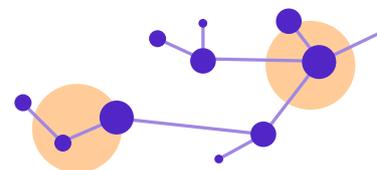GPN AC

German Postdoc Network

1st Annual Conference 2026

Establishing a Strong Postdoc Network and Exploring Career Perspectives & Postdoc Skills
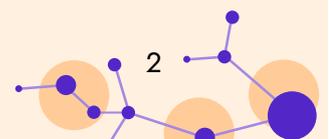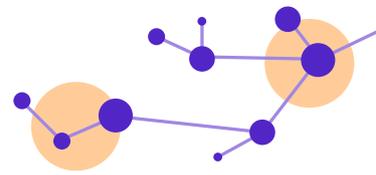
12-13 March 2026

**Helmholtz Center Munich
Ingolstädter Landstraße 1
85764 Oberschleißheim**

Table of Contents

Welcome messages

Greetings and welcome from the GPN founders

Dear participants,

Welcome to the 1st Annual Conference of the German Postdoc Network. What began as an idea to create a visible community for postdocs across Germany has grown into a vibrant initiative shaped by the very people it serves.

Our network was founded on a powerful vision. Postdocs drive innovation yet often work in fragmented structures across different regions. By connecting researchers across institutions and disciplines, we foster collaboration, amplify our collective voice and strengthen career development both inside and outside academia.

This conference represents a major milestone in the development of our network. It is a unique event organized by postdocs for postdocs. From the scientific program to the networking sessions, every aspect reflects the dedication and creativity of our community. Balancing the organization of a national event with the demands of working in research is a significant achievement that demonstrates the remarkable commitment within our network.

Bringing people together is at the heart of our mission. We hope this gathering will spark fresh ideas and strengthen the sense of belonging within our growing community. Most importantly, we want this to be a space where you feel seen and empowered. Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping shape our future.

Warm regards,
Camila Hernández Frederick, Tina Scheibe & Neele Meyer
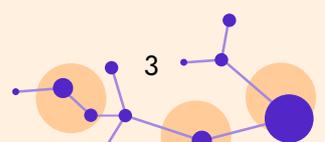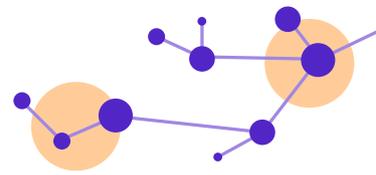
Warm welcome from the GPN coordinators

Dear participants,

Welcome to the 1st Annual Conference of the German Postdoc Network (GPN)! We are delighted to bring together postdoctoral researchers from across disciplines and institutions in Germany for two days of exchange, learning, and community building. This conference marks a milestone in our shared journey to strengthen the visibility and voice of postdocs in Germany as well as supporting careers within and beyond academia.

This is a unique opportunity to build new connections and harness the energy that arises when many voices come together with a shared purpose. Let's use this time to foster a network that empowers postdocs and helps shape the research system of tomorrow. In formats such as the World Café, we invite open exchange, bold ideas, and honest conversations. Through these discussions, we hope to gain new perspectives on how to collaborate more effectively, sharpen our network's strategic direction, and co-develop solutions to shared challenges.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Annual Conference Working Group for planning and organizing this event together with the Coordination Office. Your time, commitment, and ideas have made this conference possible — thank you!

We look forward to lively discussions and collective impulses that will guide the future development of the GPN as a vibrant community supporting postdocs. Thank you for being part of this meaningful endeavor. Let's connect, inspire, and shape the future of the postdoc experience — together.

Warm regards,
Alexandra, Judith & Melanie
Coordination Office of the German Postdoc Network
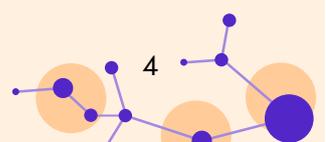
A welcome from the GPN postdoc working group

Dear participants,

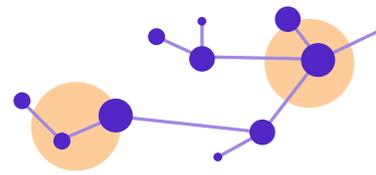Thank you for being here with us at the 1st Annual Conference of the German Postdoc Network. While for many of you this event began with your registration, its conceptualization started, believe it or not, more than a year ago, in February 2025. On behalf of the committee, we would like to say how proud we are to see what our many meetings and discussions have ultimately grown into.

We would also like to thank all members of the working groups, those who helped shape the thematic direction of this conference, as well as those who were involved in preparing sponsor packages and reaching out to potential partners. Without your dedication and persistence, this event would not have been possible.

We hope that this conference will fulfil the goals we set out to achieve and that you will look back on these days as a meaningful and positive experience.

Over the past year, we have had the opportunity to become more closely involved with the German Postdoc Network. During this time, we have met many individuals who are committed to improving the postdoctoral landscape in Germany, many of whom are here today.

For us, this conference represents the culmination of a year of work. At the same time, we hope that for you, the participants, and for the German Postdoc Network as a whole, it will serve as a starting point: the beginning of new collaborations, the formation of new local networks, and the engagement of even more postdoctoral researchers within the GPN.

Please enjoy the conference!
Laimdota Zizmare and Mark Wever
On behalf of the Annual Conference Working Group
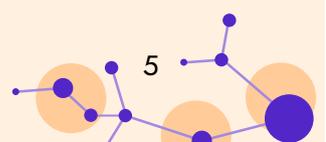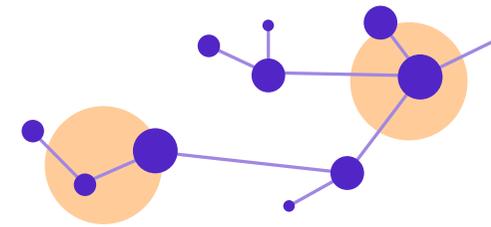
Conference overview

Conference Agenda

Thursday, 12 March 2026 — Establishing a Strong Postdoc Network

Conference Location: Helmholtz Conference Center
Moderators: Camila Hernandez Fredericks & Laimdota Zizmare

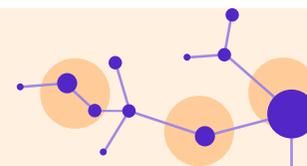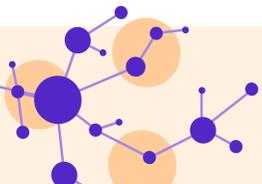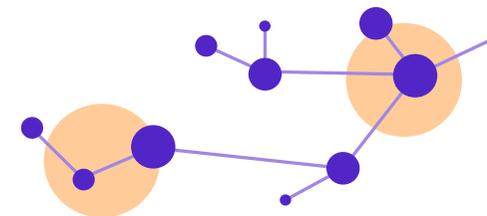|		Speakers & Moderators	Rooms
13:30 — 14:30	Registration		
14:30 — 15:30	Welcome & Opening Ceremonies	Laimdota Zizmare, Spokesperson Annual Conference WG Prof Stephan Herzig, Research Director at Helmholtz Munich Tina Scheibe, GPN Founder Melanie Schippling, GPN Coordinator	Plenary
15:30 — 16:30	Establishing a Strong Postdoc Network Keynote I & II	Lydia Repke, GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Leibniz PostDoc Network Spokesperson (2018—2021) Pil Maria Saugmann, Eurodoc President (2024-25), Representative of Early-Career Researchers to the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU)	Plenary
16:30 — 17:00	Coffee Break		Foyer
17:00 — 18:00	Building a Thriving GPN Community: A World Cafe Session	Seminar Room 1: Profile development for postdocs with Yves Klinger &Jasmin Knopf Seminar Room 2: Mentorship in the context of Postdoc phase: giving and receiving with Claudia Zeims & Melanie Vilser Seminar Room 3: Strategies for increasing postdoc participation and engagement with Miriam Kretschmer (Max Planck PostdocNet), Sherin	Seminar Rooms 1-6

