

Career development plan

Pilot version

name of Postdoc:

name of academic host:

date:

How to use the career development plan

The following questions support structured career reflection and career discussions between postdoctoral researchers and their academic hosts. The career development plan (CDP) helps postdoctoral researchers and their academic hosts to reflect on progress, set goals, and plan professional development. It is designed to complement the official annual personal dialogue, offering optional discussion points during an annual meeting (eg. MAG). The completed document remains with the postdoctoral researcher.¹

Note: In this document the term **postdoctoral researcher** refers to all scientific collaborators with a PhD who have a fixed-term contract, regardless of their job title.

The term **academic host** refers to a senior faculty member responsible for the postdoctoral researcher's appointment, typically the principal investigator or another designated supervisor.

FOR ACADEMIC HOSTS:

The career development plan encourages post-doctoral researchers to take an active role in career planning and professional development. As an academic host, your support is essential in helping them prepare for future career steps.

Instructions:

- Before the meeting, review the researcher's goals, both individual and project-related.
- Consider how you can support their development.
- Be ready to provide constructive feedback on their work, skills, and your collaboration.
- During feedback: Be specific, highlight strengths and areas for growth, offer actionable suggestions.

FOR POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS:

Your current position is a period of evolution towards the next stage of your career, within academia or beyond. This career development plan has been designed to support reflection on your career. It ensures key topics are discussed annually with your academic host.

Instructions:

- Prepare sections A-D before the meeting.
- Lead the discussion on your career development.
- Complete the action plan (section E) during or after the meeting.
- Use the available resources at UniFr and beyond:
 - [Graduate Campus Unifr](#)
 - [Euraxess Career Development for Researchers](#)
 - [Vitae Career Development](#)

¹ This career development plan is inspired by similar documents, and most notably the [Individual Development Plan of the University of Lausanne](#).

A

Achievements over the past year

Reflect on:

Publications, contributions to conferences, outreach activities, other outputs, grants, writing proposals, research activities, clinical activities, teaching and supervision, collaborations and networking, institutional and social involvement, career development.

Skills developed or improved over the past year:

Consider existing competence frameworks: The European Competence Framework for Researchers or The Vitae Researcher Development Framework

B

Professional objectives for the coming year

Consider:

Publications, contributions to conferences, outreach activities, other outputs, grants, writing proposals, research activities, clinical activities, teaching and supervision, collaborations and networking, institutional and social involvement, career development.

Support or training needs to achieve these objectives:

Identify support provided by your academic host, or other mentors or peers. Consider resources available at UniFr such as transferable skills training.



Career planning

Define your long-term career goals (5-10 years).

Consider your motivation for this type of career.

Outline short-term steps to advance toward these goals.

(e.g. knowledge of selection criteria, networking, cross-sector or international experience, acquisition of knowledge and skills, scientific independence)

Explore alternative career paths.

Think outside the box, and maybe find inspiration by existing resources such as the [Vitae Research Career stories](#) or [PhD Paths](#).

C

List actions to take and resources you could mobilise to prepare for this career:
(eg. *networking, workshops etc*)

D

Well-being

Reflect on your work-life balance and challenges for your well-being in your professional environment.

Identify strategies or support needed:



Action plan for the coming year

Summarize your priorities for the next year (achievements, improvements) and add a timeline:

List the support and resources the academic host can provide: