



CAREER PLANNING II

Explore Career Options



GET IN TOUCH!

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CAREER CENTER & POSTDOC OFFICE

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If you search online for suitable symbols for the word “career”, you get a lot of suggestions depicting a ladder, a pedestal, or something similar. The term career is often automatically associated with a hierarchical way of thinking. In our understanding as career coaches, this is a little different. We want to support you in finding your individual career path. This does not always have to be stringent nowadays.

When working with coaches and external experts within career planning, you often work with tools that foster new ideas based on creative thinking. Furthermore, you start to prove these ideas and try to structure them.

The second part of our do-it-yourself workbook series will focus on how you can discover, explore, and plan career options. It also supports you in finding answers to the following questions:



- What are my career perspectives?
- How can I further develop my career plans?
- How important is my network for my future career?
- What steps do I have to take next?

OVERVIEW OF TOOLS:

DEVELOPING PERSPECTIVES

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NETWORKING

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An important starting point for a fulfilling career is to know yourself well, to know your values, competences, ideal working conditions, and desires. These insights can provide a good starting point to develop further career perspectives. In the first section, we will show you two tools to encourage you to develop new ideas.

Let's start by looking at ourselves from the outside: How do others (colleagues, friends, supervisors) perceive us? What strengths, special talents, and preferred roles do they see in us? The change of perspective can help to complement our own picture and to further create career perspectives.

Another possibility is to take a step out of your current work and life situation, and ask yourself what you would actually do in a one-year sabbatical. It might give you new ideas and inspiration for your future plans.



PERCEPTION OF OTHERS

Complete your considerations in the workbook Career Planning I - How to prepare Exercise Competences

Think of four situations in which you felt particularly competent and comfortable. One or two situations can also come from your private life.

For each situation, think of a person who is close to you or who knows you well. This can be a family member, a friend, a colleague, or your supervisor. Describe your competencies, values, and role **from this person's point of view:**

What competences would this person observe in you? What values could an outside person suspect behind your behaviour in this situation? What role did you play in this situation from the perspective of the observer?

You are also welcome to use this template to ask people personally for their impression.

Some inspiring questions for reflection:

- Which competences were mentioned again and again?
- What values occur frequently or can possibly even be summarized under a superordinate value?
- Do the values mentioned indicate a common direction?
- Which roles seem to be your preferred ones?

Duration: 45 minutes

Situation Place, occasion, persons, duration etc.	Competences Knowledge, behaviour, social, technical, and methodological skills, motivation (internal, external)	Values Acknowledgement, influence, knowledge, cooperation, curiosity, respect, tolerance, autonomy etc.	Role Lecturer, employee, team member, supervisor, friend, partner, expert, colleague, critic, supporter
Situation 1			
Situation 2			
Situation 3			
Situation 4			

SCHOLARSHIP

Imagine that you have one year of funding to finally do exactly what you always wanted to do. You can plan this year now. What does this year look like?

1. You see a schedule dividing your scholarship into 4 quarters. Everything you write above the timeline is what you want to learn, everything below it is something you want to contribute to. Learning and contributing can also be related, e.g. first learn a skill (foreign language), then apply it (fellowship abroad).
2. Think about how you would use your scholarship and write your thoughts in the outline. You may do something different every month or create quarters, etc. Each section should also have a short description or a symbol (e.g. stay in Paris = Eiffel Tower).

3. Run through your planed scholarship one or two days later and ask yourself the following questions:

- Which type of activities fulfill me?
- Why do these activities fulfill me?
- Is it possible to earn money with this activity?
- Can I adapt these findings to my present career path?
- Do I want to make a switch in my career?

It is possible that the things you want to deal with are currently missing in your own life. If so, take a close look here as well and highlight these aspects.

Duration: 60 minutes

LEARNING

1 2 3 4

CONTRIBUTING

?!



INTERVIEW WITH MYSELF

Imagine you are 5 years (or 10 years; whichever period suits you) further in your life and you are doing well. You lead your life the way you want to lead it. Imagine being interviewed with the following questions. What are your answers?

Duration: 20 minutes

Where are you now?

