiences to get you hired.

2. Participants got into groups and perform a task designed by the MSL. In this case, individuals looked up clinical abstracts and prepare a summary for a clinical or lay audience.

3. Group shared their summaries, and discussed the experiences and challenges of completing the task.

4. After the activity, the alum held a Q&A about the career field. This was the most engaging part of the session.

JOB SIM EXPERIENCE
IN 4 STEPS

Job Simulation → Self-Reflection Guide → Informational Interview Guide → Project SMART Goals Checklist

A job simulation is a brief exercise that simulates a subset of tasks involved in a career of interest. The sims in this workbook can be completed in approximately 3-8 hours.

View simulations at:
https://gradcareers.wustl.edu/intersect/

The experience is intended to help the student or postdoc TEST A WORKING IDENTITY and assess their interest and potential career fit.

After completing a job simulations, if they are still interested in a career field, they are encouraged to pursue additional experiential opportunities and skill building activities.

This experience is not intended to indicate the individual's ability to perform a task well. The exercise is designed for career exploration. We included sample deliverables as comparisons for format and level of detail; samples were not assessed by professionals.

SIMULATION USERS SAY TO GET THE MOST OUT OF A SIMULATION EXPERIENCE...

THE JOB SIMULATIONS ARE WERE USER TESTED AND UPDATED FROM USER FEEDBACK.

✓ PERFORM THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW TO CONFIRM ASSUMPTIONS AND LEARN ABOUT THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

🕐 UTILIZE THE SMART GOALS CHECKLIST BECAUSE HAVING DEADLINES HELP TO MOTIVATE THEM TO COMPLETE THE TASKS

TIPS & GUIDELINES
FOR A SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION AT
YOUR INSTITUTION

**Encourage your simulation participants to conduct informational interviews. Students and postdocs stated in evaluations that talking with a professional organizational- or position-specific details.

CONSIDERATIONS
& LIMITATIONS

So far, the tasks are just one example of many types of daily tasks performed by a professional. We aim to create more tasks in each career field.

The tasks may represent one certain type of organization. For example, the business development simulation was created from interviews of professionals in pharma companies. Start-up companies may have a different process.

MARKETING AND DISSEMINATION

Important steps to effectively introduce Inter-SECT on your campus include informing graduate students and postdocs that this resource is available, and engaging them to complete the job simulation tasks. We have included sample materials that have been used for marketing and communication.

Sample e-mail language

Sample Recruitment Email

Hi there!

Do you want to perform a job shadow without leaving the bench? Are you interested in getting a feel for what's involved in a non-bench career? We are recruiting [TARGET POPULATION] for our job simulations project in the following fields:

- [LIST OF TOPICS IN JOB SIMULATIONS]

When you complete the simulation, you will have:

- Gained deeper insight into the daily tasks completed by a professional in your field of interest

- Performed a real task related to the career of interest

- Connected with a professional in the field of interest for an informational interview

- Have a better idea of whether the field of interest is a fit for you

Participation is on a volunteer basis and requires the following commitments:

- Complete the job simulation of choice (4-8 hours)

- Complete the associated reflection sheet, which will help you assess your experience of the job simulation (30-60 minutes)

- Conduct an informational interview with a professional working in the field (1 hour)

- Give feedback on the job simulation experience as a whole (30 minutes)

This is a great opportunity for PhD students or postdocs who are in the career exploration phase.

Please fill out this form if you are interested in participating: [LINK TO APPLY]

Sample Reminder Email for Registrants to Info Session

Greetings!

Thank you for your interest in performing a job simulation. As a reminder, the info sessions will be held at [LOCATION] on [DATE, TIME]

Please attend the session to get started with the job simulation experience and learn how completing a job simulation may give you insight into your career interests and skills.

When you complete the job simulation experience, you will have:

- Gained deeper insight into the daily tasks completed by a professional in your field of interest

- Performed a real task related to the job of interest

- Completed a self-reflection sheet about the career-related task

- Learned how to connect with a professional in the field of interest for an informational interview

- Have a better idea of whether the field of interest is a fit for you

Sample Reminder for Info Session

Hello!

A reminder for this week's Information Session - the sessions will be held at [LOCATION] on [DATE, TIME].

