

Summer Newsletter of the PostDoc Network

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Editorial

Dear PostDocs,

We hope your work motivation stays high this summer in spite of the heat and the sport events. The PDN committee continues to organize events that attract PostDocs, and we aim to stay productive throughout the year. We continue our close collaboration with the DKFZ Career Service, with whom we recently co-organized the Clinical Research and Regulatory Affairs Career Day (see a brief report on page 4 of this newsletter). Additionally, Barbara Janssens, the head of the Career Service, gave us a preview of the European Science Open Forum 2014, which will take place in the end of June (see pages 3-4).

The article on pages 1-2 touches upon the legal issues of PostDoctoral career in Germany, explaining the so-called Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz. Yördis Ehlers, who gave a presentation on this topic in May, strongly urges PostDocs to get in touch with their contact in Human Resources and get informed about their personal situation.

Career planning and academic training are very important, but so is professional and personal networking. The PDN committee's Welcome&Get-Together, organized by Hadeel Khallouf, proved to be very successful. This regular event attracts a number of people, who are happy to meet their fellow PostDocs once a month outside the lab. Pages 5 and 6 feature a report on Hadeel's recent efforts to bring us together.

The PDN committee always welcomes new members. At the moment we are looking for a new editor of the newsletter. If you would like to develop your networking and communication skills, this position is just right. If you prefer to try yourself in something else or have your own valuable ideas, there is always an opportunity for you at the PDN. Join us!

Olga Ucar
Editor of the PDN Newsletter

Time-limited contracts in science: an insight into German law

On the 6th of May 2014 more than 50 PostDocs attended a presentation by Yördis Ehlers from DKFZ Human Resources Department on the German law regulating temporary contracts for scientists (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz, or WissZeitVG). Ms. Ehlers gave a talk on the ins and outs of the law, after which she and Celina Cziepluch answered many questions and tried to clarify the law application for us. The law is not new, and many people are aware of it; some call it "the 12-year rule". However, for many PostDocs the precise calculation of the 12-year is unclear, and PostDocs from abroad often do not know whether their working experience outside Germany is counted and to

which extent. Therefore we decided to summarize the main message in this newsletter. But please notice that WissZeitVG is quite tricky and that the review of the respective 12-year period really depends on the individual cases. So the following information gives only an overview of the regulations and cannot be regarded final.

WissZeitVG (the abovementioned law) regulates the temporary employment of scientists at German Universities and non-university research institutions (such as DKFZ). It states the limits of the time period which scientists can spend on their professional qualification (obtaining a doctorate degree and obtaining experience after PhD – the PostDoc phase), and insures that during this time scientists are allowed to be employed by time-limited contracts. After the qualification period (which takes around 12 years, see details below) the scientists can only be temporarily employed in accordance with WissZeitVG, if they are funded by a third party and if the respective requirements of the WissZeitVG with regard to third party funding are fulfilled. Core funded temporary contracts cannot be based on WissZeitVG after the 12 years (for exemptions please see details on the next page).



However, limitations based on the so-called Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz are still possible after the qualification phase – but therefore, you need a certain reason for limitation (if you change the employer and haven't had an employment at this employer within the last three years, you are also allowed to have a temporary contract without a reason for two years). As a consequence, this topic affects every scientist working in a German research institution or university. Therefore, please contact your HR officer in order to get the information when your 12 year period will end.

Your professional training period begins when you start working on your PhD research topic. If you switch your topic/institute during your PhD, the time is not counted again from 0. You are allotted 6 years for the completion of your doctorate (only working contracts count with more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the regular working time before obtaining the PhD); if you do it within a shorter time period, the time you "saved" can extend your PostDoc time afterwards (please notice that for this extension period it doesn't matter whether you are paid a salary or a scholarship (or not at all) during your PhD – it still counts).

