

## Recommendations for postdocs in order to prepare a feedback meeting with their supervisor

As stated in the [HHU Postdoc Guidelines](#) supervisors are called upon to give postdocs regular feedback (at least twice a year) on their academic performance in relation to the results gained and the progress made. Possible career perspectives (including non-academic ones) should be considered at least twelve months before the end of the contract.

Such feedback meetings are intended to discuss research progress and career development and are not meant to produce any kind of stress or additional outlay for either party. As a postdoc, you should meet with your supervisor for a factual dialogue, with the aim of an open exchange of ideas, knowledge and information, as well as constructive feedback on the joint work, which is the basis for a trusting collaboration.

Using this feedback guide will foster reflection on your career development and progress in collaboration with your supervisor(s). It can empower you as a postdoc to independently and self-confidentially push your own career development.

### Preparation by yourself

- Review your [target agreement](#) and update it
- Take sufficient time to self-evaluate your progress since the last meeting (see the list of '*possible discussion points*' below).
  
- Prepare an agenda for the feedback meeting and share it with your supervisor in advance. When preparing consider the following questions:
  - What are the goals of the meeting?
  - What have been open issues of the last meeting?
  - What kind of feedback do I need?
  - What are/were my expectations of my supervisor(s)?
  
- Set an appointment with your supervisor to discuss your research progress and career development in a comforting atmosphere.

### Actual feedback meeting with your supervisor

*Possible discussion points and questions to which feedback is intended:*

- How is my academic performance? Which things am I doing well, where can I improve?
- Am I making sufficient progress towards my research goals?
- Are the goals realistic? And what strategies do you recommend to reach these goals?
- Am I progressing enough towards independence?
- I have the feeling that..... what can I do better? Where do you think is room for improvement?

- What challenges can I choose to develop my skills and reach my career goals?
- Please let me know one thing I should keep doing, one thing I should start doing, and one thing I should stop doing.
- What opportunities are there for technical learning, acquiring teaching or mentoring experience, or developing other professional skills beneficial for me?
- What kind of support can I get?
- What do you think are my prospects for my career development?
- Do you know people in [job field] whom I can get in contact with?
- 
- .....

→ At the end of the meeting summarize the “To Do’s” and upcoming activities. Thank your supervisor for taking the time and assure them you’ll get back to them and keep them informed.

### *Conflicts of interest*

If you do not agree with the feedback of your direct supervisor, ask for a second opinion e.g. of a mentor.

Discussion of contentious issues is an explicit part of the progress review. Conflicts should be addressed in a professional manner by the parties involved and, if possible, resolved with a willingness to reach agreement.

### **After the meeting**

Summarize discussion points, outcome and milestones.

Reflect the meeting and assess how the meeting went, write down suggestions for the future.

You should evaluate all the feedback you received, decide what you will do differently in the future as a result, chose the best option and take ownership of that decision.