		Bran (Leibniz Postdoc Network), Rima Siauciunaite (Helmholtz Association Postdoc Network) & Umesh Gautam Seminar Room 4: Science communication and outreach in context of Postdoc Networks with Tina Scheibe & Simone Fabian Seminar Room 5: Beyond your bubble: Collaboration across disciplines with Nicholas Russell & Justine Tanoey Seminar Room 6: From casual chats to collaboration: building your network with Martin Blaser & Rachel Gilmore	
18:00 – 18:15	Wrap Up & Group Picture		Plenary
18:15 – 19:00	Poster Session	• 25 Poster Presenters	Seminar Rooms 1 & 6
19:00 – 20:00	Networking Dinner		Foyer
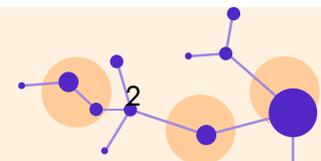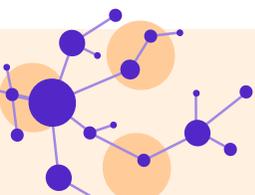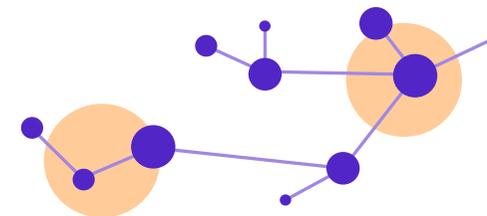
Friday, 13 March 2026 — Career Perspectives & Transferable Postdoc Skills

Conference Location: Helmholtz Conference Center
Moderators: Laimdota Zizmare & Melanie Schippling

| Time	Topic	Speaker & Moderator	Rooms
09:00 — 10:00	Welcome & Follow up of Day One		Plenary
10:00 — 11:00	Keynote: The lucky mindset — How to attract serendipitous opportunities in your career	• Anne Schreiter, Executive Director Guidance, Skills and Opportunities	Plenary
11:00 — 11:30	Coffee Break		Foyer
11:30 — 12:30	Parallel Workshop Session (Round I)	• Seminar Room 1: Self-Care in Academia: Understanding the power of Body-Mind Interaction with Christina Patel (Hochschule München) • Seminar Room 2: Beyond research - discover your competencies with Iris Köhler (The Scientist Coach) • Seminar Room 3: How to Apply for a Professorship in Germany with Katharina Lemke (Deutscher Hochschulverband) • Seminar Room 4: Leadership Essentials for Postdocs with Prof. Irmgard Mausz & Melanie Vilser (International School of Management & University of the Bundeswehr Munich) • Seminar Room 5: Leveraging Interdisciplinarity: Turning Diverse Expertise into Research Strength with Iris Mencke (Interdisciplinary Minds)	Seminar Rooms 1 - 6
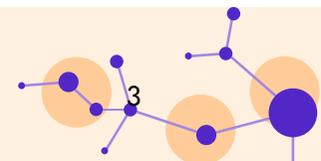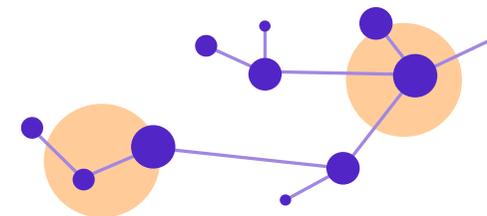
		• Seminar Room 6: What comes next? With Tiffany Paulisch (TUM Talent Factory)	
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch		Foyer
13:30 – 14:30	Parallel Workshop Session (Round 2)	Same set Up as Round 1	Seminar Rooms 1 - 6
14:30 – 15:00	Wrap up & Goodbye	Final outlook with the GPN & Goodbyes	Plenary
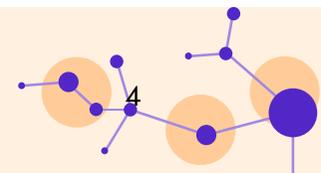
How to arrive: A visual guide

Below you will find step-by-step instructions to help you reach the conference venue.

From Munich Airport (MUC)

- Take the S-Bahn line S8 "Herrsching" toward Munich City Center and exit at "Ismaning"
- Then take the bus X202 "Robert-Bosch-Straße" and exit at "Neuherberg, Helmholtz-Z."
- It will take about 5-10 minutes to walk from the bus stop to the congress venue

From Munich Central Station (Hauptbahnhof)

- Take the U-Bahn line U2 "Feldmoching" and exit at "Am Hart"
- Then take either the bus 294 "Garching" or the bus 295 "Oberschleissheim" and get off at "Neuherberg, Helmholtz-Z."
- It will take about 5-10 minutes to walk from the bus stop to the congress venue

From "Neuherberg, Helmholtz-Z." to the venue

- Walk approximately 50 meters to the entrance of the campus (see bottom middle on the image below)
- Enter the little guardhouse. Here you will have to show the first page of the conference booklet to the Helmholtz employee, who will then let you enter the campus.
- Continue straight for about 30 meters and then turn left.
- Walk for approximately 5 minutes; the building will be on your right.
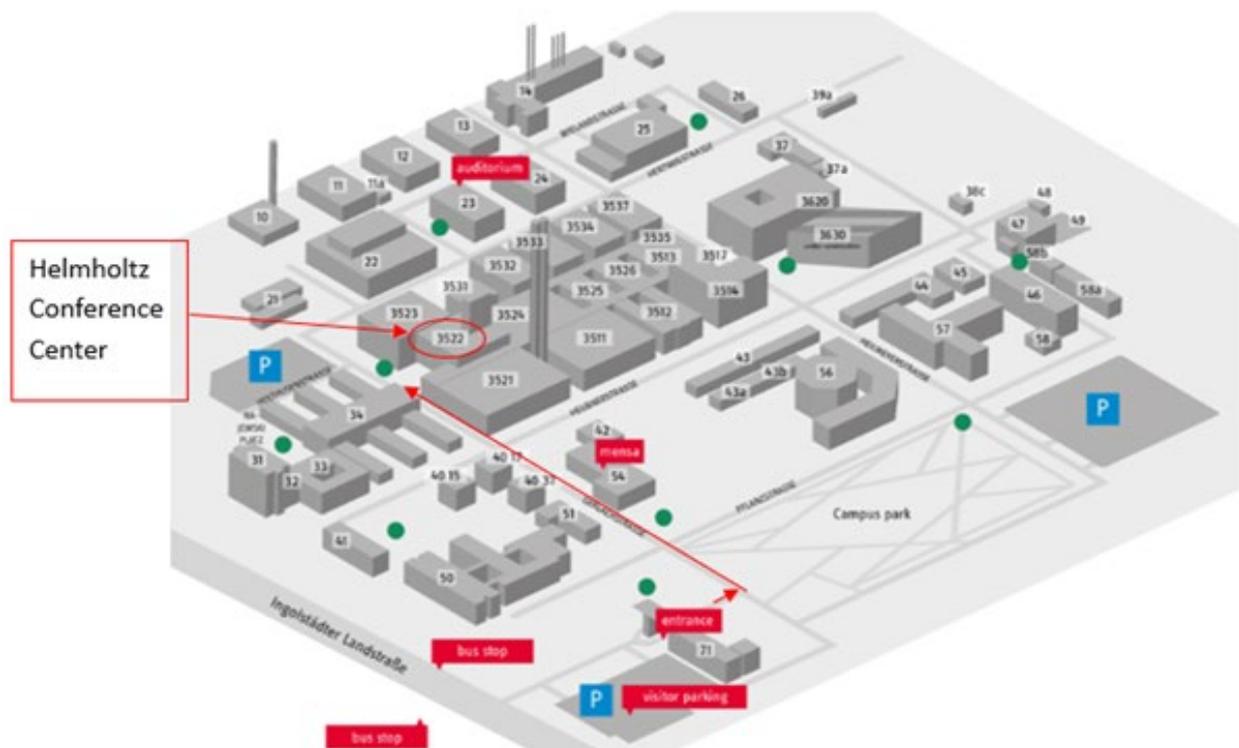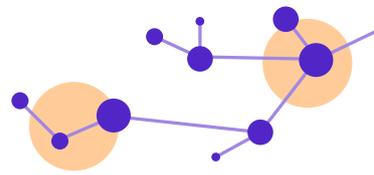
Social and networking

