Peer Coaching Programme 2019-2020

Making a Career after the Postdoc
Peer Coaching Programme „Making a career after the Postdoc“
for experienced PhD researchers and postdocs

The University of Oldenburg has established this Peer Coaching Programme in order to support early career researchers preparing for either a career in science and academia or for a high-ranking position in the non-academic field. The programme addresses in the first place international doctoral researchers in the final phase of their PhD and international postdocs, but is also open to German participants who are comfortable with the sole working language of the programme being English.

The programme pursues two objectives:

1. Supporting the career development of international (and German) postdocs through information on the German academic system and the German job market (modules 2 and 5), through the development of leadership competence (modules 3 and 4) and through individual coaching (module 6).
2. Strengthening the personal exchange with colleagues from different disciplines via peer coaching. Peer coachings open new perspectives on working methods, courses of action, and career options, and ideally lead to a lasting cooperation even after the end of the peer coaching programme (module 1 and additional meetings of the coaching teams approximately every 2-3 weeks).
Module 1: Kick-off
30.01.2020, 13-17h and 31.01.2020, 9-17h

You are looking for a group of like-minded people to discuss work-related issues? You want to increase your motivation and self-discipline? You like to participate in an ongoing quest for improving your own time- and self-management? Maybe you need some fresh ideas about how to steer your career? Then a peer coaching team might be just the right thing for you.

As a postdoc you have a lot of different responsibilities: Research, publishing, teaching, administrative work ... Most postdocs have to figure out on their own how to best approach this multitude of roles and responsibilities. The insights, ideas, and experiences of other postdocs could be highly valuable. If you see the benefits of discussing the challenges of your situation with others, if you like to profit from their feedback and support then check out the peer coaching workshop.

In the kick-off workshop you learn about the method and structure of peer coaching. You have a trial run. And then you decide whether you want to participate in a peer coaching team. A team consists of 4-6 members (from different disciplines). The team meets every two to three weeks. And each meeting is structured in a way that allows each member to address an issue that is of relevance for him or her. Everything that is related to your role and work as a postdoc could become a topic, i.e. how to structure your day efficiently, how to deal with a conflict in your team, or how to approach the next steps in your career.

If you are interested just join the kick-off workshop and find out whether you want to start your own team.

Trainer

Dr. Jan Stamm is a trainer and coach with years of experience in academia. His target groups are PhD candidates, postdocs, and professors from all disciplines.

He studied philosophy, linguistics, and economics at the Universität Dortmund, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the Nottingham University. He finished the interdisciplinary graduate program of the Berlin School of Mind and Brain with a philosophical PhD.

His major focus is time- and project-management for researchers. He is also an expert on stress competence and supports PhD candidates, postdocs, and professors in their dealing with pressure and strain. The third pillar of his work is the viva defense workshop.

Module 2: Career Development through Research Funding

08.04.2020, Workshop 14h30-18h and 24.04.2020 (individual virtual coaching by individual arrangement)

Researchers are increasingly faced with expectations to raise third-party funds if they want to pursue a successful research career. Yet, applying for third-party funds is not an end in itself and could even be detrimental to research careers, if disconnected from own scientific or life plans or scientific goals. This workshop, thus, aims to clarify which kinds of funding opportunities are suitable for the participants’ respective purposes. In addition, it offers insights into the objectives and practices of research funding institutions and peer review procedures. Individual short coaching sessions during the second day will help the participants to pave their way towards successful applications in view of their needs and ambitions.

Methods

- Input by trainer
- Group discussion
- Structured group work
- Exercises
- Feedback

Trainer

Dr. Beate Scholz has worked internationally as a strategy consultant, trainer, and coach since 2003. Until April 2008, she was a program director for research careers at the German Research Foundation. Her work focuses on research career development as well as international research collaborations.

She serves as a reviewer to several research organisations as well as expert to the European Commission and the OECD. In 2015, she acted as an advisor to the Luxembourgish Presidency of the Council of the European Union on ‘Gender equality’ and ‘Researchers’ Career Development’. She has been principal advisor to the European Science Foundation’s Career Tracking and Monitoring Platform, and is a member of a worldwide network conducting research on doctoral education. From 2013 to 2017, she acted as an invited expert of the Max Planck Presidential Commission for the Evaluation of the Max Planck Society’s Research Career Strategy.
Module 3: Leadership Competence & Supervising Doctoral Researchers  
20.04.2020, 9-17h and 21.04.2020, 08h30-16h30

Many group and project leaders assume their first postdoc phase of leadership and lead doctoral candidates in addition to students and non-academic staff. In order to successfully shape these first leadership situations and to advance one’s own career at the same time, solid knowledge of central management tools and practical experience are helpful in addition to leadership skills. The seminar supports the participants in assuming these leadership tasks. The participants reflect in which areas their leadership skills have already been developed and deepen their leadership skills and knowledge.

Contents in brief
The workshop covers knowledge on leadership in a scientific surrounding and acquaints the participants with different leadership tools.