Where are you in 5 years time?

Where are you in 10 years time?

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How do you feel to be there in 5/10 years? (pressured, challenged, excited,...)

What does your family/personal situation look like? What does your job situation look like now?

What has changed/is going to change? What is new in your life?

What/who supported you on your way?

Looking back on the last 5/10 years: How do you feel?

What positive developments can you perceive?

What challenges have you faced?

How did you manage to overcome obstacles?

NEXT STEPS AFTER FINISHING EACH EXERCISE

Now it is time to become more concrete! Please reflect on your next steps with the help of the following table. You will find that you can now use your findings from the previous exercises and compile them here! You can always look at it and check what needs to be adjusted.

Duration: 60 minutes



My professional options	Action planning What information do I want to obtain and from where? What would I like to try, what would I like to experiment with, how do I want my behaviour to change?	Further development What opportunities for further training do I want to find out about?
1		
2		
3		



You can take this double page as a poster from the booklet.

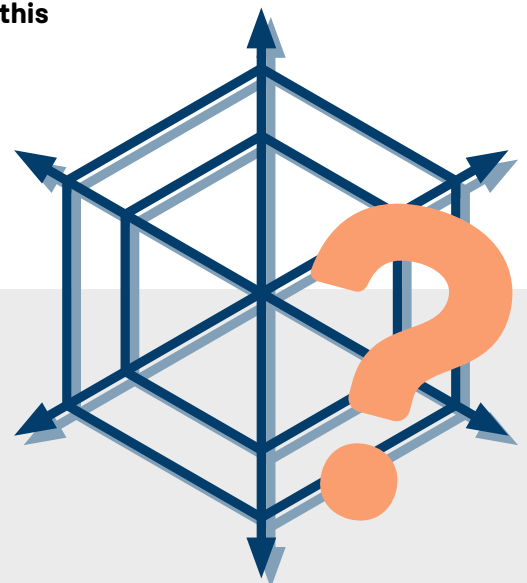


Support from network What kind of discussions do I need to have and with whom?	Ways to reward and motivate myself What motivates me to follow this option?	Problem solving If things do not go as planned, what are my strategies against setbacks? What can I learn from these experiences?

According to the definition, networking describes “... all behaviour (...) that serves to establish and maintain informal relationships, the (potential) effect of which is to facilitate work-related actions of the persons involved by voluntarily providing resources and optimising mutual benefits” (Wolff & Moser, 2006). In brief: networking is about give and take. By supporting people, you can assume that they will support you in return if you ask them to.

At this point, it is also quite clear that an extensive network can be beneficial for one’s own professional development. By making your strengths visible and by offering them on given occasions, you become more present in your network. This also means that your name is linked to concrete skills and competencies, and there is a realistic chance that you will be remembered if professional development opportunities arise in your network.

But what is the best way to start building a professional network if this has only happened by chance so far? The next tools will help you.



SPIDER WEB

Think of your network as a spider web.

- Who is currently part of your network?
- How are these people connected to each other?
- Who do these people know that you do not know?

Especially the last question is easier to answer by researching in business social media platforms such as LinkedIn or Xing.

Look not only at the names of the contacts around you and beyond, but also at their positions:

- Which position(s) sound(s) interesting?
- Which employer(s) arouse(s) your interest?

In this way, you can see where it would be worth further investing in your network. Identify three people who you will then contact as described in the “Interviewing Experts” exercise on page 14.

Duration: 30 minutes

At the end of this workbook, it's time to have a look at the broader picture: your competencies, values, interests, preferred working conditions, your network, and the feedback from others.

What are the options for your future career path? In order to align your inner compass well and to perceive possible interesting options, it is advisable to plan your next steps in more detail. This can serve as a basis for you to look at from time to time. Are you still on track? What has worked well? What is new and deserves to be considered?

On pages 10 and 11, there is an overview for individually working out your different plans and ideas. Now, you need to reflect on each situation, considering the following aspects:

- Concrete action planning
- Further development to increase your chances
- Support from your network to get first-hand information or answers to open questions
- Problem solving to overcome setbacks