An informal social gathering has been scheduled for Thursday evening, 12 March from 21:30 at the Keg Bar (Trautenwolfstraße 1, 80802 München). Registration for this event was possible in advance. If you would still like to participate, limited spots will be available during the conference, and this can be inquired about at the registration desk.

To enhance communication during the conference, we invite you to join our WhatsApp group through the QR code below.

Please note that this is entirely voluntary and no essential information will be communicated in this group.
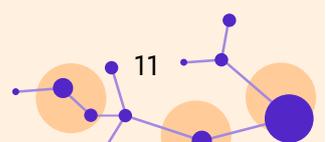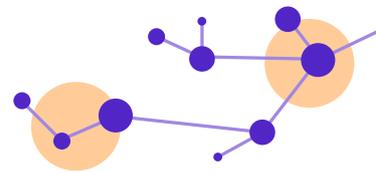
Keynote speakers

Dr. Anne Schreiter

Dr. Anne Schreiter is the executive director of GSO — Guidance, Skills & Opportunities for Researchers e.V., an independent nonprofit in Berlin that empowers researchers and institutions through career development and innovative funding programs. She holds a PhD in Organizational Sociology from the University of St. Gallen and conducted research at UC Berkeley. A certified systemic coach, Anne has designed leadership programs and led workshops helping researchers shape their careers within and beyond academia. She serves on the advisory boards of the German Postdoc Network, Network Science Management, and the Kohli Foundation for Sociology.

Dr. Lydia Repke

Dr. Lydia Repke is a team leader at GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, where she heads the team "Scale Development and Documentation" in the Survey Design & Methodology department. A committed advocate for early-career researchers, she spent four years shaping the Leibniz PostDoc Network, including three as spokesperson (2018—2021) and one as financial officer (2021—2022). As a member and former spokesperson of the Young Academy of Science and Literature | Mainz, she helped build a nationwide network of Young Academies in Germany and remains active in the Leibniz Mentoring Alumni Network. Lydia currently serves on the board of the DGS Section on Sociological Network Research and is part of the German—Spanish Science Network, with her research spanning social networks, survey methodology, and intercultural social relations.

Dr. Pil Maria Saugmann

Dr. Pil Maria Saugmann holds a PhD in Theoretical Physics from Stockholm University. Her current research is within the field of higher education studies. On behalf of European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) she represents early career researchers in the Council of Europe in the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) and as an academic member of its Bureau and in the European Research Area as a representative researchers and innovators within the ERA Fora. She was the president of the Eurodoc 2024/2025.
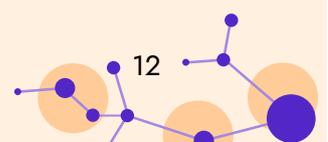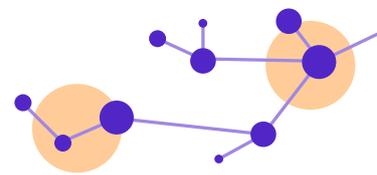
Description of the World Café, topics and session plan

Topic 1: Strategies for Postdoc participation & engagement

Dr. Miriam Kretschmer, Deputy Spokesperson from the Max Planck PostdocNet
Dr. Sherin Bran from the Leibniz Postdoc Network (LPN)
Dr. Rima Siauciunaite from the Helmholtz Association Postdoc Network (HAPN)

Topic 2: Profile development for Postdocs

Dr. Yves Klinger, Gießen University, Speaker of GPN Advocacy WG
Dr. Jasmin Knopf, University Medical Centre/University Hospital Mannheim and member of the GPN Annual Conference WG

Topic 3: Beyond your bubble - Collaboration across disciplines

Dr. Nicholas Russel, Humboldt University of Berlin, member of the GPN Survey WG
Dr. Justine Tanoey, Leibniz Institute for Prevent Research and Epidemiology, member of the Annual Conference WG

Topic 4: From casual chats to collaboration - building your network

Dr. Martin Blaser, Managing Director Freie Schule Marburg, member of the GPN Annual Conference WG
Dr. Rachel Gilmore, University Hospital Heidelberg, member of the GPN Annual Conference WG

Topic 5: Mentor-ship in the context of the Postdoc phase - giving and receiving

Claudia Zeimes, Leadership, Career & Resilience Coach
Dr. Melanie Vilser, Bundeswehr University Munich, member of the GPN Annual Conference Working Group

Topic 6: Science communication and outreach in context of Postdoc Networks

Dr. Tina Scheibe, Munich University of Applied Sciences, GPN Founder
Dr. Simone Fabian, University of Regensburg, member of the GPN Annual Conference Working Group
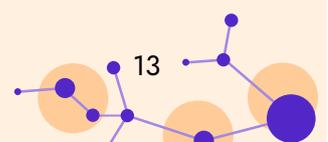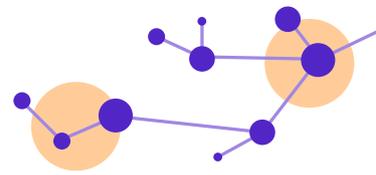
Workshops

What comes next? with Dr. Tiffany Paulisch

This interactive, reflection-based workshop supports postdoctoral researchers who are uncertain about their next career step, within or beyond academia. Combining short trainer input with structured individual reflection and peer exchange, participants explore their current career position, personal drivers, and available resources and identify potential internal barriers. The workshop focuses on gaining orientation and supports participants in outlining realistic next steps to further advance their career, while connecting with peers facing similar questions.

Dr. Tiffany Paulisch works at the Office for Research and Innovation at the TU Munich, focusing on national research funding with a special emphasis on supporting postdoctoral researchers through the program of the TUM Talent Factory. Here, she advises on funding opportunities for early-career researchers and delivers training on funding strategies and career development. Combining her role as a scientific officer with her experience as an improvisational theatre trainer, she enables others to expand their perspectives and develop an agile mindset.

Self-Care in Academia: Understanding the power of Body-Mind Interaction with Christina Patel

Ever wondered how your body, mind, and brain influence each other — and how you can leverage this connection for greater well-being? Join this interactive workshop to explore practical Body2Brain strategies, engage in self-reflection, and connect with fellow Postdocs.

