

# naturejobs

**THE CAREERS  
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**W**hen academics talk casually about colleagues going into industry, they often cite salary as the prime motivation. But pay seems to be less important than other perks at some drug-development companies that made *Fortune* magazine's latest list of the top 100 employers in the United States. Genentech and Genzyme reported salaries of \$76,000 to \$86,000 for researchers. Yet despite being in the top 100 employers overall, none of these companies made it into the list of the 25 best-paid jobs.

So what is it about industry that makes it so attractive for academics? Time off, contact with management, and options to purchase stock, according to *Fortune* magazine's survey. Genentech, for instance, offers six weeks of paid sabbatical for every six years of service. Amgen provides 17 paid holidays — more than any other company in the top 100 — in addition to its standard three weeks of vacation per year. AstraZeneca holds 'town hall' meetings with employees and management, and employees have opportunities to breakfast with the US chief executive. Stock options, once a big draw to biotech companies, have played less of a role since the biotech bubble burst in 2001, but were still cited by Genzyme's employees as a key incentive.

Creating a good work environment has obvious benefits for a company, as it helps to draw top talent. But the competition is fierce for these coveted positions. In 2005, the year from which data were compiled, AstraZeneca received 631 applicants per job; Genentech received 135; and Genzyme, 120. The lowest of the four, Amgen, still had 31 applicants per job.

Companies in other industries that made the list paid even better — especially information-technology companies such as Adobe Systems, Yahoo and Microsoft, which all had salaries of more than \$100,000. Engineers at EOG Resources also make well over \$100,000 for their work — and get stock options and bonuses. The good news is that to capture the best talent — and bragging rights on the list — other companies might also start to offer better incentives.

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