

**Guidelines for career support in the  
postdoc phase at the HZI  
(Postdoc Guidelines)**

*This document has been translated from German into the English language for better understanding of non-German-speaking employees. Please note that in case of conflicts or differences between the English and the German wording, the German version is the legally binding version and prevails over the English version.*

## **Preamble**

The postdoctoral researchers (postdocs) at the HZI are important contributors. Through their research and expertise, they contribute significantly to the research of urgent questions in infection medicine in the sense of the translational mission of the HZI. In addition, they support the qualification of future infection researchers.

These postdoctoral guidelines are intended to support scientists in the postdoctoral phase in making the best possible use of the excellent scientific environment at the HZI for their research as well as further qualification opportunities for their further career development. The HZI is also committed to attracting excellent scientists to continue a scientific career at the HZI and is increasingly drawing attention to the opportunities in technology transfer and entrepreneurship. The principles of this guideline apply to all postdocs at all HZI locations.

## **Definition of the postdoc phase**

The postdoc phase describes the professional period immediately following the doctorate, during which postdocs strengthen their scientific profile and define their further career path within or outside of science and obtain appropriate qualifications. As highly qualified scientists with professional experience, postdocs assume a great deal of responsibility for their own research and career development. The Principal Investigators (PI) provide guidance and support to the postdocs in this process. The HZI creates the optimal conditions for a successful postdoc phase in terms of infrastructure, qualification offers and networking opportunities. The postdoc phase usually ends five years after the doctorate at the latest, or at the time of a temporary appointment as a scientist, if this falls within the five-year period.

## **The postdoc phase**

At the beginning of the postdoc phase, a new research project is designed in line with the Plan in accordance with the scientific strategy of the HZI, which includes as concrete, independent contributions to the respective research topic as possible.

An essential component of the postdoc phase is the qualification for a career within or outside of science. This is achieved in particular through relevant publications, patents, presentations of one's own work at conferences as well as interdisciplinary qualifications and, to a reasonable extent, through the supervision of doctoral students and students.

At the latest three years after the start of the postdoctoral phase at the HZI, a decision regarding the direction of the further career should have been made. During this time, postdocs usually complete their scientific projects and take the necessary steps for their further career. The HZI supports postdocs and their PIs in their

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decision-making process at an early stage by providing appropriate offers. Periods of the postdoc phase that could not be used for further qualification due to raising children, caring for relatives or illness are taken into account as prescribed in the WissZVG.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The responsibilities of the postdocs**

Postdocs plan their own career development, reflect on their personal professional objectives, and identify the qualifications required to reach this purpose. Postdocs select and develop one or more research projects within the scientific orientation of the HZI or the topic of the application to the third-party funding body in consultation with the scientific manager. Interdisciplinary cooperation opportunities within and outside the HZI that can be linked to this topic are also taken into account. In this context, postdocs assume professional and ethical responsibility, follow, and communicate the principles of good scientific practice.

### **The responsibility of the PI**

The PI allows postdocs a high degree of personal responsibility and scientific freedom. This may also include direct supervision of younger scientists. In particular, the manager supports the publication of scientific results or invention disclosures and patent applications that give adequate visibility to the scientific contributions of the postdocs. This also includes active participation in conferences and the training opportunities offered at the centre.

Within the framework of regular discussions for employees, the manager provides early and regular constructive feedback on the research project and on further necessary qualification measures and points out possible career perspectives. As far as possible, contract terms should be adapted to the duration of the project and, as a rule, should not be less than two years; justified exceptions are possible. Funds raised by postdocs themselves for their own position are available to postdocs without restriction.

### **The responsibility of the HZI**

The HZI supports and accompanies the postdocs and provides all necessary resources for the successful implementation of the projects and the further qualification of the postdocs.

### **Contact point for postdocs**

The HZI establishes a central contact point for postdocs. One of its tasks is to ensure the implementation of the guidelines set out here. The contact point advises and

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supports all postdocs working at the HZI and addresses the special concerns of international postdocs and postdocs with family ties.