Senior Advisor for Psychosocial Counseling at the Graduate School of Munich University of Applied Science, responsible for the Mental Health Qualification Program and the Counseling Roundtable. Deputy contact person of the Anti-Discrimination Office. Background: Certified Systemic Consultant & Therapist, Licensed Psychotherapy Practitioner, currently training as a Systemic Supervisor. Previous roles at the Graduate Center LMU and as Coordinator for ERS International (Exploratory research space) at RWTH Aachen University. Holds an M.A. in English and Spanish Studies from the University of Bonn, Universidad Complutense Madrid, and Freie Universität Berlin.
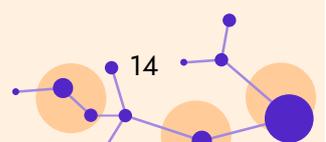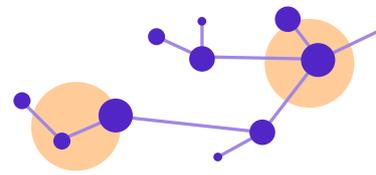
How to Apply for a Professorship in Germany with Katharina Lemke

Are you considering a career as a professor at a German university or just starting to apply for professorships in Germany? This compact workshop offers a short introductory impulse followed by an extended Q&A session. In the impulse talk, you will get an overview of the main pathways to a professorship in Germany. We will briefly outline the legal requirements of the typical appointment procedure. Building on this, we will address key aspects of the application process: where to find suitable job advertisements and what German universities usually expect from applicants. The second part of the event is dedicated to your questions. Participants are invited to raise concrete issues related to their own situation — from specific questions on CVs, publication lists and teaching portfolios to uncertainties around fit, timing and strategic considerations when applying in Germany.

Katharina Lemke is Head of the Legal and Advisory Department at the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (DHV).

## Leadership Essentials for Postdocs with Dr. Irmgard Mausz & Dr. Melanie Vilser

This workshop introduces postdocs to essential principles of lateral leadership in academia. Participants will explore key leadership theories and models and learn practical techniques for guiding (doctoral) students, fostering collaboration, and navigating challenging situations — strengthening their leadership skills in environments without formal authority.

Prof. Dr. Irmgard Mausz is a professor of business psychology at the International School of Management in Munich. She also works as a trainer and coach. Her research focuses on topics such as career development and well-being in the workplace. Her training courses focus on leadership, self-management, positive psychology, and job applications.

Dr. Melanie Vilser is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of the Bundeswehr Munich, where she leads the interdisciplinary project "Exploitative Leadership in Digital Collaboration". She previously worked at the LMU Center for Leadership and People Management and has extensive practical experience in adult education and consultancy through roles at BCG, Allianz, and her ongoing freelance activities. Her work focuses on leadership development, collaboration, and professional skills in academia and organizational settings.
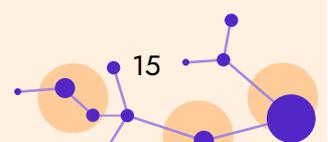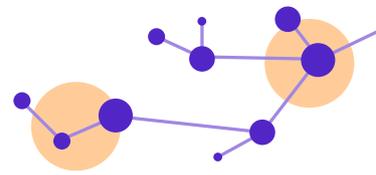
Beyond research - discover your competencies with Dr. Iris Köhler

In this interactive workshop, postdoctoral researchers explore the full range of competencies they develop throughout their academic careers — far beyond research skills alone. Through guided reflection, practical exercises, and peer exchange, participants identify their transferable skills, learn to articulate them confidently, and discover how these strengths can open diverse career paths inside and outside academia.

Dr. Iris Köhler supports early-career researchers with passion and expertise in all aspects of career planning. Iris holds a PhD in agricultural sciences from the TU München and completed a postdoctoral stay in the USA. After working in science management and becoming a certified career coach, she founded her own training and consulting company „The Scientist Coach" in 2019. Since then, she has successfully taught over 150 courses with 2000+ participants and deeply enjoys empowering postdoctoral researchers to explore and pursue their next career steps.

Leveraging Interdisciplinarity: Turning Diverse Expertise into Research Strength with Dr. Iris Mencke

Inter- and transdisciplinary research has become a key priority in research and innovation, with funding bodies increasingly prioritizing projects that cross disciplinary boundaries. At the same time, working effectively across fields presents practical and conceptual challenges that are rarely addressed explicitly in everyday research practice. This introductory workshop gives an overview of key success factors and best practices for effective interdisciplinary collaboration. Participants will explore common challenges, learn strategies for productive collaboration across disciplines, and gain impulses on how to strategically position an interdisciplinary research profile within their academic career.

Dr. Iris Mencke is a researcher, trainer, and certified systemic coach with a focus on interdisciplinary competence and career development. She holds a PhD in Psychology and conducted research on behavioral and neural foundations of aesthetic and creative processes. Over more than ten years, she has worked as a project lead in international and interdisciplinary research groups. As the founder of Interdisciplinary Minds, she designs and delivers training formats that support researchers and teams in successful collaboration across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries.
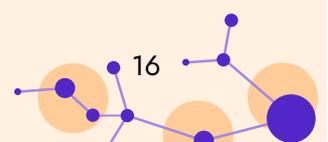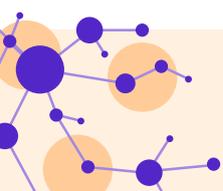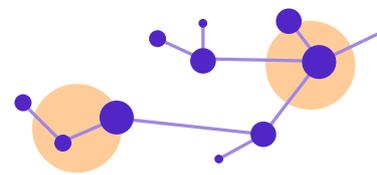
Poster session

Vote for your favorite!

As you view the posters during the poster session, decide which you enjoy the most — perhaps the poster had a unique layout, maybe the presenter did a fantastic job explaining their work, or a potential collaboration might have even developed during a discussion at a poster. Please vote for your favorite poster by placing the sticker you received with your conference welcome materials in the corresponding box on the designated "Fan Favorite Voting" poster.

List of posters

P01 — Jasmin Knopf - Clearance of Neutrophil Extracellular Traps by Macrophages in Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC)*

P02 — Dhanya Ramachandran - Evaluating the influence of Gene Expression and Methylation patterns on Survival of patients with Ovarian Cancer*

P03 — Loui Al Sardy - Towards Regulatory Alignment for Secure AI: A Comparative Study of EU Cybersecurity Instruments*

P04 — Fabian Sturm - Industrial Hand Action Dataset V2 (IHADV2): Creation of a dataset for affordance extraction from human hand assembly movements for fine-tuning vision-language-action models in industrial humanoid robotics*

P05 — Anshika Singh - Heat, Holobionts, and Hidden Helpers: How Sponge Microbiomes Shape Resilience in a Warming Ocean*

P06 — Paula Reichelt - Scientists Responsibility Summit - Position Paper*

P07 — David Piatka - Precipitation fuels dissolved greenhouse gas (CO2, CH4, N2O) dynamics in a peatland-dominated headwater stream: results from a continuous monitoring setup*

P08 — Manuela Tischler - Power Abuse in Academia in Germany*

P09 — Nicholas Russell - Spatial ploidy inference using quantitative imaging*

P10 — Alexandra Irimia - Bureaucratic Fiction: Narratives, Images, and Affects of Administration in Contemporary World Literature and Film (B-FILES)*

P11 — Milkias Tuka - Improvement of Wind Turbine Performance Coefficient on a Grid-tied DFIG-Based Wind Power Plant Under Variable Wind Speed Conditions*

P12 — Kelly Siemund - Investigating Synaptic Degeneration in a Mouse Model of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)*

P13 — Valentyna Oberemchuk - Social entrepreneurship in wartime: challenges and strategies*

