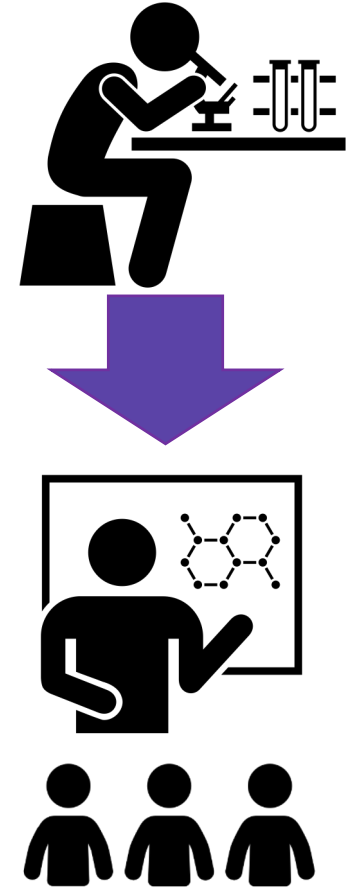


From postdoc to professor: grant-writing experience matters

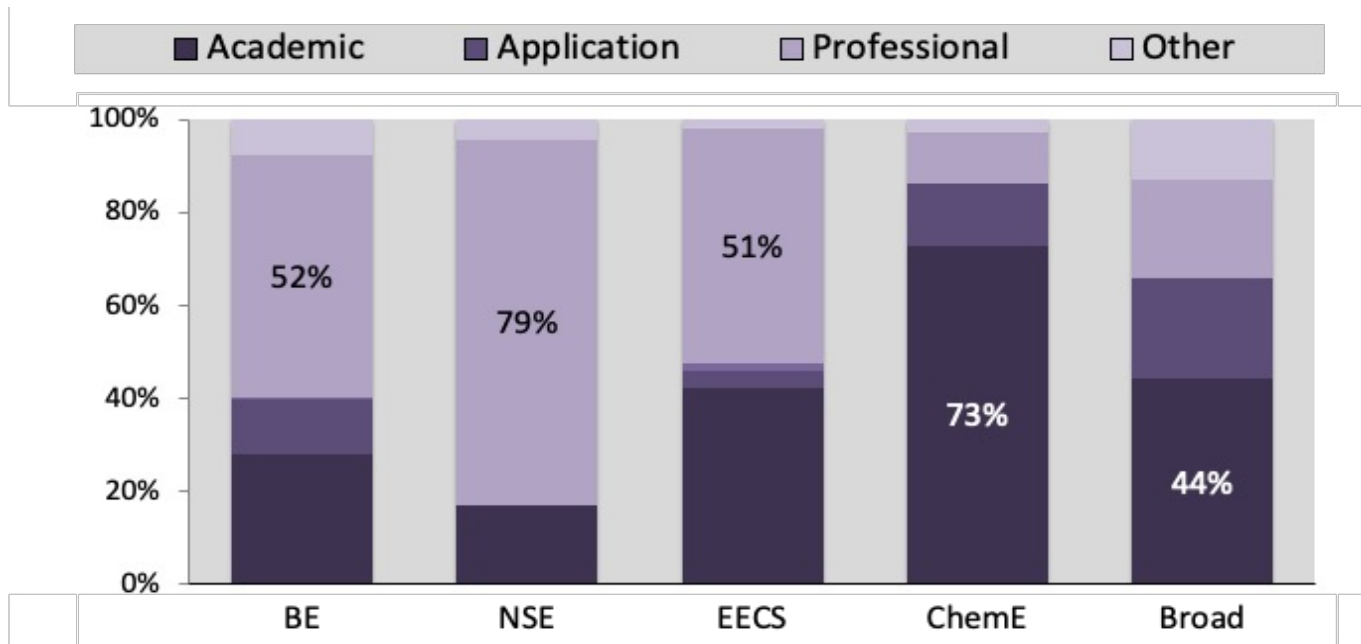
- 90% of ChemE postdocs want to pursue academia
- This transition requires:
 - Increasing **research independence**
 - Preparation on how to **lead a lab**
 - Experience **seeking grants and writing proposals**
- But time constraints and scarce opportunities outside biomedicine **limit opportunities for ChemE postdocs to practice grant-writing**
- And in interdisciplinary fields, ChemE postdocs often **must outcompete candidates with grant experience** in an increasingly competitive market



We observe a gap in this skill-building compared to other SoE Comm Labs

Postdocs in ChemE seek support for applications and professional tasks less than other Communication Labs.

2018 ChemE Postdoc Coaching Sessions



Appointment task distribution for postdocs across SoE Comm Labs.

