Potential PI Questions

• What is the timeline for the postdoc position? One, Three, or Five years?
  What is the timeline of the grant that the postdoc stipend is attached to?
  How many years of funding are guaranteed?
  What is Stipend? Are raises included?

• Does the PI have a specific project for you? If so, what is it?

• How many postdocs do you currently have in your lab?

• How many graduate students do you currently have in your lab? Will I be responsible for any supervising of these graduate students with their projects?

• What are the PI's expectations of the postdoctoral scientist in terms of lab work, leadership of the lab team, management of the lab?

• What type of professional positions have previous postdocs taken?

• What is the postdoc publication rate with your group of postdocs? With graduate students?

• Does the PI want you to focus mostly on publications?

• Professional Development Opportunities –
  Do your current postdocs attend/present at professional conferences?
  Are your postdocs encouraged to attend on campus professional development workshops?

• What type of grant writing opportunities are available to your postdocs?

• Work Style –
  Work Schedule: Ask expectations for on campus versus off campus flexibility.
  How often will we meet? Lab group versus one-on-one.
  Tasks: How are timelines and priorities determined? PI/postdoc/team effort?
  Interruptions: Is it okay to stop by your office uninvited with questions? When is it not appropriate?

• Would you please describe the work culture in the lab?

• What is your communication style?
  Are emails the best way to communicate with you between set meetings?
  What is your response rate to emails? And how quickly do you expect email responses?

• Describe your mentoring style?
  Share your expectations of mentoring. Ask yourself will this be a good match?

• How would you describe your approach to life balance?

• If possible, talk to current postdocs and graduate students in the PI's lab. Inquiry respectfully, but be direct. If you cannot talk to them face to face, ask the PI to give you email addresses or phone numbers of current or previous postdocs who can provide some background information.

Postdoc/Grad student Question Examples:

Would you recommend taking a postdoc position with this PI?

If you had the opportunity to go back in time, would you do this again?

What would you do differently?

How would you describe the lab culture?

Does the PI celebrate achievements, encourage teamwork?

What is the dominant language?

Are the work hours rigid or flexible?

What is the PI’s management style?

Are postdocs able to pursue related but independent research?