UNIVERSITÄT BIELEFELD

GrACe | Graduate and Academic Career Development Centre

Toolbox Career Development Discussions

Preparing for a Career Development Discussion: A Guide for PhD students and Postdocs

- ✓ **Career goals and aspirations:** Reflect on your career goals and aspirations, and find out about possible career prospects or development pathways that might be suitable for you (within or outside the university). It is not essential that you already have a fully formed plan; uncertainties and unanswered questions can also be discussed during the career guidance meeting. However, it is helpful if you prepare yourself so that, during the discussion, you are able to outline the status of your goals and any issues still requiring clarification as specifically as possible. To this end (regardless of the career guidance session), you can also seek a personal consultation with the Graduate Centre team (graduatecentre@uni-bielefeld.de) or, regarding non-university career opportunities, with the Career Service.

- ✓ **Preparing information:** Prepare concise information about yourself. Compile career-relevant details – where possible, supplement each point with your own assessment of what is already going well or comes easily to you, and where you see room for improvement or might require further support:
    - Career-relevant tasks / skills / projects: research progress and projects, committee work, teaching, awards, publications, presentations, networks, symposia, conferences, ...
    - Publications and presentations
    - Funding opportunities / scholarships
    - Professional development
    - Any other interdisciplinary skills / evidence

- ✓ **Identify sources of support:** Consider which resources, funding (e.g. programmes, scholarships, etc.), further training opportunities or advisory services might be available to you to help you pursue your career goals. If necessary, compile information on these so that you can bring them up during the discussion if required. You can find information on the Graduate Centre's website.

- ✓ **Consider your talking points before the discussion:** Consider in advance what you hope to achieve from the meeting, which topics you wish to discuss and what questions you would like to ask. At Bielefeld University, the aim is to promote a transparent approach to different career goals and to value career paths both within and outside academia equally. Particularly if you do not yet have clear career ideas or are not pursuing an academic career, you have the option of holding your career prospects meeting (in advance or exclusively) with the Career Service (advice on non-academic careers) or the Graduate Centre (advice on academic careers). If you are unsure or are concerned that the discussion might be difficult or contentious, the Counselling Center for Staff and Managers is also available to provide confidential advice on specific cases.