Questions about the FOR/ASBMB Hack Day

The Future of Research and the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology will jointly host a Hack Day on Saturday, Oct. 24. The goal of this event will be to find innovative solutions to collecting data and tracking biomedical scientists throughout their careers. Below are some specifics about the event. If you have further questions, please contact Gary McDowell (FOR; gary.mcdowell@tufts.edu) or Chris Pickett (ASBMB; cpickett@asbmb.org).

What is a Hack Day?
A Hack Day is a single-day event that enlists teams of individuals at sites across the nation to address a specific problem or subset of problems. The intensive, time-limited event is meant to focus the participants on a specific problem and challenge them to come up with practical, creative solutions. Hack Days or Hack-a-thons were first used by computer scientists and engineers, hence the name, but the format is applicable to any well-defined topic.

Specifically, participating teams from across the country will be presented with a brief list of problems and gaps concerning data collection and presentation. Participating teams will then have the opportunity to choose one of these to work on during the Hack Day. The goal is for each team to devise an innovative tool, program or strategy that resolves key problems concerning the research workforce. For more information on how these events work, check out Science Policy in Action: Hack Days, Hack-a-thons and Hacktivism for Biomedical Research.

Awards of $500 will be given to up to four winning teams, and winning projects will be featured in FOR publications resulting from the event. In addition, teams that submit completed projects before the end of the Hack Day will be eligible for a reimbursement of expenses.

When is the Hack Day and how long will it be?
The Hack Day will take place on Saturday, Oct. 24. It will be a 14-hour event from 9am-11pm Eastern (6am-8pm) Pacific.

I'm near Boston! How do I attend the Boston Future of Research Symposium on Oct. 23?
You can register here.

Do we have to attend the Boston FOR Symposium to take part in the Hack Day?
No! Teams of enthusiastic graduate students and postdocs from across the country are welcome to participate in the Hack Day. Hack Day organizers will hold a webinar to brief everyone on the symposium's discussions and set up the Hack Day events.

Do we have to register for the Hack Day?
Yes. Only registrants will receive the password to attend the morning webinar where the specific Hack Day topics will be revealed. The morning webinar will also have instructions on how to submit your completed project.

What topics will we get to work on?
The Boston FOR Symposium will highlight gaps in our knowledge about the size and structure of the biomedical workforce, available training and job opportunities and many other issues. Broad topics of interest for the Hack Day related to these data questions will be revealed on Oct. 12, and the final

specific topics will be announced during the morning webinar on Oct. 24. Specific topics will be a mix of organizer-determined questions as well as those proposed by symposium participants.

Can I propose a specific topic to work on during the Hack Day?
Do you have a great idea you think should be explored on the Hack Day? During the Boston FOR Symposium, you can tweet @FORSymp with the hashtag #FORHack or email Gary McDowell (gary.mcdowell@tufts.edu) or Chris Pickett (cpickett@asbmb.org) with specific ideas they would like to see included as specific topics in the Hack Day. Hack Day organizers will comb through the suggestions and present the best ones during the opening webinar on the morning of Oct. 24.

How will we find out what the specific topics are?
The first 30-60 minutes of the Hack Day will be a webinar hosted by the Boston FOR and the ASBMB. This webinar will briefly recap the symposium discussions on data collection and the job market for Ph.D.s. At the end of this webinar, we will announce the specific topics for Hack Day participants to work on.

Do we have to join the webinar?
Joining the webinar is not required, but it is highly recommended that at least one member of your team attend. The specific topics will be announced at the end of the webinar. If you are registered, but miss the webinar, you will be able to find the topics later in the day by emailing Chris Pickett (cpickett@asbmb.org). Although this may slow your team's progress.

Do I have to work in a team?
Yes. Teamwork provides the greatest opportunity for creativity and the ability to bring multiple people's expertise to bear on important and difficult topics.

Can I just register myself and then find a team?
Yes! We want you to work on the issues that matter most to you. Because specific topics will only be revealed on the morning of the Hack Day, Hack Day organizers will ensure registrants have a method to network with others to facilitate the formation of teams of people with an interest in addressing common specific topics.

How many people can be a part of our team?
That's up to you. Your team can be as big or as small as you want it to be, although you will need to factor in space and reimbursement considerations.

Where are we supposed to work?
Again, that's up to you. You need to find space to accommodate your team.

You mentioned reimbursement. How does that work?
We are still working out the details of reimbursements, and we will post more specific information about this prior to the event. The purpose of the reimbursement is to defray some of the cost of your Hack Day experience. Food and drink during the day, space rental and travel around your city for the purposes of your project are all reasonable Hack Day expenses. The ASBMB will not reimburse for alcohol or tobacco products, excessive travel or other items or services it deems inappropriate. Reimbursement will require the submission of a completed project before the end of the Hack Day.

Do we have to work for all 14 hours?
No. You should work until you have a finished product. But if you find you have plenty of time to spare, you may want to reexamine your submission and consider whether you have included all of the important aspects.

What materials will I need for the Hack Day?
Minimally, you will need a computer and an Internet connection in order to view the morning webinar and submit your completed project. But you can use pretty much anything at your disposal. If you think you may want to shoot a video, it's probably best to make sure you have the equipment and some good ideas of where to film. If you think you might want to design a website, it may be best to take some time and jump onto a site that offers free hosting, like Wordpress, and figure out how to build a site with their tools. Or convince someone to join your team who has these skills. Submissions will be accepted in pretty much any form that can be transmitted electronically. Be creative!

Can my team work on multiple questions?
Yes, but we encourage you to focus. Some of the specific topics will be highly related and working on a solution to more than one of them only makes sense. However, the goal of the Hack Day is to come up with creative, workable solutions to important problems confronting the research enterprise. You are encouraged to dive deep into one or a couple highly related topics rather than trying to fix every problem.

What happens at the end of Hack Day?
Completed projects submitted before the end of the Hack Day will be evaluated by a select panel of judges. Projects addressing one of the four broad topics will compete against one another for a $500 prize. A maximum of four prizes will be awarded; however, the judges may elect to award no prize in a category if no project warrants it.

Please note, a team can only win once. If your team happens to submit projects in multiple broad topic areas, a winning entry in one broad topic area will disqualify your other projects from winning additional prizes.

How will the FOR and the ASBMB use the completed projects?
The FOR and the ASBMB will feature winning projects and other clever ideas in a variety of outlets such as social media, the ASBMB member magazine *ASBMB Today*, the FOR's symposium recap and others. Should the FOR or the ASBMB choose to use or build off of a project to further efforts in improving data collection and presentation, this will be done in conjunction with the authors of the project or after the authors voluntarily relinquish their rights to the project.

Anything about liability you want to tell us?
You are liable for your actions. If you do something illegal or in violation of the policies of wherever you may be, if you break something, if you hurt yourself or others, or if you do anything else unbecoming, that is on you. The FOR and the ASBMB do not condone such actions, and neither is liable for your actions or responsible for any damages you may incur. This is supposed to be a fun event working on important issues facing postdocs. Have fun, but please do it responsibly.