

Getting hired in industry – life science graduate students use case studies to get noticed

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Challenge

- Without hands-on, relatable experience, life science MSc and PhD graduates may not be competitive in the industry job market, even for entry-level positions
- Action-learning experiences such as internships, professional experience years, or consulting projects may be limited in number, not supported by all academic departments, or challenging to arrange around research or personal commitments

Industry Team Case Study

- Developed by the Science Career Impact Project, and the Life Sciences Career Development Society at the University of Toronto
- Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows work in teams to simulate industry projects with mentorship from industry professionals
- Teams identify a business or policy challenge, investigate the topic, generate insights, and develop a report, white paper, infographic, or presentation to present a solution or persuade a target audience to follow a strategy
- Mentors provide feedback and guidance on the proposed topics, information sources, and quality of the work, and explain complex aspects of their field
- ~130 graduate students/postdocs & 19 mentors have participated since 2016

Case Study Areas of Focus

(to date)

- Research & development
- Product development
- Clinical trials
- Regulatory affairs & policy
- Market access (reimbursement)
- Medical affairs
- Business development
- Marketing

Industry Team Case Study Alumni Profiles (based on first-person interviews)

	Parco MSc Pharmacol. & Toxicology Market Access Consultant	Alex PhD Cell & Systems Biology Regulatory Affairs Associate	Nathan MSc Cell & Systems Biology Regulatory Affairs Associate	Tracy PhD Immunology Medical Science Liaison
Interests	Drug development process, business strategy	Science, convincing reviewers with data	Biotechnology, health science, public policy	Interface of science & business, translating research findings into impact
Case studies	Request for priority review: drug for breast cancer Reimbursement strategy: drug for cystic fibrosis	Pre-New Drug Submission (NDS) briefing package: vaccine	Regulatory policy white paper & infographic: cannabis edibles	Clinical evidence comparison: two drugs for psoriasis Pre-NDS briefing package: vaccine Treatment landscape for renal cell carcinoma
Challenges & learnings	Terminology & stakeholders Strategic mindset to anticipate & overcome barriers Technical knowledge & resources	Laws & regulations Opportunities to engage Health Canada Clinical trial process & evidence translation	Laws & regulations Policy development	Time management Information resources Leveraging skills developed in graduate school
Using case studies to get noticed by employers	Included in resume & described in interview Discussed alternative scenarios & approaches	Included in cover letter, resume & portfolio Impressed with applied skills & non-academic experience	Included in cover letter Impressed in interviews; became focus of discussion	Included in resume, portfolio & presented in interviews Intrigued & impressed by content & initiative

Case Study Benefits for Trainees

Develop specialized knowledge and industry insights which can lead to meaningful conversations with hiring managers

Develop a portfolio of work hiring managers can relate to

Develop technical skills and behavioural strengths

Build relationships with professionals and peers

Explore career paths

Showcase potential for future success