

Career change after the PhD

Switching to a scientific project manager position

Contents

1. Working as a scientific project manager

- The research centre



- The position

- Checking it matches your profile

2. Starting the application process during the pandemic

- Tailoring the supporting documents

- Making use of social networks online

- Q&A



Working as a PM: the research centre

- The European Genome-phenome Archive (Barcelona, SP - Cambridge, UK)

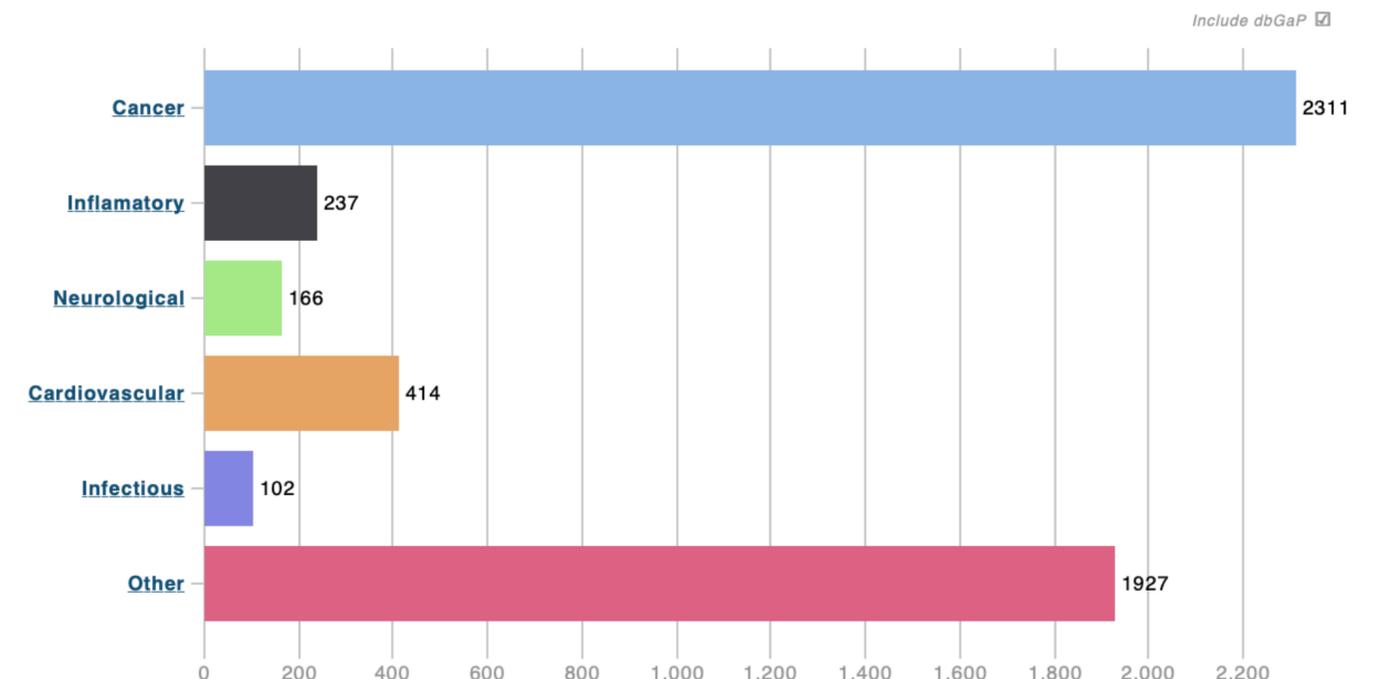
The EGA is a service for permanent archiving and sharing of all types of personally identifiable genetic and phenotypic data resulting from biomedical research projects.

In Barcelona, we are affiliated with the Centre for Genomic Regulation. We participate in over 15 international research projects where we bring our expertise in:

- data management;
- data access and security;
- data discovery;
- metadata standards.

What is in the EGA?

Studies in the EGA by disease





Working as a PM: the position

- My main role, as a scientific project manager, is to liaise between clinical research centres and hospitals, to understand their needs in terms of data storage, management, discovery, and access, with our team to adapt our service in order to better serve the scientific and clinical community.
- Specifically, my tasks encompass:
 - Organising and driving meetings with clinical and research partners
 - Leading working groups (e.g. to improve metadata standards)
 - Creating and adopting data models for specific fields (e.g. oncology)
 - Writing papers / Giving talks
 - Outreach



Working as a PM: the profile

- Interests and work ethics
 - Being very collaborative — rather than competitive
 - “Jack of all trades, master of none”
 - 40h/week with no extra time except for conferences
- Skills (developed in our PhD ;)
 - Very strong organisational skills
 - Very good “people skills”
 - Attention to detail
 - Good writing — and especially editing — skills
 - Ability to work autonomously
 - The rest can be learned ;)