### **Good scientific practice**

The HZI is committed to communicating the principles of good scientific practice and to providing appropriate supervision and support.

### **Postdoc networks and postdoc representations**

The HZI explicitly supports the establishment of an internal postdoc network as a representation of interests, also appropriately involve postdocs in processes and decisions relevant to them at the HZI.

### **Work-life balance**

The HZI generally ensures family-friendly conditions. This includes, for example, the provision of qualified childcare during school holidays and support in finding childcare places on site and in the event of short-term childcare bottlenecks. Flexible arrangements regarding working hours and place of work regardless of gender.

Seminars and team meetings are to take place in hybrid format in the framework working hours by arrangement in order to enable all postdocs to participate as far as possible.

### **Women in science**

A particular concern of the HZI is to offer women a professional environment that is as flexible and family-friendly as possible, which, among other things, enables them to remain in science through attractive part-time offers and childcare facilities.

### **Start of the postdoc phase**

#### **Recruitment**

The recruitment process of postdocs follows a systematic and transparent procedure in the form of a structured interview taking diversity and equal opportunities into account. The profile's requirements must be clearly communicated in the job advertisement as thoroughly as possible.

#### **Employment**

Postdocs are usually employed on a fixed-term basis. If possible, the fixed-term employment contract should not be less than two years or correspond to the duration of a project funded by third-party funds. Extensions should not be less than one year. Postdocs should not be employed at the HZI for longer than five years on a non-permanent position.

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## **Remuneration**

Postdocs are appropriately remunerated based on of TVöD 13 or TVöD 14 in agreement with their cactivity.

The HZI welcomes postdocs who successfully acquire external grants with a high reputation and offers them comprehensive access to all supporting structures at the Centre.

## **Qualification Agreement and Career Development Plan**

Postdocs establish a research project and qualification goals with the manager at the beginning. These are documented digitally in a Career Development Plan (CDP) at the latest in the subsequent appraisal interview. The CDP is regularly discussed and, if necessary, adapted in the course of the appraisal interviews. The Contact Point for Postdocs provides support in drawing up a CDP.

## **Implementation of the Postdoc Project and Qualification**

### **Staff appraisal interview**

In annual interviews recorded by the postdocs, the PI and the postdocs discuss the progress made with regard to the goals of the CDP agreed in writing and openly discuss possible questions and problems. The results are documented by mutual agreement and the schedule for the next meeting is agreed. In addition to the discussions for employees, the PI and the postdocs should have a detailed career discussion no later than the beginning of the third year after the start of the postdoc phase. The aim is to assess the research performance to date and to discuss a possible adademic career or non-academic career. Another person, such as an external mentor or the postdoc's contact point, can also be included in this discussion.

The PI provides the scientific management with information about the time of any interviews that have taken place. Three months before the end of the employment contract or the stay, a final status discussion takes place between the postdocs and the managers.

### **Visibility**

The visibility of one's own work is of great importance for profile building and for establishing networks in national and international competition. This applies in particular to participation in conferences and expert committees.

### **Personnel management and teaching experience**

Postdocs should also acquire initial personnel management and teaching skills to an reasonable extent. This includes, to an appropriate extent, supervising Bachelor's and Master's students, involvement in student internships, lectures within the HZI Graduate School, and co-supervision of doctoral researchers.

### **Career counselling and further qualification**

Postdocs and managers are responsible for the agreements made. The HZI offers career development counselling via the Postdoc Contact Point and provides information on existing mentoring opportunities. In principle, counselling and qualification offers are also available to the postdocs' PI.

### **End of the employment relationship**

At the latest six months before the end of the employment contract (or fellowship, if applicable), there should be clarity about further career prospects. At the end of the postdoc phase, a final discussion should take place that appropriately reflects not only the project progress but also the possible development of the postdoc in science.

### **Entry into force**

The guideline comes into force with immediate effect and is valid for an indefinite period of time.

Brunswick, the  
Management

Prof. Dr. D. Heinz

E. Gerndt (Comm)