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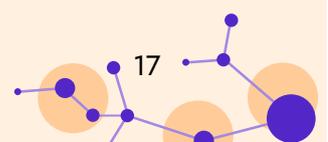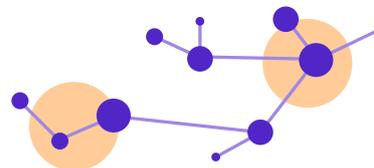
P16 — Daniela Paasch - Dynamic Immune Profiling of iPSC-Derived Macrophages in Tuberculosis Infection Models*

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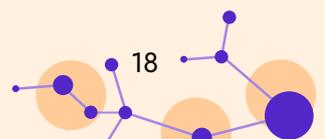P22 — Ladyna Wittscher - Influence of design choices on self-supervised artificial intelligence for computer vision*
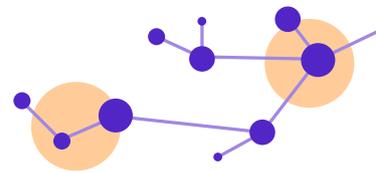
P23 — Chiara Galante - The IMB Postdoc Programme (IPPro) at the Institute of Molecular Biology in Mainz

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List of abstracts

Clearance of Neutrophil Extracellular Traps by Macrophages in Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC) Jasmin Knopf[1,2,3], Laura Blum[1,2,3], Kira Jäger[1,2,3], Makenzie Jones[1,2,3], Michael Boettcher[1,2,3] *(1) Department of Pediatric Surgery, University Medical Center Mannheim, Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany* *(2) Mannheim Institute for Innate Immunoscience (MI3), Medical Faculty Mannheim, Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany* *(3) European Center for Angioscience (ECAS), Medical Faculty Mannheim, Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany*	P01

Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) is a severe inflammatory bowel disease that primarily affects preterm infants with a very low birth weight. The pathogenesis of NEC is complex and multifactorial. Risk factors include premature birth, formula feeding, dysregulated intestinal perfusion and the immature innate immune system. NEC is characterized by excessive neutrophil infiltration and the formation of neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs). Macrophages are known to degrade extracellular DNA. In this study, we investigate their role in NEC pathogenesis, focusing on the clearance of NETs as a mechanism to reduce inflammation.

Intestinal organoids were generated by isolating crypts from intestinal healthy and NEC tissue. Immune cells, such as neutrophils and monocytes/macrophages, were isolated and co-cultured with organoids. To evaluate the NETs degradation, an MPO-SytoxOrange FACS staining was performed and a 7-color FACS panel was established to analyze polarization. Results were validated via immunofluorescence staining and the inflammatory profile was analyzed via a multiplex bead assay.

We observed increased monocyte migration into NEC-derived organoid models when co-cultured with neutrophils. After 24 hours of incubation, monocytes displayed distinct polarization patterns, particularly in NEC organoids, with a tendency toward M1 macrophage polarization. This shift may help explain the enhanced inflammatory response observed in NEC conditions. Furthermore, we found reduced NETs levels after 24 hours in both control and NEC organoid groups when macrophages were present, indicating an active role of macrophages in NETs degradation and clearance within the NEC microenvironment.
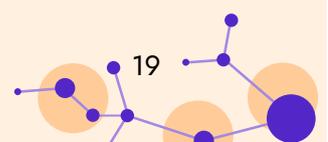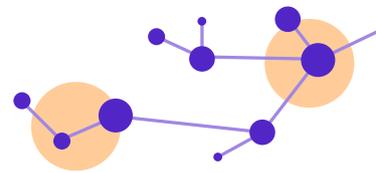
| Evaluating the influence of Gene Expression and Methylation patterns on Survival of patients with Ovarian Cancer	
Luisa Hölzl[1], Florian Heitz[2], Leticia Oliveira-Ferrer[3], Thilo Dörk[1], <u>Dhanya</u> <u>Ramachandran</u>[1] (1) Gynecology Research Unit, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany (2) Evangelische Kliniken Essen-Mitte, Essen, Germany (3) Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany	P02

Our group has a research focus on gynecological cancers. Epithelial ovarian cancer is among the leading causes of cancer-associated deaths in women. Surgery is a common treatment option, and a recent genome-wide association study identified genomic susceptibility factors associated with resection status after surgery, indicating that genetic factors can determine clearer surgical margins and predict disease recurrence. As the number of known predisposition loci for resection status in ovarian cancer is small, we propose to identify and functionally characterize further loci in novel epigenome-wide association analyses, combining survival and transcriptomics data from patients with epithelial ovarian cancer. This study can shed light on novel molecular mechanisms underlying treatment response and prognosis of ovarian cancer.
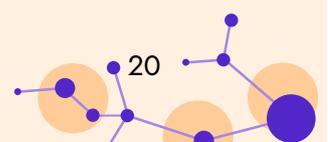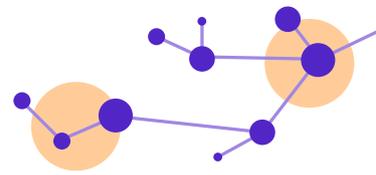
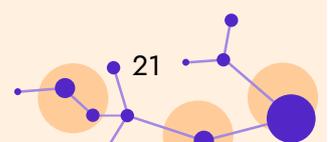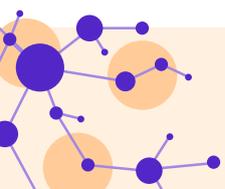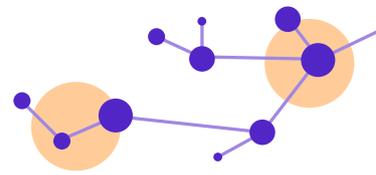| Towards Regulatory Alignment for Secure AI: A Comparative Study of EU Cybersecurity Instruments	
Loui Al Sardy[1], Momal Tariq Khan[1], Mamdouh Muhammad[1]	P03
(1) Computer Science 7 (Computer Networks and Communication Systems), Department of Computer Science, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU), Erlangen, Germany	

Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems are increasingly integrated into critical infrastructures and digital services, introducing complex and evolving cybersecurity risks. In response, the European Union has introduced the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA), the EU AI Act, and the NIS2 Directive to strengthen digital security and governance. However, limited research has comparatively analysed how these regulations address AI-specific vulnerabilities.

This study conducts a structured scoping review and comparative regulatory assessment to evaluate the extent to which these frameworks mitigate technical and organisational AI risks, including adversarial attacks, data poisoning, supply-chain threats, and lifecycle governance weaknesses. The regulations are assessed using three evaluation metrics: vulnerability coverage, regulatory clarity, and applicability to high-risk AI systems.

The findings show that the three instruments provide complementary protection across governance, product security, and organisational resilience. Nonetheless, technical guidance on advanced AI attack vectors remains partially under-specified. Effective AI security, therefore, requires both regulatory compliance and robust lifecycle-based safeguards.

Industrial Hand Action Dataset V2 (IHADV2) Creation of a dataset for affordance extraction from human hand assembly movements for fine-tuning vision-language-action models in industrial humanoid robotics Fabian Sturm[1,2], Tobias Bocklet[2], Benjamin Menz[1] *(1) Machine Learning for Industrial Production, Technische Hochschule Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm, Nuremberg, Germany* *(2) Technology Transfer Center: Digital Intelligence, Technische Hochschule Nürnberg Georg Simon Ohm, Kronach, Germany*	P04

The objective of this research project is the investigation and testing of a specifically developed dataset for the fine-tuning of Vision-Language-Action (VLA) models. This dataset will be based on affordance-based approaches to facilitate flexible assembly and handling tasks in industrial environments. Affordances refer to the action possibilities that an environment offers to an agent in relation to its physical and perceptual capabilities [1]. In robotics, this concept is often adapted to denote the action-relevant properties of objects or scenes, specifically which actions are possible given the robot's embodiment and the available spatial or functional cues. The project focuses on extending the existing IHADV1 dataset [2] and transferring the successful methodology of the EPIC-Kitchen dataset [3, 4]—an established benchmark for VLA training in household settings—to concrete industrial application scenarios. It is anticipated that the EPIC-Kitchen dataset and similar general datasets will exhibit weaknesses in the industrial domain due to the specific nature of the data and the complexity of industrial processes [5].The project involves the following core steps: Extension of the IHADV1 Dataset: Creating a comprehensive, annotated dataset of industrial assembly and handling processes that provides the affordance-based information necessary for VLA models. Transfer of Research Findings: Adapting proven methods for dataset creation for VLA fine-tuning (derived from the EPIC-Kitchen approach) to real-world industrial application scenarios.

