

Spring Newsletter of the PostDoc Network

dkfz.

Editorial

Dear PostDocs,

The aim of the PDN is to assist PostDocs in their career development and networking and to represent their interests towards the DKFZ management board. Thanks to our annual PostDoc survey, we know you a little better now. Most of the PostDocs that answered our questions are very young and have not been PostDocs for a long time. We are convinced that our activities can help you in choosing your career path and interacting with other scientists. The article below provides you with a detailed summary of the survey.

The Career Seminar series is running with a great success. Recently we had a chance to learn more about career possibilities in the area of Patenting and Technology Transfer. Three speakers from DKFZ, EMBL and BASF Technology Transfer units had agreed to share their insights with us. On pages 3 and 4 you will find a brief report written by Inés Fernández Ulbarri, who is now heading the Career Seminar Group in the PDN.

We also have some good news for those of you mainly inter-

ested in the academic career paths. A new working group focusing on academic careers was recently started. The first project was to organize interviews with DKFZ group leaders, but more projects are in development, e.g. organization of an Academic Career Seminar Series addressing most relevant topics, for example "How to write a successful grant application?". Any input to develop new projects within the PDN Academic Career Group is welcome!

Last but not least, we started organizing this year's PostDoc Retreat. It will be a 2-day event, featuring scientific sessions, talks by invited speakers, and, of course, social activities. The exact date and place will be announced soon. Look out for the ads!

We wish you luck, success, and a little sunshine to make the spring feeling stronger. If you want your ideas put into action – join us at the PDN Committee!

Olga Ucar

Editor of the PDN Newsletter



Photo: Nick Kepner

Who are the DKFZ PostDocs?

Last summer, the PDN was brainstorming on how to improve its support to the PostDocs at DKFZ. While discussing our personal situations, we found that even in a group of only six PostDocs we had a large variety of aims, career plans and working environments. Therefore we decided to ask the whole PostDoc community to complete the picture using the annual PostDocs survey. We are happy to present here a summary of it and invite you to contact us (postdoc-network@dkfz.de) for comments, suggestions or further questions.

Our survey was answered by 82 PostDocs, which is more than half of the active PostDocs registered on our mailing list and SharePoint. Exactly half of the participants were female. PostDocs come from all over the world, although the majority is from Germany (52%). 58% of the PostDocs

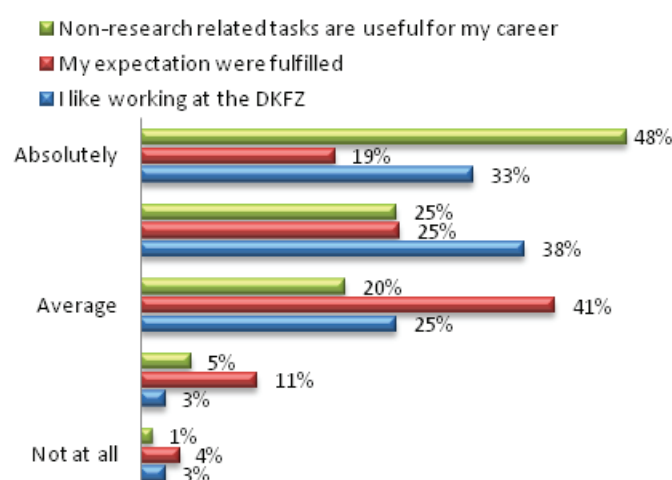


Figure 1: PostDocs like their working environment at the DKFZ

The Network for PostDocs at the DKFZ <http://www.dkfz.de/en/postdoc-network>

Join us on facebook! [PDN@DKFZ](https://www.facebook.com/PDN@DKFZ) Mailto: PostDoc-Network@dkfz.de



Figure 2: Reasons making the DKFZ attractive (multiple choice question).

are under the age of 34, and 56% received their PhD less than 5 years ago. Most PostDocs are doing their first Post-Doc here (68%) and remarkably, 72% have no children.

Our survey showed that PostDocs at DKFZ like their working environment and that their situation at work matches the expectations they had when applying for the positions (see Figure 1). 96% of the PostDocs that answered our survey are required to do tasks that are not directly related to their own scientific projects. However, 54% of those are satisfied with this situation. As shown in Figure 1, most of them consider these non-research related tasks useful for their future careers.

Our survey revealed that various reasons make the DKFZ attractive for PostDocs. As depicted in Figure 2, the most prominent reasons are the image and reputation of the institute (55%), its scientific infrastructure (50%) and its location in Heidelberg (44%). Some former PhD students, representing 17% of the participants, stayed at DKFZ after their defense, which for the majority was less than a year ago.

The publication record of the DKFZ PostDocs is very good. Most PostDocs that have received their PhD over a year ago have also had a 1st author publication. 44% of the PostDocs published in journals with an impact factor between 5 and 10 and 9% published in journals with an impact factor that exceeded 10. Most PostDocs (88%) attend scientific meetings and if they do, they are usually active participants of the meetings either as presenter (45% oral; 29% poster), part of a jury (1%), session chair (2%) or in other ways (10%).

