

WISEST INITIATIVES / POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM / Post-doc Institute

General observations and tips about job application packages

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- **Number all the pages.**
- **Figures** (if included) **should be easily readable.** However, high quality pictures do not have to (and *should* not be) huge in size: you must try different formats and check their size and their quality both for screen and printing viewing.
- **Research statement: be selective about the amount of information you supply.** It is not clear whether supplying a lot of information and technical details is a plus. If you think it is because you are targeting someone in the faculty whom you know would like to see all the details of your research you should organize your documents so that it allows for two different kinds of viewing easily:
 - Overall description (any faculty member can easily jump over the technical details).
 - Detailed description for faculty member(s) in your area of expertise.
- **Research statement: be bold, develop vision.** Most research statements lacked the “big vision.” They mostly provided next (small) steps to the doctoral or post-doctoral research work. The best research statement was the one that mentioned multidisciplinary research in the long term (also, multidisciplinary research is very attractive—we had a WISEST postdoctoral workshop on networking that also mentioned multidisciplinary research).
- **Teaching statement: give examples.** The best teaching statements illustrate ideas with past examples.
- **Make the documents visually appealing.** For example, for the teaching and research statements, either create named paragraphs or separate the paragraphs enough so that the whole thing does not look like a monolithic structure. Seek the help of someone who is gifted in laying out documents.
- **The most important information should be on the first page of the CV.** It includes for sure:
 - Education
 - **Current** and past employment.
 - Advisors for each of the degrees as well as mentors/directors for postdoc or visiting positions. This must be immediately apparent, even if in the list of references state their role in one’s career.
 - Areas of research.
 - Any other important information?
- **Most common problems with CVs are layout and publication organization.** For publications separate them clearly. Papers in preparation should not be listed together with the published ones; neither should theses.
- **Information about WISEST should be prominently displayed.** There should be a good short paragraph about WISEST (NSF should be in there too) in the cover letter. In the CV, the WISEST postdoc position should be listed as an honor or award, but also for sure under current employment.
- **Special attention should be given to the cover letter.** “It is amazing how so many people hate to write cover letters. That is not good, since employers LOVE them. The results of a national hiring survey ... showed that cover letters were *very influential*.” (taken from *Soaring on your strengths* by Robin Ryan, Penguin Books, 2006; note: the main theme of the book is the concept of “Branding you.”)
- **References: include all advisors/mentors.** At least most recent advisor/mentor and PhD advisors should be included.