When you complete the job simulation experience, you will have:

- Gained deeper insight into the daily tasks completed by a professional in your field of interest

- Performed a real task related to the job of interest

- Completed a self-reflection sheet about the career-related task

- Learned how to connect with a professional in the field of interest for an informational interview

- Have a better idea of whether the field of interest is a fit for you

The job simulation experience consists of:

- The job simulation of choice, estimated 4-8 hours to complete (quicker than a 6 week internship or short course!)

- The self-reflection sheet, which will help you assess your experience of the job simulation

- Conducting an informational interview with a professional working in the field

Sample Follow-up Email After Job Simulation Completion

Dear [ADDRESSEE]:

Thank you for participating in the job simulation info session [or thanks for completing the job simulation experience. Please complete the brief survey [XX MINUTES] at your earliest convenience: [LINK TO EVALUATION]

If you would like to donate your deliverable as a sample for the job simulation library, please email [YOUR ORGANIZATION'S CONTACT] or thianguyen29@gmail.edu.

Your contribution to the creation of [YOUR ORGANIZATION]'s job simulation library is extremely valuable.

Printable Flyer

Two version of the back – HSS/Biosci and Biosci only

WEB-BASED JOB SIMULATIONS
A CAREER EXPLORATION TOOL FOR PhDs

PERFORM REAL JOB TASKS

EXPLORE A CAREER FIELD

TAKE LESS THAN ONE WEEK

OVER **40** JOB TASKS IN **21** SCIENCE & HUMANITIES CAREER AREAS INCLUDING:

BUSINESS AND CONSULTING
WRITING AND COMMUNICATION
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
EDUCATION & OUTREACH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
POLICY & ADVOCACY

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WEB-BASED JOB SIMULATIONS

A CAREER EXPLORATION TOOL FOR PHD-LEVEL LIFE SCIENTISTS

PERFORM REAL JOB TASKS

EXPLORE A CAREER FIELD

TAKE LESS THAN ONE WEEK

FREELANCE SCIENCE JOURNALISM

SCIENCE POLICY & ADVOCACY

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

MEDICAL WRITING

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SCIENCE EDUCATION & OUTREACH

CLINICAL RESEARCH COORDINATION

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HOW TO CRAFT A JOB SIMULATION

Our hope is that with engaged collaborators, the Inter-SECT job simulation library will grow and encompass more tasks in existing career fields, and expand to new career fields. If you're interested in creating job simulations, we provide a straightforward process that involves collaboration with a professional in the field. In this section we'll cover:

1. Guidelines for getting started
2. The process of developing a job simulation
3. The job simulation template and suggested interview questions for the professional to help you get to a final product

1. Developing a Job Simulation - Guidelines

The following guidelines are designed to help you develop a job simulation that is easy to read and user friendly. This section provides an overview of format and content.

For detailed questions and structure of a job simulation,
please review "Developing a Job Simulation – Layout".

JOB SIMULATION GUIDELINES

1. *Make it approachable.* Keep in mind that someone without any training whatsoever should be able to pick up this exercise and complete it within 2-4 hours. A person struggling with the task may take up to 6-8 hours or more. Reading over the task should not feel overwhelming, it should feel empowering and interesting.

2. *Keep it simple.* Eliminate unnecessary jargon, give enough detail, but keep it to 1-3 pages. If jargon specific to the job is needed, define it and give resources to learn more.

3. *Keep it clear.* Did you clearly state what the goal and deliverable of the exercise? How to perform it? Do you give specific resources to use such as databases or websites? What the result of the exercise should look like? Looking over the simulation at first glance you should be able to pick out the 6 components: Title, background, process, the exercise, deliverable, and resources.

4. *Keep it short.* The result of the task may be an abstract or a short essay, the description of the task should not be an essay. Aim to keep the job simulation within 1-3 pages font size no smaller than 11 point with appropriate spacing.

2. The Process of Developing a Job Simulation

The goal is to work with professionals to mimic job tasks that are representative of the career field, accurate, and can be completed in 4-8 hours. To do this, it's imperative to work with industry professionals who have the content knowledge and experience. Several professionals for each career have validated the current job simulations.

- Identify a career of interest to your population
- Identify and contact 4-5 professionals in the field
- Interview 2-3 professionals in the field using the "Questions for the Professional" below. Professionals could provide different viewpoints and could include the following:

- Individuals who recently entered the field ~6mos
- Individuals more senior who may have hiring experience for that job and has advanced in their career
- Individuals who have completed a PhD or Postdoc
- Individuals at different size companies

- Using the interviews as a guide, choose a task for that career and fill in the information into the layout/structure document.