- Leading and management in a scientific surrounding
- General management tasks and tools
- Management by objectives (MBO)
- Delegate and control tasks
- Motivation, conditions for a motivational surrounding
- Communication, difficult conversations
- Common conflicts arising during supervision of PhD, Master, and Bachelor students
- Exchange of good practice among the participants
- Peer consulting

The seminar enables the participants to organise their own research projects using successfully practiced management tools. All theoretical models are applied to the academic environment in Germany. The exchange of good practice methods is supported.

Methods
The seminar comprises mostly practical exercises, which are accompanied by short lectures on indispensable leadership tools. The participants are guided to apply well-established managing techniques to organise their own research group and/or projects.

Trainer:
apl. Prof. Dr. Hendrik Hölscher studied physics at the University of Hamburg and has been doing research in the fields of nanotechnology and biomimetic surfaces ever since. After various posts as a postdoc, he led a junior research group at the CeNTech of the University of Münster for five years. Since 2008 he has been head of department for biomimetic surfaces at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). He has more than 20 years teaching experience at universities. His cross-scientific interest is leadership and organisation in science and academia.
Module 4: Conflict Management – From Confrontation to Collaboration
14.05.2020, 9-17h30 and 15.05.2020, 9-16h

This workshop introduces you to key competencies for successful dialogue facilitation and conflict resolution. Using analysis, self-management and communication tools learned here you can turn each confrontation into a constructive process.

Discussion points are

- Conflict dynamics (Glasl)
- Competitive vs. co-operative behaviour in negotiation
- Clashing personality types (Riemann), gender- and culture-related issues
- Identifying with conflict partner
- Conflict analysis tools (Thomas & Kilmann, Schwarz)
- Harvard Negotiation Project
- Listening, giving feedback and asking questions in a solution-oriented manner
- Short- and long-term self-management
- Dealing with “difficult people” and attacks, saying “No” successfully
- Conflict moderation roadmap

Different personalities, goals or strategy preferences, different communication styles or behaviour can lead to misunderstanding and conflict, to name just a few. More often than not, the results are time-consuming and destructive. Over time, motivation and performance levels of those involved may drop and gradually the situation becomes more difficult to resolve by reaching an understanding or consensus. This scenario does not have to be inevitable at all!

Methods

- Trainer input
- Demonstrations
- Exercises
- role-playing games
- group discussions
- video clips
- individual feedback
- group discussions.

Note: Participants are encouraged to bring their own cases for case work and group feedback.

Monika Maria Thiel is Owner-Manager of Creative Dialogue e.K., studied theology (Münster and Tübingen) as well as I/O Psychology, Psycholinguistics and Intercultural Communication at the LMU. Certified in commercial mediation, supervision, training, collaborative practice and the Graves Values System-Model, she was an editor at Springer Verlag, Heidelberg, for 15 years. Monika specialises in leadership, team development and conflict management. With 20 years of experience, she has developed international teams and individuals, as well as running teaching assignments at various universities and academies in Germany and abroad.
Module 5 Tailor-made Job Applications: How to Apply for a Job and be Hired
18.06.2020, 9-17h and 19.06.2020, 9-17h

This workshop has been designed for postdoctoral candidates who want to prepare for the job search in a systematic way, or who want to learn more about application strategies and feel more confident in the application process.

The workshop will provide participants with an overview over the different employment opportunities available for them. They will learn which strategies they can apply to find a job that matches their profile. Participants will also learn more about the career options that different occupational fields can offer.

Participants will develop individual job application strategies based on their personal and professional background and employment options.

The relevant criteria that are obligatory for a written job application will be covered. Participants will also be given the opportunity to have their application documents analysed and optimised, if desired.

The last part of the workshop will deal with the job interview. Which aspects should an interviewee pay special attention to, and what are the different elements of a typical job interview? Finally, participants will act out individual elements of a job interview to feel more confident in these situations.

Contents in brief

- My job profile and employment options
- Networking in a targeted way
- Career prerequisites and application process
- My individual application strategy
- How to structure and present application documents in such a way that they appeal to potential employers
- Main aspects of a successful job interview

Methods

- Brief presentation
- Discussions in (small) groups
- Peer advice
- Resource oriented coaching exercises

Prof. Dr. Uta Bronner is a specialist for leadership and career planning. After she studied psychology and economics at the Freie Universität Berlin and did her PhD at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB) she was active over 10 years in diverse functions of the Robert Bosch GmbH. Today she works as a professor for Human Resource Management at the University for Applied Sciences Stuttgart (HFT Stuttgart). She brings a unique mixture of theoretical expertise and practical experience into her trainings and coachings. Uta Bronner has been working as a trainer and coach in science for 20 years.
Module 6: Individual Coaching (by individual arrangement)
02.-03.07.2020

Coaching offers you an excellent opportunity to reflect upon a question, decision, or challenge that you face. The coach offers you professional guidance for finding your own standpoint, answers, and solutions by asking you questions, giving you feedback, and engaging your creativity. You will not get external advice but a structured approach that supports you in reflecting upon and developing your authentic perspective. Possibly topics encompass everything that you deem of importance with respect to your work and role as a postdoc, i.e. career related issues, questions about leadership or conflict resolution. In a coaching session you take the lead by highlighting what you want to work on.

Depending on the overall number of participants the coaching session will be between 30-45 minutes.