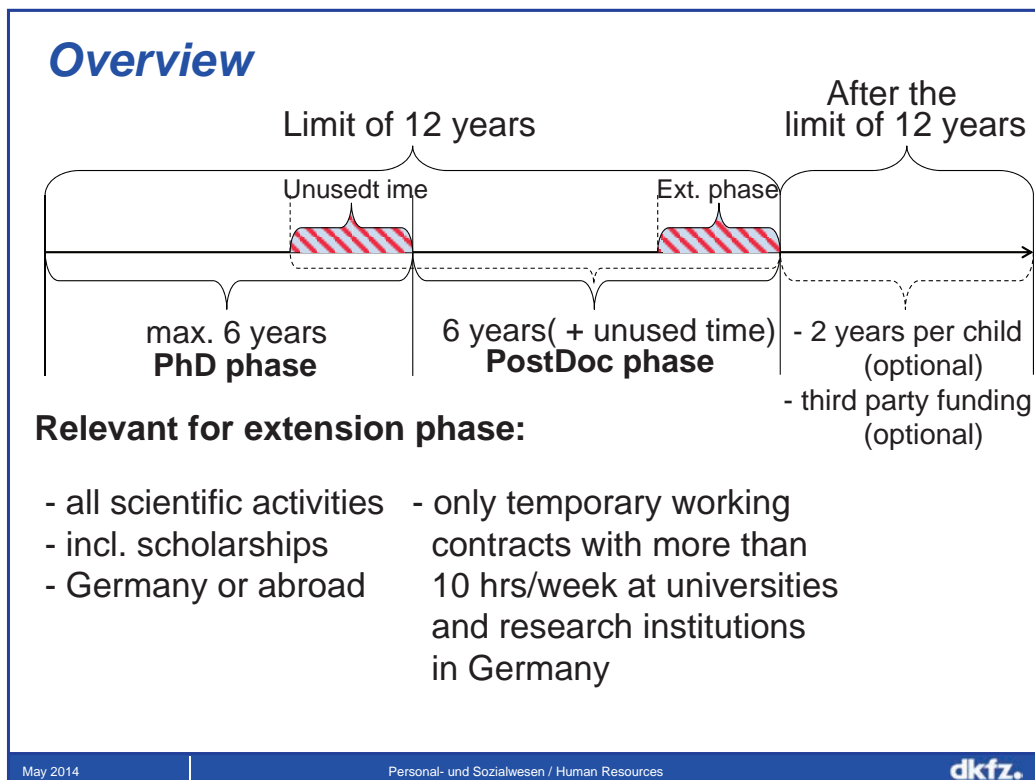
The PostDoc time is initially limited to 6 years with the exception of medical doctors, who have 9 years (prolonged by the time not used during PhD training), but here only the time spent on a salary counts (consider yourself lucky if you had a scholarship as a PostDoc, it saves you some time). In addition, the clock is not ticking in the following 4 cases: 1) when you have a permanent contract, 2) when you are abroad or working in industry, 3) when you are unemployed, and 4) when you have a contract for less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the regular working time.

If you have children and have to take care of them during your training phase, you can get a bonus time of 2 years per child. Precondition is that the child is born before or during your PhD/PostDoc period and the fact of child care. But you have to notice that there's no claim to a working contract. It's just a legal basis for a temporary contract beyond the 12 year limit. So if the employer is willing to temporarily engage you after the 12 years, this is possible due to this regulation. Furthermore, in case of maternity or parental leave you are allowed to prolong the qualification phase by these times. This is only possible immediately after the end of your contract during which maternity or parental leave have been taken.

As you can see from the summary slide, the 12 years can actually be longer under some circumstances (child care, PostDoc time on scholarship etc.). It is also worth mentioning, that for example for those who did their PhD out of Germany and only came here as PostDocs, the default state would be 6 years. However, if it took you less than 6 years to complete your PhD, your PostDoc allotted time can be prolonged. We and the Human Resources Department strongly encourage you to find out just how much time is left in your personal case. The easiest way to do so is to send your CV to your contact person at the HR and ask them. Why would you want to know? It could make your career planning easier and spare you some unpleasant surprises. But knowing is just the first step, of course. If you plan an academic career, you might want to take the first steps towards independence well before your "12-year" time is up.