- Revise and ask professionals for their feedback.

- Revise based on comments and complete a final check for accuracy with professionals.

- (Optional) Give it to someone outside the field to check for clarity

- Revise based on feedback and publish

Notes about creating these job simulations with industry professionals:

In our experience, the industry professionals are typically excited about this project, happy to be involved, and even offer to serve as contacts for informational interviews. The biggest challenge in creating job simulations is often working around individuals' schedules. We recommend working with several in tandem to create and validate different sections of the job simulation concurrently.

3. Job Simulation Template & Guiding Interview Questions

The following is a job simulation template that lays out the general sections that will become the backbone of your job simulation. We include questions for you to ask the professional in order to help the professional understand the purpose of each section and how best to create a useful job simulation example. Please feel free to customize it to the needs of your institution or specific graduate student population.

Title of Task/name of the process

Phrase that starts with a verb. Ex. Create a fact sheet

Short phrase description of task Use an action word and include the audience, if applicable (ex. Condense information into talking points for a congressional staff member)

Background

Purpose: Provides the context in which the task fits in the job broadly.

Format: Paragraph text

Interview Questions:

• What does a person in this career do?

• Who typically performs the task? Individual, group, company?

• What does the task accomplish in the bigger picture?

• Who is the intended audience once the work is completed?

• What happens after this task is completed?

The Process

Purpose: Give a general process within which the task fits, e.g., making the batter is step 2 of making bread.

1.

2.

3.

Format: List with paragraph text to provide context, if necessary.

Interview Questions:

• What steps are needed to complete this task?

- What is the purpose of each step?
- Who are the team members with which you complete each step?
- For final steps or for creating the deliverable, who reviews the completed work?

Your role:

Purpose: Provide context about the types of positions in a company that completes these tasks. Describe the individual's role in one or two sentences – the position and their responsibilities.

Format: List with paragraph text to provide context, if necessary.

Interview Questions:

• Is this task performed by an intern? Associate?

- (info about the organizational structure) How is this role integrated in the team?
- (info about the organization type) What type of company would hire individuals for this type of task?

The exercise:

Purpose: Give instructions for completing the task. Answers the question – what would the intern do if given a task on a typical day.

Note: Describe the overall exercise and actions necessary to complete the Task. Break down the exercise into discrete tasks, if necessary to indicate different steps in the process or different skills needed to be successful. If you find yourself with dense sections that require significant time commitment (> 6-8 hours to complete the task), re-think the task and cut it down to simple action items or well-defined parts.

If a task is an analysis, include criteria where appropriate. Include any context required to understand the career field (e.g., "getting started").

Format: Paragraph with bullet points, as needed. Use action verbs.

Interview Questions:

- What tasks do you perform on a daily basis?
- If you were inviting a grad student or postdoc for just one day, what task might you have them do? What information would they need to get started? Do you have a template?
- What type of exercise might you ask a job applicant to perform, in order to assess their proficiency, experience, or approach to core tasks? (do you have sample interview assessments we can draw from?)
- What steps do you take when you start this type of activity?
- Where might you anticipate challenges for the task? How do you overcome those challenges?
- What step of the process takes the most time?
- Who is the target audience for this task target?

The Deliverable:

Purpose: Give detailed information on the result that would be handed into a manager or audience for the completed task.

This section tells the participant what they will be creating as a result of the job simulation. Ex. PowerPoint, table, etc...

Interview Questions:

- What product does one create for the project? A document, a spreadsheet, an article, a paragraph summary?
- What are the components of the deliverable? Expected length?
- To whom would you send the deliverable on the team? Who makes decisions based on the deliverable? What decisions do they make?
- Is this typically created individually or with a team?

General resources to help you get going:

Purpose: Provides background information or examples that would be useful in completing this task (e.g., websites or templates). Include a short description of the purpose of each resource.

Format: List

Skills used to perform this task

Purpose: Give a list of skills that the professional identifies as important to complete the task (technical? interpersonal?). Use workforce data or evidence where possible.

Format: List

Skills used in [THIS] field:

Purpose: Gives additional skills, beyond those listed above, needed to do succeed in the career field.