Applying as a PM: tailoring the docs

Lauren Fromont

A PhD in biomedical sciences with six years of international experience in managing research projects and making sense of intricate human data

lauren.fromont@gmail.com

+1 (438) 354-7738

Nationality: French

Summary of qualifications

- Strong organizational skills and project management experience in the fields of cognitive and biomedical sciences resulting in 10 publications and 85,000\$ in funding
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills: presentations to 18 international conferences and extensive experience in training, teaching and outreach to a variety of audiences
- Problem solver with a passion for using advanced to understand biomedical data, resulting in the first application of Random forests on electrophysiological data

Management & research skills

- **Management of multiple research projects from planning to delivery** · led 3 projects involving different collaborators and coordinated data analysis teams on 4 additional projects
- **Project tracking** · drafting and monitoring written agreements with funding agencies and ethics boards
- **Coordination of meetings** · scheduled, prepared agendas, and wrote reports of weekly project meetings · actively participated to departmental assemblies as student representative · coordinated visits of international collaborators including travel details and planning of meetings and activities

Experience

Data Analysis Coordinator · Proyecto OASIS Colombia · 2020 — present

- lead the data analysis team and mediate with the web design team
- perform text mining from hundreds of individual online testimonies
- develop quantitative analyses of large datasets
- translate results to inform public policies in the health sector

Lecturer in neuroscience · University of Montreal · 2020

- taught an introduction to imaging techniques applied to language research
- created training strategies to develop critical thinking
- created collaborative groups to improve scientific written and oral communication
- adapted the course online by recording tutorial and lectures videos for Youtube, creating an online calendar, and moderating the discussion forum

Linguistic Editor · Quebec HIV/AIDS Portal · 2019

- edited and corrected the contents of the Portail's website for language (pvsq.org)

Research scientist · University of Montreal & McGill · 2014 — 2019

as a PhD candidate in Biomedical Sciences

- coordinated scientific projects leading to publications (see [Google scholar](https://scholar.google.com/))
- performed advanced statistical analyses of large datasets (EEG data)
- communicated complex scientific results (18 international conferences)
- obtained and managed competitive grants at the national level

Research assistant · Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona · 2013

- coordinated a research project in cognitive sciences leading to 2 publications
- recorded and edited audiovisual experimental materials
- managed multiple testing schedules

Education

PhD in Biomedical sciences, Université de Montréal · 2019

- 'Excellence Program for International Students' Fellow · Quebec research fund



Applying as a PM: tailoring the docs

I am pleased to submit my application for the Project Manager position to coordinate the [REDACTED]. I have a PhD in biomedical sciences with experience in managing international scientific projects with interdisciplinary teams, which make me a good fit for this position.

Work philosophy

Over the course of my research career, I have developed a global perspective of the research process, including meeting deadlines and incorporating all partners involved — from collaborators to funders. To ensure that important deadlines will be met on time, I decompose objectives into smaller tasks that are easy to track, and organized regular meetings to review everyone's progress and decide on future steps. All eight students I supervised completed their projects and successfully applied for funding with my support and training. I make sure the connexion between researchers and external partners is strong: I proactively report to international collaborators, funding agencies, and institutional review boards with a detailed timeline of project achievements and deliverables. As a doctoral candidate, I obtained and managed 85,000\$ in institutional and national funding and published three peer-reviewed articles within my project timeframe.

Concrete examples from my PhD

I thrive when working simultaneously on multiple projects with interdisciplinary teams. As a data analyst, I have contributed to five research projects and collaborated with a variety of experts, including neuroscientists, health workers, and data scientists. I value strong communication with collaborators where we fully share our skills to benefit everyone involved. Currently, as a lead data analyst on a project that gathers user data from an online platform, I am liaising with web designers who rely on my research expertise to guarantee that the platform is both effective and user friendly. I am particularly comfortable in multicultural environments, and I see cultural diversity as a strength. I speak five languages, and I have worked with numerous cultural groups, including indigenous communities in Mexico.

General overview of my profile and achievements

“Soft” skills



Applying as a PM: the online presence

I focused on LinkedIn (but since then I have been developing my activity on GitHub)

- Build a profile for the job you want to have
- Showcase your PhD experience as work, not studies
- Curate the CV part, include key words that are present in job ads
- Make meaningful connexions of people who works in a related positions
- *Talk to these people*: I had various conversations where they explained the job, read my resume etc: it's incredibly useful and they might even tell you about an open position you did not know about!



Applying as a PM: the online interviews

I had three interviews for this specific position

- One initial one with the team lead (20 mins)
- One with managers, members of the team, and the team lead (1h)
- One with the team lead and the EGA director (1h)

A few tips

- Pay a lot of attention to how you treat the future team and the admin staff by email
- Connect early, make sure mike and video work fine!
- Do not give up on body language even though it's not a very organic situation

Thank you!