Olga Ucar

with the help of Yördis Ehlers, Human Resources



Courtesy of Yördis Ehlers

Life after a PhD: How professional career advisers support researchers in Europe



JUNE
21-26
SCIENCE
BUILDING
/ BRIDGES



A preview of the ESOF 2014 meeting

On June 21-26 Copenhagen hosts the biannual European Science Open Forum – ESOF 2014. This time DKFZ is contributing by organising two sessions in the Career Programme – but also the Science, Policy, Society, Business and Journalism sessions promise to be exciting.

<https://esof2014.pathable.com/#meetings>

On this occasion, the DKFZ Career Service together with Sarah Blackford (Society of Experimental Biology) took the initiative to gather for the first time, provide insights and career advice in two sessions. You can view and join discussions on LinkedIn, where we established a group called CARE: a forum of Career Advisers supporting Researchers in Europe.

Part I: Panel Discussion - What does Europe offer and what do researchers need?

As the quality of doctorates in Europe is improving, there is an increasing need to support the careers of doctoral scientists, across a range of disciplines from humanities to the natural sciences, in academia and beyond. But what type of support do they need and who can deliver it? Currently career support varies between institutions and from country to country, with few professional

career advisers. We will review doctoral career perspectives in Europe, based on recent surveys and the experience of career services. Early career researchers will be able to provide feedback on what they need to enable them to take informed decisions about their future.

Part II: Round tables with European career advisers

Expert career advisers, many of them recently established on the European continent, will offer career advice and hand-outs so that early career researchers can inform themselves about job markets and available career support. Facilitators aim to discuss and present information according to a) country and b) career guidance expertise. Following a recap of the previous panel discussion, participants will further discuss their needs for career development and facilitators will feedback each group's priority outcomes to the CARE forum of Career Advisers supporting Researchers in Europe, so that they can be taken forward to formulate an action plan. The new platform for long-lasting collaborations between career advisers aims to improve 'life after a PhD'.

Participating Career Advisers:

Barbara Janssens (DKFZ), Sarah Blackford (Society for Experimental Biology, UK), Vincent Mignotte (ABG, France), Gerlind Wallon (EMBO, Germany), Rachel Coulthard (EMBO, Germany), Sarah Shinton (UK), Clare Jones (UK), Katrin Wodziki (Göttingen, Germany), Tina Persson (Karolinska Institut, Sweden), Jasmien van Daele (Ghent, Belgium), Laurence Theunis (Belgium), Alysia vandenBerg (Paris, France), Berenice Kimpe (ABG, France), Elisabeth Pain (Barcelona, Spain), Vibeke Broe (Aarhus University, Denmark), María Dóra Björnsdóttir (Iceland), Gerrit Rößler (German Academic International Network, New York).





Part III: CARE Meeting: a Forum for postdoctoral career guidance

CARE members assess the outcome of the panel and round table discussions. The aim is to set some action points for the CARE group to continue discussing and exchanging info.

From the discussions with scientists, we would like to learn

- a) What are the main career issues for researchers currently?
- b) What types of career support is a priority for researchers?

For the CARE group we want to formulate action points on

- a) How can career advisers best help researchers?
- b) How can career support best be delivered?

We will also discuss how to keep our discussions on LinkedIn structured and useful, and when/where to meet next time.

If you like the view and participate in the discussions feel free to join on LinkedIn and Twitter.

www.linkedin.com/groups/CARE-Careers-Advisers-supporting-Researchers-6613591

[www.twitter.com/#CAREsof](https://twitter.com/#CAREsof) and [#CAREeradvisers](https://twitter.com/#CAREeradvisers)

Barbara Janssens

Clinical Research and Regulatory Affairs Career Day

This year we had a Career Day focusing on Clinical Research and Regulatory affairs on the 24th of March 2014. Clinical research is a broad field and covers a range of topics from pharmacovigilance and clinical research organization to drug safety and regulatory affairs and involves public and private sector institutions playing a role at different levels. The wide range of speakers invited to this Career Day corroborated this viewpoint of diversity and possible directions of career development for scientists.