We have used [workforce data from Boston University's BEST website](http://search.bu.edu/) for hard and soft skills in different careers: http://search.bu.edu/ & referred to the "Resources for Exploring Careers" section of [Duke Career Center website](http://...).

Additional tasks in [THIS] career:

Purpose: Give a list of other tasks that a person in this field may perform. Potential source: the "Resources for Exploring Careers" section of [Duke Career Center website](http://...).

Need inspiration or examples?

Browse the Washington University in St. Louis job simulation library:

https://intersectjobsims.com//library/

Developing a Job Simulation FAQs

- I've never done this job, how can I make a simulation if I'm not an expert?

    o You don't need to be the expert. Your goal is to engage the experts to help you build the job simulation. If you need data or source material for the job simulation, ask your professional where you could get some or if they're willing to provide it.

- How do I approach a professional about this project? Here are two sample emails:

    o (1) "I'm reaching out because I'm creating a job simulation in the [job family]. It's part of a project to help prepare PhD students and postdocs for career transitions. As a [role] in this field, I'm hoping you might be willing to provide advice on the certain tasks involved in your job. From this, I will put together an activity that individuals can complete to get an idea of whether they might like working in a career area new to them. Would you be available for 45-50 minutes to talk? Thanks for considering it!"

    o (2) "We are looking for professionals in [CAREER] such as yourself to help us prepare PhD students and postdocs for career transitions. We are creating a brief job simulation exercise in [CAREER], and I'm

hoping you might be willing to provide advice on your work activities, and the process. From this, I will put together an activity the individual can complete to get an idea of the job, whether they might like it or want to develop skills in this career area. Do you have 45-50 minutes where we could talk? If you're too busy right now, can you suggest a colleague that might be willing to help?"

- o You can send them links to this UCSF Inter-SECT press release or the Inter-SECT job simulations home page:
  - https://graduate.ucsf.edu/news/inter-sect
  - https://intersectjobsims.com/
  - or refer to the ScienceCareers article published in Oct 2018: "Like virtual reality for careers: A new online resource helps scientists explore job options"

- This career has several tasks that are important, how can I pick the right one?
  - o All jobs require multiple tasks of different types. The simulation should not be representative of an entire career, merely one aspect of the job they would likely encounter in their first year. Pick something that is both interesting to you and can easily be adapted to a 6-8 hour task in this job simulation format. If you're still concerned, vet your idea with your professional(s).

- What if this task is done in very different ways depending on the company/group?

- o Sometimes roles and responsibilities for any given task vary greatly depending on situational context. Pick one scenario for your job simulation, and include a disclaimer or explanation on how the task, role, or deliverable could change in another context.

- How will I know when I'm done developing the job simulation?

    - o If you can answer most or all of the questions in the "Questions for the Professionals" section just with the content provided in your job simulation, you are most likely done. We recommend having someone who has no knowledge of the career to take a look at the job simulation to see if there are any resources missing and to check for clarity.

- How do I ask another professional to vet the job sim I created? Here is sample email language:

    - o "Hope you're doing well. When you're free in the next few weeks, would you be open to hopping on zoom for a quick question about [job sim area]? I'm writing up a job simulation that describes what a PhD in [job sim area] does on a daily basis and wanted to check some facts with you, if that's okay. Thanks for considering!"

EVALUATION MATERIALS

Here is a sample evaluation that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of Inter-SECT job simulations at your institution.

Thank you for participating in the Inter-SECT beta testing! Your responses will provide information for us to improve the job simulations. The survey is completely anonymous and voluntary. You can stop taking the survey at any time. Your partial or complete participation in the survey does not affect your ability to try the job simulations. Your responses, if reported, will be reported anonymously and in aggregate. We will not share the individual responses outside of the evaluation team. If you have any questions, please contact [YOUR CONTACT].

Q1. Which job simulation did you choose? [*multiple-choice answer*]

Q2. Please rate your knowledge of the career field, BEFORE working on the job simulation [*5-point scale No Knowledge to Very Knowledgeable*]

- The process described in the task
- The skills needed to complete the task
- The type of information needed to complete that task

Q3. Please rate your knowledge of the career field, AFTER working on the job simulation [*5-point scale No Knowledge to Very Knowledgeable*]

- The process described in the task
- The skills needed to complete the task
- The type of information needed to complete that task

Q4. What did you like about the specific task? [*text box answer*]

Q5. How would you improve the task? [*text box answer*]

Q6. Did you conduct an informational interview? [*Multiple choice answer]*

- Yes

- Not yet, but I contacted a professional

- No (*If No, go to question 11*)

Q7. These questions refer to the **Informational Interview** [*Yes/No multiple choice*]

- Did you send your job simulation to the professional?