Particularly interesting questions for the PDN were ad-

ressing goals and career plans of the PostDocs as well as strategies to reach them. Interestingly, the survey revealed that 86% of the participants wanted to pursue an academic career at the beginning of their PostDoc. As it is now, 37% of the PostDocs aim for a career in academia, 34% want to go to the industry and 26% are undecided yet (see Figure 3). From the PostDocs who plan to pursue an academic career, 77% want to become a professor. However, only 8 of these PostDocs (about one third) confirmed having an own 5-year-research-plan.

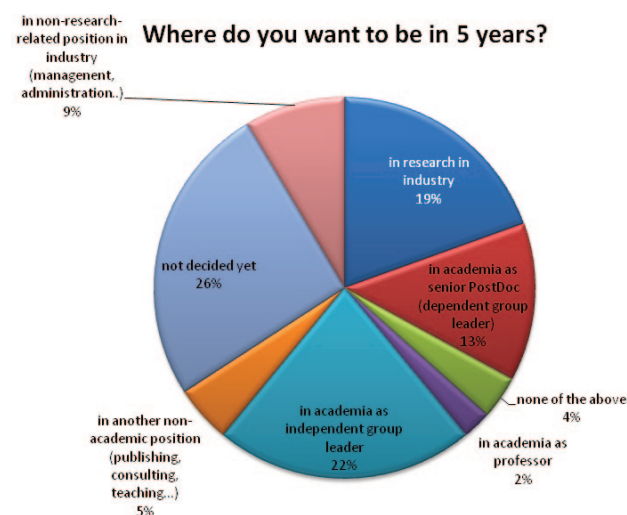


Figure 3: Career goals of the PostDocs. 37% aim for an academic career, 34% want to be in industry and 26% are undecided.

Generally, PostDocs feel that they need more information on career development and especially more information and help in pursuing an academic career. The PDN plans to meet these demands with the newly founded Academic Career Group, headed by Christina Falschlehner. To gather more information on how to be successful in academia, members of the Academic Career Group organized interviews with young DKFZ group leaders. More information on the interviews will be available in an upcoming article in the DKFZ *Intern* magazine.

Although the PostDoc situation at DKFZ is already very good, there is room for improvement. Feel free to contact us and share your ideas!

We would like to thank the DKFZ PostDocs for answering our survey, for the valuable information they provided and for the great feedback they gave on running PDN projects. Thanks a lot!

Sarah Mang, Coordinator of the PDN Survey Group

The PDN Survey Team 2011: Vera Böhm, Maiwen Caudron-Herger, Frank Götschel, Frauke Henjes, Christina Laufer, and Sarah Mang

Career Seminar - Patents and Technology Transfer

The sixth Career Seminar organized by the PDN took place on March 20th. We introduced for the first time a very enriching new seminar format, in which we hosted three experts in the field of Patenting and Technology Transfer: Dr. Ruth Herzog (DKFZ), Dr. Birgit Kerber (EMBLEM) and Dr. Christine Amshoff (BASF). These successful women share their studies in biology, their PhD in life sciences and their passion for the job. At different stages of their academic career, they decided to go for a career in the field of Patents and Technology Transfer because, apart from their interest in science, they liked other topics like business, economics, management or patents. According to their particular interest, skills and circumstances, they chose to drive their career development in different directions inside this field. Currently they occupy different job positions and during the seminar they gave us insights into training, experience and skills required to hold such positions. Besides they provided a detailed description of their responsibilities and duties as well as information about job perspectives and where to seek for jobs.

The seminar started with **Dr. Ruth Herzog**, Head of the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) at DKFZ since its establishment. After her PhD in genetics and before coming to DKFZ she worked for Roche in sales and marketing and clinical trials in oncology. During her talk, she gave a fantastic introduction about general aspects of the OTT, focused mainly on description of how the OTT closes the gap between invention and innovation, how Intellectual Property (IP) management works and which parties are involved in the technology transfer process. Furthermore, she provided a list of the positions that are offered in OTT and the background required for them (see box above).

Dr. Herzog stressed that for all positions it is required to have a PhD and experience in IP management (for instance, being an inventor or registered technology transfer professional) and experience in technology transfer or in industry. Additionally it is important to have good skills in communication and leadership as well as business and negotiation abilities. Besides that it is helpful to be abroad, have a Master in Business Administration (MBA) and training in patents or marketing (for instance, Beuth Hochschule). Finally, Dr. Herzog indicated that, apart from the OTT positions, there are job possibilities in the industry, e.g. business development, competitive intelligence, patent searchers and agents. Importantly, Dr. Herzog offered the possibility to discuss personally with her about potential patent training in the OTT at the DKFZ.

