

Survival Skills for Scientists

The aim of this presentation is to describe the graduate course on “Survival Skills for Scientists” developed at INRS. The central theme is that succeeding in Science requires skills beyond those needed for the Science itself. Competition for jobs, funding and resources in general has become extremely tough over the last two decades. We thus advocate the need to mentor graduate students and early career scientists beyond their work in the laboratory, so as to develop soft professional skills that will make them more aware and competitive. The course offers basic career advice to graduate students and post-docs and discusses other themes of importance for their training. The main topics for discussion are as follows:

- the job market for science and engineering graduates;
- comparing different work environments such as industry, government labs and academia;
- career planning;
- the peer review system;
- ‘playing chess’; in scientific research, anything that matters is peer reviewed. Therefore it helps to learn to place ourselves in the mindset of those who are going to evaluate us, so as to forestall objections before they are made;
- Managing your boss;
- finding a mentor;
- communicating your Science (giving presentations, writing articles);
- funding your Science;
- women in Science and Engineering
- The two body problem
- Ethics in Science.