Benchmark and Comparison: Conducting a comparison of the developed dataset and the VLA models trained on it (such as $\pi0$ [5], Gr00t [6], or OpenVLA [7]) with similar existing datasets [2, 3]. Data acquisition and testing will take place at an industrially replicated manual assembly workstation, jointly developed with Bosch. This workstation, originally created as part of an industrial doctorate [2, 8] for intelligent manual assembly assistance, is optimally suited for recording high-quality industrial process data and applying machine learning methods in an industrial context. The hardware and software expansion of this workstation is an explicit part of the project. The resulting research will provide a domain-specific, affordance-based benchmark for VLA models in industrial settings, significantly advancing the development of flexible and robust robotic solutions for complex assembly tasks.

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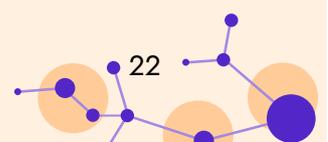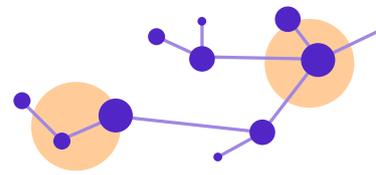
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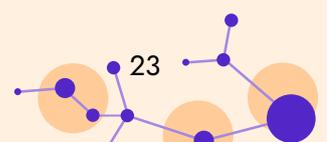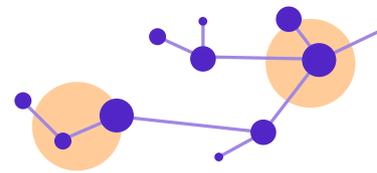
Heat, Holobionts, and Hidden Helpers: How Sponge Microbiomes Shape Resilience in a Warming Ocean

Anshika Singh[1], Gert Wörheide[1]

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P05

Marine sponges form some of the oldest and most widespread animal—microbe partnerships in the ocean. Their microbiomes—often dense, diverse, and metabolically versatile—support host nutrition, chemical defense, and major biogeochemical pathways such as nitrogen and carbon cycling. As marine heatwaves intensify, understanding how sponge holobionts (host plus microbiome) respond to warming is becoming essential for predicting the future of benthic ecosystems. Unlike the relatively stereotyped bleaching responses observed in many corals, sponges exhibit a broad spectrum of outcomes under thermal stress: some maintain functional stability, others restructure their microbiomes, and some experience dysbiosis and mortality. This variability highlights both vulnerability and opportunity—sponges can act as sensitive indicators of ecosystem change, but also as models for studying resilience mechanisms in complex symbioses.

Here, we synthesize emerging evidence that sponge microbiome responses to heat are structured, conserved, and non-random. Across multiple taxa and systems, thermal stress frequently depletes key functional groups such as nitrifiers and phototrophs, while enriching heterotrophic opportunists that can proliferate under disturbed conditions. Despite taxonomic turnover, many sponge species maintain core functions via functional redundancy—different microbes performing similar metabolic roles—and through symbiont flexibility, where hosts tolerate or select alternative microbial partners under stress. These dynamics suggest that resilience can arise not from an unchanged microbiome, but from coordinated reconfiguration that preserves essential functions and supports recovery.

Multi-omics approaches (metagenomics, metatranscriptomics, metabolomics, and host transcriptomics) further reveal that microbiome shifts are coupled to host stress physiology. Heat exposure commonly triggers host molecular responses such as heat shock protein (HSP) activation, oxidative stress mitigation, and immune modulation, which in turn can influence microbial community assembly and stability. We propose a unifying framework that places sponge holobiont responses along a reactivity—adaptability continuum, ranging from (i) low reactivity/high stability, through (ii) adaptive restructuring with functional retention, to (iii) high reactivity leading to dysbiosis and breakdown.

Finally, we highlight how combining controlled experiments (e.g., EcoFAB-style modular systems) with in situ monitoring can bridge laboratory realism and field relevance. We discuss next-generation tools—including the SMART (Symbiosis Monitoring and Resilience Toolkit) field kit concept—for real-time diagnostics that track microbiome markers, functional indicators, and host stress signatures. Together,
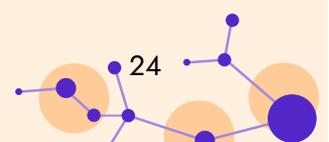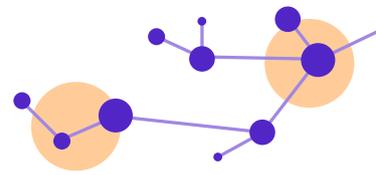
these approaches can improve early warning capability, enable comparative assessments across sites and species, and inform conservation strategies under accelerating ocean change.
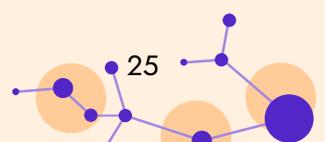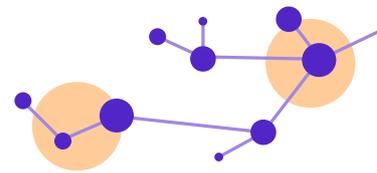
Scientists Responsibility Summit - Position Paper

Anne Baillot[1], Stefan Bäumli[2], Gudula Frieling[3], Niko Froitzheim[4], Matthias Grotkopp[5], Rasmus Hoffmann[6], Leonardo Jost[7], Max Koch[8], Joachim Mietusch[9], Ilona Otto[10], Luis Pauly[11], Nicolas Roy[12], Ilyas Saliba[13,14,15], Laura Stalenhoef[16], Fabian J.E. Telschow[17], Rowena Verst[18]

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(10) Wegener Center for Climate and Global Change, University of Graz
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(12) zbMATH Open (Zentralblatt MATH), Institute of Mathematics, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
(13) Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO), Bonn
(14) Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi), Berlin
(15) Centre for Fundamental Rights, Hertie School, Berlin
(16) Department of Psychology, University of Hildesheim
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(18) Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Geotechnical Engineering, University of Wuppertal

P06

The aim of this paper is to articulate how the current threats to academic freedom and the social and political challenges of the ecological crisis are intrinsically intertwined. Therefore, we argue, academics and academic institutions need to act with both dimensions of the crisis of democracy in mind. We propose a list of demands to that end. It is not exhaustive but illustrates guiding principles permeating academic research, teaching, and outreach. The defense of democratic values is at their core and should steer their interpretation and application.

