

## Course 1: The Strategic Postdoc

### Module 2: Applying for and Choosing the Right Postdoc

Session 4: Post interview

Activity 4.3: Negotiating Your Exit Strategy

**Carefully read the following case studies and answer the reflection questions below.**

1. Ashley is a 5th-year PhD candidate who has recently accepted a postdoc position and is excited about pursuing an academic research career. For her PhD she created a new technical method that has been well received because of its effectiveness. During one of their weekly meetings, Ashley's research advisor, Eric, told her that he wants to pursue patenting this method and thus he does not want to publish the method or share it with anyone until it is well into the patenting process, something which could take years. Ashley is worried because she has not published her first author paper and she wants to hit this important milestone and be more competitive as an incoming postdoc, as well as for potential fellowship applications. In addition, this method was also a strong 'selling point' during her interviews. She's two months out from her postdoctoral start date, has fulfilled all of her requirements for graduation, and is preparing her transition strategy, but now she feels conflicted and does not know how to resolve this issue without harming her relationship with her advisor.
  - a. Which of the 3 transition issues discussed in the course (start date, ownership, or productivity) is causing problems in this case? What is the perspective of Ashley and Eric in this case?
  - b. How can Ashley negotiate with her advisor to reach a compromise?
  - c. If you were in Ashley's shoes, what steps would you have taken to avoid or manage some of the conflicts here?
2. Jacob is a 7th year PhD candidate and is starting his new postdoc position in four months. He is currently working on his second manuscript which has the potential for major impact. Jacob promised his advisor that he wouldn't leave the lab until his manuscript was published. Maria, Jacob's advisor, has invested years into this project and recently presented it to her colleagues and found out that another lab had similar findings. She tells Jacob that they need to get the publication out as soon as possible so they do not get "scooped." After submitting the manuscript, they received extensive reviewer feedback and realized it would take at least eight months to address the reviewer comments. Jacob is conflicted because he has a fixed start date with his new research advisor but Maria is expecting him to stay – as promised.
  - a. Which of the 3 transition issues discussed in the course (departure date, ownership, or productivity) is causing problems in this case? What is the point of view of Maria and Jacob?
  - b. How can Jacob negotiate with Maria to reach a compromise?



- c. If you were in Jacob's shoes, what steps would you have taken to avoid or manage some of the conflicts here?