- Did you discuss the job simulation with the professional?

- Have you conducted an informational interview before?

Q8. What were your expectations from talking to the professional? [*text box answer*]

Q9. What lessons did you learn from talking to the professional? [*text box answer*]

Q10. These questions refer to the **Job Simulation experience overall**. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. [*5-point scale Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree*]

- The task was useful for exploring a career of interest

- The task was easy to understand

- The background information was sufficient to complete the task

- I enjoyed doing the task

- I would be likely to recommend this job simulation to a friend or colleague

Q11. Did completing the job simulation task and self-reflection sheet help you decide whether or not to pursue this career path? Please describe. [*text box answer*]

Q12. What did you like most about the job simulation experience overall? [*text box answer*]

Q13. How could this job simulation experience be improved overall? [*text box answer*]

Q14. What other job simulation tasks would you like to see added? [*text box answer*]

Q15. I am a [*multiple choice*]

- Graduate student

- Postdoc

- Other [*text box answer*]

Thank you for taking this assessment!

APPENDIX

Information Session

We found that an in-person information session helped engage participants and aid them in understanding the different components of the job simulation experience.

If you are interested in piloting new job simulations for clarity and time-to-completion, we have attached slides that we used for an information session.

Information session

We will cover

| What is Inter-SECT? | Your role in the program | Deliverables Deadlines | What you gain |

UCSF

What is Inter-SECT?

Interactive **S**imulation **E**xercises for **C**areer **T**ransitions

- A workbook of job simulation exercises to prepare trainees for careers beyond academia

- Helps graduate students and postdocs learn about a job

- User end goal: Decide whether to pursue a career

- Project end goal: A library of job simulations accessible <u>nationwide</u> made in collaboration with multiple institutions.

- Funded by Burroughs Wellcome Fund

UCSF

Documents and deliverables

5 documents and deliverables:

1. Job simulation
2. Self-Reflection Sheet
3. Project SMART Goals
4. Informational Interview Guide
5. Overall Experience Evaluation

UCSF

1. Job Simulation

Provides task details. Download from the website.

Pitching an article

Pitch an article to a popular science magazine editor.

Background

Editors want to publish new knowledge and refreshing perspectives. Do you have something new to offer to the discussions that are happening in the scientific field?

The Exercise

Find a newly published research article. Pitch the story for publication on the Blog Network for Discover Magazine. For this exercise, you are an aspiring freelance journalist.

Task 1 | Task 2 | Task 3 | Task 4 (advanced)

Find an article
Find an article that is something new that will potentially garner public attention, but is not already being covered by major news outlets.

THE DELIVERABLE

Instructions | Sample Deliverable #1 | Sample Deliverable #2

The pitch should be brief and clear: 150 words, or 3-4 sentences. A pitch is not a full article. The deliverable should allow the editor to clearly answer these questions:

- What is the significance of the result, and how is it interesting to the audience? Is it relevant to the journal's audience?
- Is their previous data on the subject, or is it really a new result? Do you think the results are sufficiently sound to report on widely?
- Is there already interest on social media - Twitter, Facebook, Reddit? Is it the kind of article that could be shared by Facebook or Twitter users?

▪ Self-explanatory

▪ We will use your anonymized completed simulation to use as an example for other institutions and trainees.

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2. Self-Reflection Sheet

Helps you decide if you want to pursue a career.

Fill out online.

- Google form for you to fill **after** you complete the simulation.

- Important to familiarize yourself with this form **before** starting the simulation – check the downloadable .pdf version.

- Keep in mind that we'll ask you questions on content and format of the self-reflection sheet.

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3. Project SMART Goals

To help you keep on task.

Download from the site.

- For you to fill throughout the beta testing.

- A tool for you to break down the major components into tasks.

4. Informational Interview Guide

A "How-To" on informational interviews. Also on the website.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

So, you've just completed a job simulation. How does this experience change your approach to conducting an informational interview? You can use your self-reflection sheet to ask more specific questions and *gain more insight* about your career of interest.