This position paper was conceived and prepared in the context of the Scientists' Responsibility Summit, a conference that took place in Berlin on Oct 11th, 2025. It was designed to serve as a discussion basis within academic institutions in order to safeguard resilient structures in the face of the polycrisis. Additional signatures are welcome.
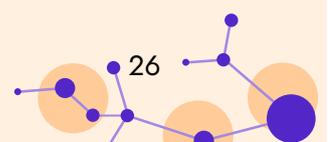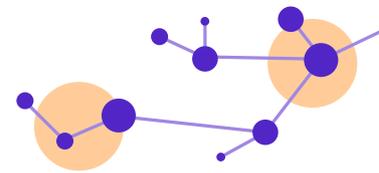
| Precipitation fuels dissolved greenhouse gas (CO2, CH4, N2O) dynamics in a peatland-dominated headwater stream: results from a continuous monitoring setup David R. Piatka[1], Raphaela L. Nánási[2], Ricky M. Mwanake[1], Florian Engelsberger[1], Georg Willibald[1], Frank Neidl[1], Ralf Kiese[1] (1) Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research Atmospheric Environmental Research (IMKIFU), Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany (2) Stiftung Kunst und Natur gGmbH, Bad Heilbrunn, Germany	P07

Stream ecosystems are actively involved in the biogeochemical cycling of carbon (C) and nitrogen (N) from terrestrial and aquatic sources. Streams hydrologically connected to peatland soils are suggested to receive significant quantities of particulate, dissolved, and gaseous C and N species, which directly enhance losses of greenhouse gases (GHGs), i.e., carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O), and fuel in-stream GHG production. However, riverine GHG concentrations and emissions are highly dynamic due to temporally and spatially variable hydrological, meteorological, and biogeochemical conditions. In this study, we present a complete GHG monitoring system in a peatland stream, which can continuously measure dissolved GHG concentrations and allows to infer gaseous fluxes between the stream and the atmosphere and discuss the results from March 31 to August 25 at variable hydrological conditions during a cool spring and warm summer period. Stream water was continuously pumped into a water-air equilibration chamber, with the equilibrated and actively dried gas phase being measured with two GHG analyzers for CO_2 and N_2O and CH_4 based on Off-Axis Integrated Cavity Output Spectroscopy (OA-ICOS) and Non-Dispersive Infra-Red (NDIR) spectroscopy, respectively. GHG measurements were performed continuously with only shorter measurement interruptions, mostly following a regular maintenance program. The results showed strong dynamics of GHGs with hourly mean concentrations up to 9959.1, 1478.6, and 9.9 parts per million (ppm) and emissions up to 313.89, 1.17, and 0.40 mg C or N m^{-2}h^{-1} for CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O, respectively. Significantly higher GHG concentrations and emissions were observed shortly after intense precipitation events at increasing stream water levels, contributing 59% to the total GHG budget of 762.2 g m^{-2} CO_2-equivalents (CO_2-eq). The GHG data indicated a constantly strong terrestrial signal from peatland pore waters, with high concentrations of dissolved GHGs being flushed into the stream water after precipitation. During drier periods, CO_2 and CH_4 dynamics were strongly influenced by in-stream metabolism. Continuous and high-frequency GHG data are needed to assess short- and long-term dynamics in stream ecosystems and for improved source partitioning between in-situ and ex-situ production.
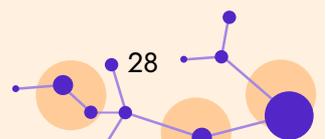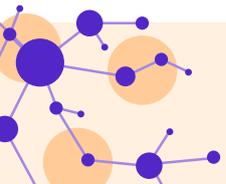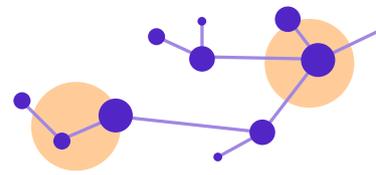
Abstract based on the publication:

Piatka DR, Nánási RL, Mwanake RM, Engelsberger F, Willibald G, Neidl F and Kiese R (2024) Precipitation fuels dissolved greenhouse gas (CO2, CH4, N2O) dynamics in a peatland-dominated
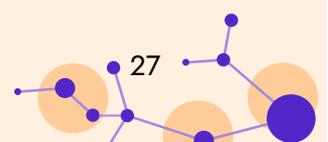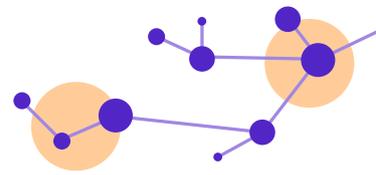
headwater stream: results from a continuous monitoring setup. Front. Water 5:1321137. doi: 10.3389/frwa.2023.1321137

Power Abuse in Academia in Germany	
	P08
Manuela Tischler[1], Lina Spagert[1], Ronja Philipp[1]	
(1) Hochschule München, München, Germany	

With our research, we intend to make power abuse in academia more visible and find ways to better prevent it. We follow a mixed methods design consisting of expert interviews, narrative interviews with scientists in different career stages as well as those, who left science and finally we will conduct a quantitative survey among Postdocs in Germany (beginning of 2027) too. Our aim is to offer insights about the forms and dynamics of power abuse, the conditions that produce power abuse, the effects of power abuse as well as what needs to change to better prevent power abuse. In the poster we will present first results from our expert interviews.
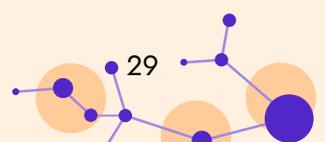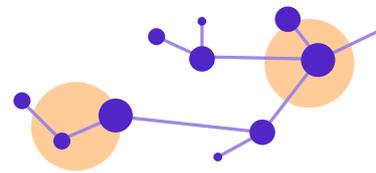
Spatial ploidy inference using quantitative imaging

Nicholas Russell[1], Paulo Belato[2], Lilijana Sarabia Oliver[3], Archan Chakraborty[2], Adrienne H.K. Roeder[3], Donald T. Fox[2], Pau Formosa-Jordan[1]

(1) Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding Research & Humboldt University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany
(2) Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA
(3) Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA

P09

Polyploidy (whole-genome duplication) is a common yet under-surveyed property of tissues across multicellular organisms. Polyploidy plays a critical role during tissue development, following acute stress, and during disease progression. Common methods to reveal polyploidy involve either destroying tissue architecture by cell isolation or tedious identification of individual nuclei in intact tissue. Therefore, there is a critical need for rapid and high-throughput ploidy quantification using images of nuclei in intact tissues. Here, we present iSPy (inferring Spatial Ploidy), an unsupervised learning pipeline designed to create a spatial map of nuclear ploidy across a tissue of interest. We demonstrate the use of iSPy in Arabidopsis, Drosophila, and human tissue. iSPy can be adapted for a variety of tissue preparations, including whole mount and sectioned. This high-throughput pipeline will facilitate rapid and sensitive identification of nuclear ploidy in diverse biological contexts and organisms.
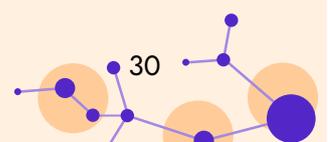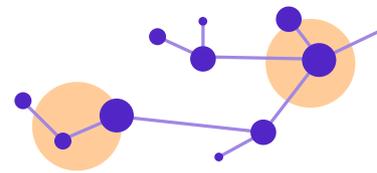
| Bureaucratic Fiction: Narratives, Images, and Affects of Administration in Contemporary World Literature and Film (B-FILES)	
	P10
Alexandra Irimia[1] *(1) University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany*	

B-FILES is interested in fictional works engaging with bureaucratic themes and forms, characterized by intricate linkages of political and symbolic power, technologies of data storage and encryption, signifying marks, bodies, and affective intensities. It argues that the processes of regulation and systematization that produce administrative flows of paperwork are not without consequence in the production of contemporary aesthetic forms. Conversely, these processes are always already determined by social imaginaries (Castoriadis) and historical narratives (Foucault) via the production and reception of aesthetic forms. Finally, the project is an inquiry into the fictional and metafictional implications of logocentric authority, connecting the administrative force of the written record with its aesthetic potential.

