



Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Chemists



John Hyatt

**Senior Research Associate
Eastman Chemical Company
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Education:

B.S. - Chemistry, Wake Forest University
Ph.D. - Organic Chemistry, Ohio State University
Postdoctoral Study, Harvard University

Job Description:

Senior Research Associate in Organic Chemistry

Advice to Students:

"A person working in my area should have a profound personal interest in organic chemistry as well as a great deal of patience and imagination."

Interview:

"My specialty is doing organic chemistry research and development, particularly involving naturally-occurring compounds. In my work, I attempt to find better ways to obtain, through synthesis and isolation, commercially valuable organic compounds which are used in nutrition, medicine, and industrial chemistry.

A typical project might involve designing and carrying out a synthesis of an isotopically-tagged version of a reasonably complex target molecule, or searching for a more efficient method of isolating and purifying a naturally-occurring compound, or developing a new and improved route to some compound known to be of commercial value. Other possible projects involve such tasks as isolating and identifying minor impurities in products.

A typical day is spent largely running and working up chemical reactions, determining product structure, and designing further reactions to try. A significant part of my time is also spent studying literature, doing library research, and having technical discussions with colleagues. I also plan work for technicians and occasionally spend a few days engaged in report writing, preparing publications or patent applications, refereeing manuscripts and grant proposals sent to me by journal editors and funding agencies. I work alone about 70 percent of the time and in teams the rest of the time. My work varies from requiring almost no interaction with others, to being intensely cooperative with others. I work in an outstandingly nice, clean, well-

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maintained set of labs with excellent equipment and instrumentation. Another Ph.D. scientist and two technicians share the lab with me.

A person working in my area should have a profound personal interest in organic chemistry as well as a great deal of patience and imagination. The failure rate in research projects is so high that the work would be very disheartening to someone who did not take it as a personal challenge, and an area of personal interest."

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