

Molecular Genetics

Career Development Alumni Symposium 2026

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

About the event

The Molecular Genetics Career Development Alumni Symposium, hosted by the Department of Molecular Genetics at the University of Toronto, is an annual event where undergraduate and graduate students connect with experts, industry leaders, alumni, faculty, staff, and postdocs for insightful discussions, networking, and career development sessions. The goal is to help students explore career opportunities, build networks, and foster meaningful connections.

Prior to the event

- Register for the event: <https://moleculargenetics.utoronto.ca/career-development-alumni-symposium-june-2026>
- Provide a short bio and headshot (this is for a booklet we create for registered students with university login and will not be public on the website)
- No formal preparation is required

During the event

- **Event Schedule**
 - The full schedule is available on the event website: <https://moleculargenetics.utoronto.ca/career-development-alumni-symposium-june-2026>
- **Roundtable Discussions**
 - The main role for mentors is participating in *roundtable discussions*, which are informal conversations with up to 10 students at a time.
 - “Networking prompts” will be available on each table for students to use if they run out of questions (see below).
 - At the start of each roundtable, mentors may give a brief introduction, then allow the conversation to flow based on student questions.
- **Lightning Introductions (optional)**
 - New this year, the *Lightning Introductions* session is optional for mentors.
 - Mentors will introduce themselves in 1–2 minutes (background, current role, relevant past roles, career experience, and tips).
 - Introductions will be on the main stage and a microphone is available
 - No slides are required
 - This session is designed to give students a quick sense of the breadth of career paths available, and can shorten the introductions during the roundtables.
- **Networking**
 - Networking breaks (coffee and reception) offer opportunities for informal conversations with students and other mentors.
 - An optional *Mentor Lunch* will be held at 12:00 PM for mentors only.

CAREER EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

Here are some generic questions that you could ask a mentor during a coffee chat, an informational interview, or during the symposium round-table discussions.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CAREER

1. How do most people get into this field? What are some common career paths in this field?
2. What are the skills/ attributes/ qualifications that are most important to have success in a position in this field?
3. How do you see your role/career field changing in the next 10 years?
4. What's the best advice you'd give to someone interested in this field? What's the most important thing someone considering this field should know?
5. Can you recommend any resources (books, websites, courses, etc.) for someone interested in this role/field?
6. What degree of education is best for this job (MSc vs PhD preference, additional certification)?
7. What are some steps to succeed in getting to your current position?
8. What was the job-hunting experience for you?
9. What type of experiences do you feel best prepared you for your job?
10. How did you approach networking to help you in the field?

DESCRIBING YOUR WORK

1. What does a typical day look like in your role?
2. What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
3. What are the challenges associated with this role/field?
4. What is the work-life balance for this job?
5. What skill set is most important to succeed in your job?

CAREER CHOICES

1. Can you tell me about your career path and what led you to the role you're in today?
2. What drew you to this field/role/specific company?
3. What didn't you know before you got into this field that you wish someone had told you? What's something surprising about this field?
4. What are some career pathways that you can go to after this role?
5. What motivated you to take this career path?
6. What career path would you have taken if you were not doing what you do now for your job?
7. How do you negotiate job offers?
8. Where was the best place to look for job openings?