

Gator Grad to contract research professional ...what's next for you?

Latoya Allen, PhD



Good morning!

Who am I?

Latoya Allen, PhD

- Originally from Madison, Wisconsin
- 2019 graduate from UF Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences, Neuroscience concentration
- Current role: Study Director in Toxicology at a contract research organization (Covance by Labcorp).



Endless career opportunities with a PhD

- Academia (teaching, research, both!)
- Government
- Science Policy/Law
- Science Writing
- Technology
- BioPharmaceutical industry
- Contract research
- Science/Medicine/Technology Liasion
- Sales

...this is just a small list!

What is the right career path for you?

■ Academia

- Generally considered a traditional career path for PhDs, however, demands for PhDs in other sectors are changing.
- Postdoctoral Fellowship was traditionally the next step after earning a PhD
- Traditional careers:
- Tenured Professor, Lecturer, Research Assistant Professor, etc.

■ BioPharmaceutical/Pharmaceutical Industry (often referred to as “industry”)

- Generally considered a non-traditional career path
- Many ways to transition into different sectors of industry; postdoctoral fellowship not required (yes your PhD counts as experience!)

What does “industry” mean?

- Industry means many different things, so it is important to understand *which type of industry you are interested in*
 - Pharmaceutical industry
 - Medical device industry
 - FDA, CDC, WHO, OSHA, etc.
 - Contract research organization
 - Liaison roles
 - Sales

How do you become a competitive applicant and transition into industry?

- **NETWORK (establish meaningful connections with people)**
 - Attend as many professional events as possible (conferences, banquets, seminars, etc.)
 - Talk to people in different careers. What do they like/dislike about their field?
 - Engage and provide value
 - Don't wait until you graduate to start making connections!
- Attend career development seminars/workshops
 - Different varieties, so you figure out what is interesting to you
 - Career Connections Center, OGPD at UF
- Work on your online presence
 - LinkedIn profile is very important
- Courses
 - Career development course(s) in your field
 - Clinical trials courses, GMP/GLP processes

Strategies to become a competitive applicant

- **NETWORK**
 - **Referrals** are the best way to transition into the job you want. Use your network
- **Leadership**
 - Organizational leadership role
 - Mentoring
 - Management
 - Starting a support group/organization
- **Apply for an internship**
- **Develop your transferable skills**
 - Communication
 - Work ethic
 - Conflict resolution
 - Critical thinking/problem solving
 - Writing
 - Mentoring/management

Develop an effective resume: leverage transferable skills!

- Recruiters look at your resume for an average of 6 seconds! Make it easy to find your relevant skills and experiences (www.themuse.com)
- Customize your resume (and cover letter) to fit the job description.
<https://tagcrowd.com/>
- Recruiters want to see specific actions you took to achieve measurable results. Use STAR statements to describe your experiences.

Situation

Task

Action

Result

- Lists of skills or extensive “CV-style” resumes do not effectively communicate your experiences.

STAR statement examples

Situation
Task
Action
Result



STAR statement examples:

Coordinated volunteer opportunity for diversity graduate students with BioFlorida as BioFlorida's assistant for Celebration for Biotechnology event for 2 years.

Co-founded Annual Diversity Graduate Research Symposium and successfully executed for 2 years with over 100 student presenters and 200 attendees each year.

Managed 12-person research team, monitored study progress and achieved deadlines for 3 years maintaining study compliance.

Remember to add keywords from the job description

Practice, practice, practice!

- Be able to articulate your elevator pitch for the “tell me about yourself” question
- Utilize the professional development resources at UF
 - Career Connections Center: <https://career.ufl.edu/>
 - Interview coaching
 - Mock interviews
 - Negotiation coaching
 - They post jobs too!

How did I successfully transition into a contract research organization?

■ NETWORK

- I had a referral who was a friend, who also helped me craft my resume and cover letter.

■ Leadership

- Undergraduate mentor
- President and co-founder of the UF College of Medicine Diversity Committee
- Managed several research programs during my PhD
- BioFlorida's Celebration for Biotechnology assistant

■ Career development seminars and courses

- Biopharmaceutical GMP course
- Clinical trials course (for credit at UF)
- Career development seminars of all kinds

■ Worked with a career development mentor (UF Career Connections Center)

- Practiced interviewing 1x/week
- Practiced negotiation (salary, position)

What is my job role in contract research?

- Contract Research Organization, Covance by Labcorp
- Study Director in Toxicology, Safety Assessment
 - Toxicology studies are necessary for new drug submissions to the FDA
 - Responsible for study design, oversight of study conduct, interpretation of results
 - Central point of control for study, primary Client contact/liaison
 - Report writing
- I love my job!
 - Still a scientist from an oversight perspective; not at the bench
 - Work with companies from all over the world
 - Learn the drug development process required for FDA approval
 - Leadership, mentoring, process improvement opportunities

We are hiring!

Connect with me if you are interested in a career at Covance by Labcorp.

ENERGIZING PURPOSE
EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE
EXTRAORDINARY POTENTIAL



STUDY DIRECTOR - TOXICOLOGY

Madison, WI

Looking for career that makes an impact on patients' lives? You can find it here at Covance by Labcorp. We have a great opportunity for a STUDY DIRECTOR specializing in Toxicology, Biologics or Ophthalmology to join the Study Direction team at our Madison, WI site. Covance by Labcorp's work in developing new pharmaceutical solutions has an incredible impact on millions of lives worldwide. Be a part of this life-saving work.

Key Qualifications

- ▶ PhD, DVM, or equivalent degree
- ▶ 2-5 years experience in Toxicology
- ▶ DABT certification desirable

To apply, please visit our website at www.careers.covance.com and click on req # 2021-66241.

Patients can't wait. Neither can we.

Thank you!

Q & A