Dr. Birgit Kerber, Business Development Manager at EMBLEM (EMBL Enterprise Management Technology Transfer GmbH), gave the second

POSITIONS in Office of Technology Transfer (OTT)

Director (science, legal, economics and patent)
Positions with primarily scientific background

- Technology manager
- Licensing manager
- Business development manager
- Patent agent (science and legal)

Other positions

- Contracts manager (legal)
- Marketing manager (business, science)
- Funds manager (finance, business, science)
- Venture Capital manager (finance, business, science)

presentation. She performed a PostDoc at EMBL after a PhD in molecular genetics. At that time she realized that she was interested in business economics and attended classes at the Management School in Strasbourg. It was difficult for her to combine those studies with her PostDoc, but she was convinced about it and determined. Following her PostDoc she was offered a group leader position at EMBL, but declined it to join the recently founded EMBLEM. Dr. Kerber explained that her position is one of an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) manager and she is involved in scope of protection, patent strategy (country, timing, cost), studying market opportunities (size, access, competition), licence agreements, establishing collaborations and providing consultancy to external partners, and negotiating. Furthermore, she referred to some useful websites to find more information about technology transfer (see box below).

The third talk was given by **Dr. Christine Amshoff**, Patent Attorney at BASF. She started to work for Promega in the Technical Service department after obtaining her PhD in molecular biology. As she heard about the patent office from this company, she decided to become a Patent Attorney. Before getting her current position at BASF, she worked in the team of Dr. Herzog at DKFZ. Dr. Amshoff gave a great outlook about the education and training that must be followed to become a Patent Attorney. The training in patent law firm takes 3 years after the studies at the

www.protoneurop.org
www.autm.org
www.astp.net
www.les.org



Photo: Nick Kepper

University (PhD or PostDoc are not required). Afterwards it is possible to become a German Patent Attorney or European Patent Attorney, which requires passing specific exams at the respective patent office. Alternatively the training can take place in a company which takes about 10 years. Apart from the official education, Dr. Amshoff continued training and obtained a degree from the Master Business School (CEIPI) in Strasbourg. She also indicated that German skills (oral and written) are essential for her job. Additionally, she said that as a Patent Attorney you can work in the industry, chancellery or in a Patent Office, e.g. the European Patent Office (EPO) or the German Patent and Trade Mark Office (DPMA).

The three speakers agreed that their jobs are keeping them very busy, but at the same time they enjoy themselves, because they work at the interface between differ-

ent areas (legal, business, science and politics). They are in contact with many people from different disciplines. They like learning and training continuously and are not afraid to take challenges. Therefore, these are good points to take into consideration in order to find out whether you could fit in such positions.

To conclude, PDN Career Seminar Group thanks again Dr. Herzog, Dr. Kerber and Dr. Amshoff and you all for attending this seminar and for the lively round of discussion with the speakers. We hope to see many of you in our next career seminar.

Inés Fernández Ulibarri
Coordinator of the Career Seminar Group

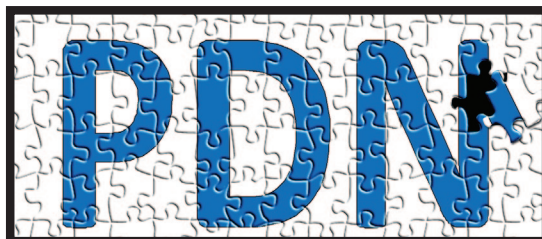
Dr. Alexandra Kienast, scientist at Qiagen

Alexandra Kienast was part of the PostDoc initiative that created the PDN about two years ago. After her PhD at DKFZ in the group of PD Dr. Dick, she went to the group of Prof. Dr. Klingmüller for a PostDoc. Although it was early clear for her that she would not stay in academia, she said that her experience with biotechnologies and automation processes, acquired during her PostDoc, was essential to get her current position. She left DKFZ during the summer of 2010 after applying for an advertised position at the company Qiagen and getting an offer for another position, more suitable for her. As life-cycle manager, she takes care that the pipeline from production to selling of the machine runs without problems and even better. Within this multifaceted job, she is in contact with many companies, travels in Europe and Asia, and brings people together. For this, coordination and communication are very important skills. During her time in the new-formed PDN Committee, she improved her teamwork and team management skills, which are both relevant and very helpful now. She was actively involved in the establishment of the PDN Career Seminar although she left DKFZ before the very first seminar and could not appreciate the results of her engagement. She explained that in her view the aim of the Career Seminar is to give PostDocs the opportunity to get information, exchange ideas and discuss with speakers about their successful next step after their postdoc time either in academia or industry; all of this in a relaxed atmosphere since the invited speakers are accessible and informed about the expectations of the participants. To conclude, Alexandra insisted on the importance of networking. She strongly recommends PostDocs seeking for a job in industry to use Internet platforms like Xing, LinkedIn or Experteer.



Thank you Alexandra for sharing your experience with us! Thanks for the friendly interview!

interview by Maiwen Caudron-Herger



YOU can fit in here!