The career day was divided into two sessions. The morning session mainly focused on clinical research with two speakers each from academia and industry and a speaker with independent business as a freelance medical writer. The afternoon session introduced the regulatory affairs and pharma consulting with one speaker from academia and two speakers each from pharma and consulting respectively. The morning session started with talks from Dr. Andreas Eisenmenger from NCT and Anna-Lena Gamer from KKS Heidelberg who gave the deep insight of project management in clinical trials, skills required and possible entry into the field of clinical trials through a junior position like Clinical research assistant. Dr. Tilo Netzer from Phamalex talked about the regulatory affair manager positions and their demands in near future, which he expects to gradually increase with time and expanding market especially in developing countries. During the afternoon session Dr. Susanne Becker from spm2 introduced the topic

of pharmacovigilance. She also emphasized the growth in the field of pharmacovigilance and therefore demand of interdisciplinary scientists willing to enter CRO is paramount. The last two talks of the career day were from big multinational consulting companies in pharma, NNIT and IMS consulting group.

To conclude, the Clinical Research Career Day was a successful event not only in terms of number of participants but also the positive feedback given by the participants. The PDN Career Seminar team thanks all the speakers for their talks and fruitful discussions with the participants during the lunch break.

Apar Jain



Welcome & Get-Together

It has been one year since I started organizing the Welcome & Get-Together events at the PDN. I decided to take over this mission as I strongly believe in the importance of welcoming new PostDocs and networking in a friendly atmosphere. I try to organize different events once a month on different days of the week, so that everyone has a chance to join. In every event, I had the chance to meet very nice PostDocs and other scientists not only from DKFZ but also from other Heidelberg institutes and was happy to see that over time more and more PostDocs have joined.

One Get-Together that I always wanted to organize was the international dinner in March this year. It was great that many PostDocs have joined and prepared such amazing specialties. Our special international dinner menu had Argentinian, Chinese, German, Italian, Macedonian, Spanish, Syrian, Russian, and Turkish dishes (pictures on the next page might give some impression).

Here is a list of the events I have organized over the last year

- May 2014: German dinner at Palmbräugasse
- April 2014: Middle-Eastern dinner (falafel)
- March 2014: International dinner
- February 2014: Bowling at Firebowl
- January 2014: Italian Dinner at Zafferano
- November 2013: Heidelberger Christmas Market/ Weihnachtsmarkt
- October 2013: Brewery Tour & Beer Tasting &/or Dinner at Kulturbrauerei Heidelberg
- September 2013: Brauerfladen & Flammkuchen & CO at Bier Brezel
- August 2013: Falafel & Jazz
- July 2013: BBQ-Picnic

- June 2013: Outdoor-Get-Together (drinks)

The general aims of the Welcome & Get-Together group are:

- To welcome new PostDocs and give them useful information about life in Heidelberg and work at DKFZ
- To encourage networking and exchange of ideas by organizing Get-Together events for PostDocs from DKFZ and other institutes in Heidelberg

If you are interested, please sign up in our mailing list so that you can get the invitation for future get-together events and other relevant information:

<https://listhost.inet.dkfz-heidelberg.de/mailman/listinfo/postdocs-network>

And please spread the word especially among new PostDocs in your group.

If you have any questions or suggestions, do not hesitate to contact:

Hadeel Khallouf

h.khallouf@dkfz.de

For the next Get-Together we will go to the Handschusheimer Kerwe, a traditional feast that takes place every year in Handschusheim with some nice food stands, drinks & music. If you have never been there it is worth giving it a try.

http://www.tiefburg.de/kerwe_2014.htm

Date: Monday, 23rd June at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting point: in front of the ATV INF 242, then we cycle to Handschusheim. If you are late, you can find us near the Tiefburg in Handschusheim.





Pictures from the March Get-Together taken by Hadeel Khallouf

Upcoming events:

**PDN committee meeting: 23rd of June, 11:30,
A2.228 (ATV)**

**Get-Together: 23rd of June
(details on page 5)**

**“Rowing against cancer”: 7th of September
Join us in the PostDoc rowing team**

**A unique opportunity for those who would like to
try themselves in publishing!**

**The PDN committee is looking for a new Editor of
the PDN Newsletter**

**You will be part of an active and productive team
and develop your networking and communication
skills
Join us!**