

-  FOCUS
-  SPOTLIGHT
-  RECRUITMENT
-  ANNOUNCEMENTS
-  EVENTS

# naturejobs

## They'll see you now

If you're like most people, waiting for a performance review is akin to sitting in reception at the dentist's. You hope your appointment isn't going to result in any pain, but you expect the worst.

Perhaps some scientists aspire to academia in order to avoid such meddlesome interactions, but two UK lab heads say that feedback is a valuable part of the scientific process. The trick, they say, is making these routine check-ups a two-way process. They advise keeping the meetings relatively informal and focused on progress, rather than deficiency.

Kay Davies is head of the University of Oxford's anatomy department, honorary director of the Medical Research Council's Functional Genetics Unit and co-director of the Oxford Centre for Gene Function. She makes appraisals an annual event for the scientists she directs, and says they keep her researchers focused on specific objectives. Yearly meetings help them to see what sort of research opportunities exist and how to pick up the necessary skills and resources, she adds.

A different strategy is used by Steve Jackson, who heads

a lab at the Gurdon Institute of Cancer and Developmental Biology in Cambridge. He conducts informal exit interviews when students and postdocs end their stint. These casual conversations give the young scientists career goals and provide Jackson with valuable feedback about his lab's direction. He has also used the chats to find employees for KuDOS Pharmaceuticals, a biotechnology company that he created in 1997.

Labs all over the world differ in their policy towards such interactions. Some provide few opportunities for appraisals or feedback, others rely on casual conversations, still others apply a more formal framework. But in science, as in dentistry, regular appointments — whether initiated by you or your supervisor — can improve your long-term health.



**Paul Smaglik, Naturejobs editor**

### CONTACTS

**Publisher:** Ben Crowe  
**Editor:** Paul Smaglik  
**Marketing Manager:** David Bowen

**US Head Office, New York**  
 345 Park Avenue South, 10th Floor,  
 New York, NY 10010-1707  
 Tel: +1 800 989 7718  
 Fax: +1 800 989 7103  
 e-mail: [naturejobs@natureny.com](mailto:naturejobs@natureny.com)

**US Sales Manager/Corporations:**  
 Peter Bless  
 Classified Sales Representatives  
 Tel: +1 800 989 7718

**New York/Pennsylvania/  
 Latin America:** Kelly Roman  
**Midwest USA/Maryland/  
 NIH:** Wade Tucker  
**East USA/Canada:**  
 Janine Taormina

**San Francisco Office  
 Classified Sales Representative:**  
 Michaela Bjorkman  
 West USA/West Corp. Canada  
 225 Bush Street, Suite 1453  
 San Francisco, CA 94104  
 Tel: +1 415 781 3803  
 Fax: +1 415 781 3805  
 e-mail: [m.bjorkman@naturesf.com](mailto:m.bjorkman@naturesf.com)

**European Head Office, London**  
 The Macmillan Building,  
 4 Crinan Street,  
 London N1 9XW, UK  
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4961  
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996  
 e-mail: [naturejobs@nature.com](mailto:naturejobs@nature.com)

**Naturejobs Sales Director:** Nevin Bayoumi (4978)  
**European Sales Manager:** Andy Douglas (4975)

**Advertising Production Manager:** Billie Franklin  
 To send materials use London address above.  
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4814  
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996  
 e-mail: [naturejobs@nature.com](mailto:naturejobs@nature.com)

**Naturejobs web development:** Tom Hancock  
**Naturejobs online production:** Niamh Shields

**European Satellite Office**  
 Patrick Phelan  
 e-mail: [p.phelan@nature.com](mailto:p.phelan@nature.com)

**Japan Head Office, Tokyo**  
 Chiyoda Building,  
 2-37 Ichigayatamachi,  
 Shinjuku-ku,  
 Tokyo 162-0843  
 Tel: +81 3 3267 8751  
 Fax: +81 3 3267 8746  
**Asia-Pacific Sales Director:** Rinoko Asami  
 e-mail: [rasami@naturejpn.com](mailto:rasami@naturejpn.com)