Appointment type	Session #
Manuscript or abstract	16
Oral presentation	6
Faculty package	13
Fellowship/scholarship	2
Total	37

Grant support including **grant-writing workshops** tied as the **third most requested resource** for career support in the 2010 Postdoctoral Life at MIT survey.

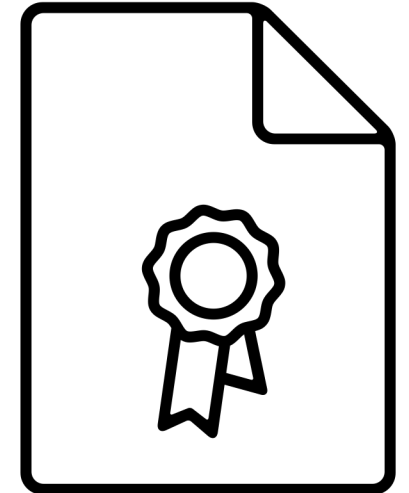
Hold more (and publicize better) **workshops** related to selecting funding sources and **writing for grants/fellowships**, etc.

For postdocs, **more emphasis and opportunities for grant-writing training**. I know some of these occur, but sometimes we cannot make them due to travel, etc. So there need to be multiple opportunities throughout the year. Also, more training on how to "start" a laboratory (supplies, personnel, planning a budget, etc.).

**Open-ended responses
from postdocs**

Proposed solution: Comm Lab facilitated **mini-research grant contest**

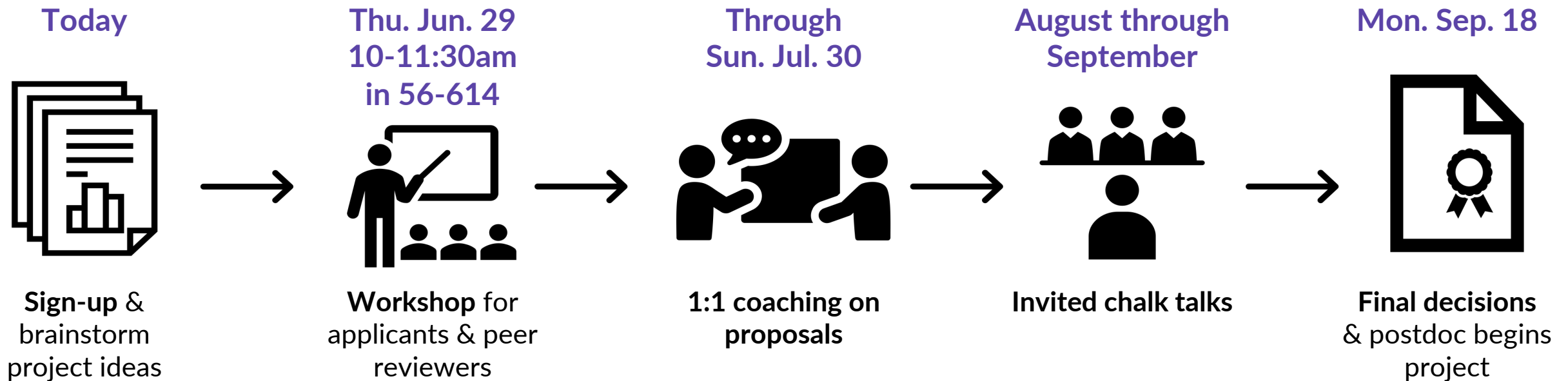
- Annual competition open to postdocs without an academic appointment.
- Modest award to be spent on research material; core facility use; travel to enable use of beamlines, off-campus research facilities, or conferences.
- Target success rate of 5-10% with ~2 awardees/year
- Selection committee: 2 faculty, ~6 postdoc peer reviewers, and 2-3 Comm Lab members



*Certificate by Denis Klyuchnikov from
the Noun Project CC BY.*

Grant Program Milestones

Proposals due **Sunday, July 30 at 10pm EDT**



Grant-writing experience that walks you through the entire proposal process

- Workshop coupled with practice and coaching **trains postdocs how to write strong, tailored proposals.**
- Interview offers **experience pitching and defending** research proposals in front of a selection committee.
- Application process itself **builds grant-seeking qualifications** for CV.
- Postdoc selection committee members **learn how to assess proposals.**
- Awardees conduct small, independent research projects in **preparation for faculty careers,** and **secure a steppingstone for further recognition.**

The goal is to **engage postdocs in a deep learning experience** that makes them **feel more empowered and effective in their research and communication**—with minimal impact on their primary research responsibilities.