The purpose of having this conversation is to:
- Learn more about a job or career path
- Confirm or challenge any ideas you have about a job or career path
- Learn about skills needed to be competitive for the job or career of interest
- Expand your professional network

- What to expect and what questions to ask.

- How to set up an informational interview and end one.

- Interview etiquette

- Contact more than one professional when you're ready for informational interviewing.

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5. Overall Experience Evaluation

Feedback on the whole experience.

Survey format.

- A place for you to tell us how you liked the experience from start to finish.

- Help us improve how we and other institutions run future tests of job simulations.

- Must be completed to complete the beta testing experience.

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What you gain from this experience

You'll learn a lot about these careers and about yourself!!

▪ You'll find out what types of ways you like to search for information.

  • Talking to people, Google, patents, scanning D.C. news sites

▪ You'll find your niche within a career

  • Maybe you love diving deep into FDA nuances?

▪ Do you like drug development and learning about partnerships or do you prefer to read up on technology?

▪ How to convince big wigs your idea rocks versus mediating conflict to make a big idea happen.

▪ All can factor into deciding what type of job you want to pursue!

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Timeline

Start to finish – expect X weeks

▪ You'll have *X* weeks to complete the job simulation and *X* weeks to complete the informational interview.

▪ Remember, the bulk of the work lies in the job simulation which will take a maximum of 6-8 hours to complete.

▪ Nothing needs to be polished or final, we essentially just want your experience.

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Summary

- The Inter-SECT project will culminate in a library of job simulation workbooks to prepare trainees for careers beyond academia.

- You are the critical first step in this process!

- You will have 3 deliverables:

  - Job simulation

  - Self-reflection sheet

  - Overall Experience Evaluation

- We will provide you with the resources you need to complete them.

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University of California
San Francisco

UCSF OCPD Resources
Workshops
One-on-one coaching
Online materials and more!!
career.ucsf.edu

AFTERWORD

A message from the Project Manager

I was a graduate student who went through the challenges of trying to find a career beyond academia that would fit me. I was fortunate enough to be at UCSF where there were several programs and seminars on various careers outside of academia. These experiences helped prepare me to engage with multiple professionals across a variety of careers through informational interviews and professional networking events. While I learned a lot from researching several careers and speaking to wonderful people, there was always an element missing of getting a feel for what it is like to step into their shoes. Although I wanted to do an internship in several careers, it just wasn't feasible to take that time off from graduate school, especially not at a time when finishing my thesis was of utmost importance.

Because of this, I jumped at the chance to be a part of Inter-SECT and to develop such an important resource for graduate students and post-docs. I'm not alone in this opinion, through my work in this project, many students, post-docs, staff, alumni, and professionals have expressed their excitement for Inter-SECT and have been very generous of their time and resources to help bring this project to fruition.

From my experiences making and testing new job simulations, I learned what worked and didn't work. For those of you also looking to pilot new simulations I recommend keeping the following in mind:

- Engage your participants
    - Tell them how they will benefit - make sure they know how their career search will be enriched and how they will grow from practicing informational interviewing.
    - Show them they are part of a national project - emphasize that their participation contributes to a greater good for students and post-docs nationwide.
    - Make a personal connection – sharing that I was also a graduate student and recounting personal experiences with informational interviews may have helped participants reach out to me for help through the testing process.
- Make building a simulation easier
    - Let the professional take the lead – an appropriate task for a job simulation will often come out naturally in your conversations with the professional; try not to let your pre-conceptions guide the task and instead really listen to what the professional has to say.
    - Aim for clarity – a job has a multitude of tasks that can vary depending on seniority, location, and project, it is easy to get stuck trying to represent an entire career; keep the goal of developing a job simulation down to a single task that is approachable, relevant, and engaging.

- o Set a timeline – it's easy to spend too much time interviewing professionals or adding extra details to the job simulation. Setting a timeline of 1.5 - 2 months maximum to develop a simulation from scratch will help you maintain focus. Let the pilot testing of new simulations reveal what are the details you've missed.

Lastly, I'd like to share what a joy it has been to hear both the excitement of professionals as they talk about their careers and the many stories of graduate students and post-docs whose simulation experiences immediately impacted their career search process. I encourage you to do the same and make sure you enjoy the process.

-Linet Mera, PhD