

Dr Kirk Jensen

The challenges of developing an independent research career

**School of Molecular and Biomedical Science
Discipline of Biochemistry
University of Adelaide**

Career History:

- 1985** **B.S. in Biological Sciences**
Stanford University
- 1995** **Ph.D. in Chemistry and Biochemistry**
University of Colorado at Boulder
- 1996-2000** **Postdoctoral Fellow**
The Rockefeller University
- 2001-2003** **Research Assistant Professor**
The Rockefeller University
- 2004-present** **Senior Lecturer**
School of Molecular and Biomedical Science

Adelaide History:

- 2004** Arrive in February; write grants!
- 2004** Set up lab; 1st year with one Honours student and one Postdoctoral Fellow
- 2004** Become full member of Centre for the Molecular Genetics of Development (CMGD); substantial funding from CMGD through 2008
- 2004** Grants from NHMRC & ARC for funding from 2005-2007

Current lab:

Two postdocs:

Kate Dredge (ARC Postdoctoral Fellow)

Jane Sibbons (funded from NHMRC Project grant)

Five Ph.D. students:

Jonathan Webb (2005; on leave as Rhodes Scholar)

Peter McCarthy (2005)

Fook Hing (2006)

Sophie Wiszniak (2007)

Bradley Simpson (2007)

Covenor, Discipline Honours Program 2005-present

The first year is very hard...

...but the 2nd-4th are even harder.

Starting up issues:

Setting up physical lab (equipment, who sells X, Y & Z)

Balancing teaching, admin and research

Getting PhD students started

Keeping PhD students focused

Finding enough time to keep PhD students focused

Having another senior person in the lab is enormously helpful,
but not a substitute for the lab head

Most pressing issues:

Publish!

Finding balance between high impact work (top tier of molecular biology journals; SCI scores of 30-18) and publishing frequency (must fit papers into three-year granting cycle)

NHMRC Project application for 2008-2010 not funded

Also:

Keep eye on long-term research goals

Make sure you have School/Discipline support for your goals

Personal issues:

Finding balance between work and other activities

Health