The project aims to create a database of fictional bureaucratic narratives in world literature and cinema, and to examine bureaucratic fiction created in the 21st century, following a widespread shift from paper to digital records. The inventory serves to curate, share, and open for analysis a collection of literary and cinematic works that enables comparative, transmedia and transnational analyses of bureaucratic poetics, as well as affective regimes and material culture associated with the world of administration. Advancing the concept of "bureaucratic fiction" and developing around it a growing field of research, the project investigates how language, audiovisual culture, and political power influence and mirror one another through the mediation of textual and visual artifacts.
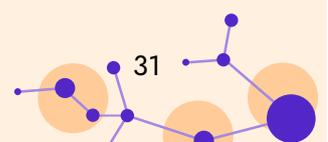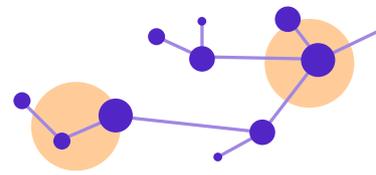
| Improvement of Wind Turbine Performance Coefficient on a Grid-tied DFIG-Based Wind Power Plant Under Variable Wind Speed Conditions Milkias Tuka[1] *(1) Technical University of Applied Sciences Wurzbürg-Schweinfurt (THWS), Schweinfurt, Germany*	P11

This work introduces an appropriate hybrid control technique to enhance the maximum performance coefficient of a Doubly-Fed Induction Generator (DFIG)-based grid-tied wind power plant under continuously varying wind speed conditions. However, these wind speed variations are a crucial challenge for improving the turbine's maximum performance coefficient values. By considering these struggles, this study aimed to design a robust hybrid Adaptive Neuro-Fuzzy Inference System (ANFIS) with a Proportional-Integral (PI) controller on the back-to-back converter at the rotor and grid sides to address the identified gaps in the existing methodologies. The actual real-time wind speed and turbine output power generation data are collected from the Adama II wind power plant in Ethiopia, utilized as input and output variables to the ANFIS controller. In this work, a novel training method for the ANFIS is used as a hybrid propagation training and testing algorithm to enhance the overall system accuracy when processing real data. The simulation results from the latest version of the MATLAB/Simulink software indicate that the proposed hybrid ANFIS-PI controller achieves a maximum performance coefficient (C_p, max) compared to the hybrid FLC-PI controller, using the benchmark reference the FLC-PI controller based on the baseline reference value for the PI controller at a rated wind speed of 12.5 m/s and an optimal pitch angle of 0°.
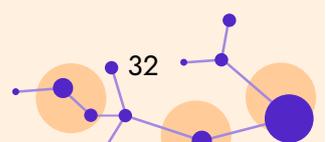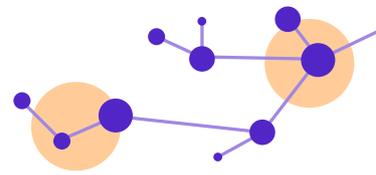
Investigating Synaptic Degeneration in a Mouse Model of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)

Josiane Kelly Siemund[1], Christian Marc Simon[1]

(1) Carl-Ludwig-Institute of Physiology, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

P12

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a fatal neurodegenerative disease characterized by the loss of upper and lower MNs leading to muscle atrophy, paralysis, and death. The causes of ALS are mostly sporadic, with only about 10% of cases being inherited. Since 1993, over 200 SOD1 gene mutations have been identified in ALS patients, and studies have revealed MN degeneration in familial ALS resulting from dominant gain-of-function mutations in the SOD1 gene.

Recent findings from patients and mouse models of ALS suggest synaptic dysfunction as an early event in this pathology. However, the crosstalk between MN loss and synaptic dysfunction in ALS is still not well established.

Our study applied immunohistochemistry and confocal microscopy to perform a time course analysis coupling MN and synaptic degeneration in the SOD1G93A mouse model of ALS. We characterized MNs from the lumbar spinal segments 1, 4, and 5 of mutant and control groups at different disease stages. The L1 segment, mostly innervating proximal muscles, demonstrated a significant loss of MNs only at the disease end-stage, whereas L4 and L5 segments, which innervate distal muscles, were already affected at postnatal day 80. Interestingly, quantifying proprioceptive synapses (major excitatory sensory inputs to MNs) in proximal motor circuits demonstrated synaptic degeneration earlier than MN loss in the L1 segment. Proprioceptive synapses on MNs of the L4 and L5 segments significantly degenerated towards the onset of MN death. Additionally, analysis of further excitatory (c-boutons and VGluT2+ synapses) and inhibitory VGAT+ synapses revealed significant aberrations in all segments.

Taken together, our findings demonstrate the correlation between MN loss and synaptic impairment in both vulnerable and resistant motor circuits in ALS mice, highlighting the key role central synapses play in investigating fundamental mechanisms underpinning motor circuit pathology both in ALS mice and patients.
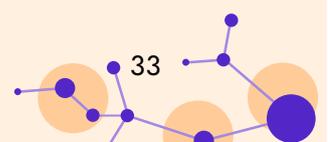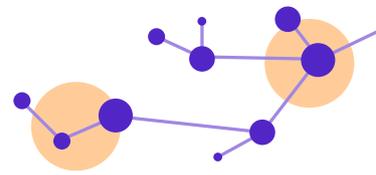
| Social entrepreneurship in wartime: challenges and strategies	34
Valentyna Oberemchuk[1,2]	**P13**
(1) Kyiv National Economic University, Kyiv, Ukraine (2) Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany	

The war in Ukraine has created a specific institutional environment for entrepreneurship, in which traditional rules, structures and institutions have either been destroyed or have created voids. In these conditions, entrepreneurs are forced to adapt their practices, combining economic goals with a social mission.

In this context, our research aims to study entrepreneurial practices that are transformed during the war and the social mission of entrepreneurship (business) that is realized in interaction with the institutional environment.

The research is ongoing. Further empirical analysis is needed to assess the possibility of transforming entrepreneurial practices into sustainable institutional models and to evaluate their contribution to Ukraine's post-war economic recovery.
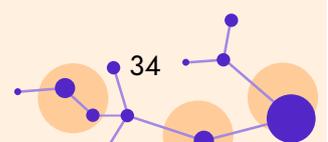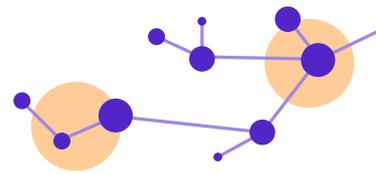
| Recalibrating Afrikanistik: Digital Preservation of Igbo Oral Poetry (Abụ Ọgbara Ọhụụ)	P14
Joy Eyisi[1]	
(1) Institute of African Studies, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany	

Indigenous Igbo oral poetry represents a vital repository of cultural knowledge, yet a good number of it faces extinction due to modernisation and limited preservation efforts. This paper presents a digital archiving project designed to curate, preserve and make accessible various forms of Igbo oral poetry, including proverbs, riddles, lullabies, praise songs, work songs, empowering songs and tongue twisters. The study employs a structured multimodal data collection (text, audio, and video), followed by translation into English and detailed metadata documentation, conceptualised through the lens of cultural remediation. This framework facilitates the remediation of Igbo oral poetry into digital formats, without losing its cultural essence, supporting both preservation and global accessibility. Situated within the framework of "Recalibrating Afrikanistik", an initiative aimed at repositioning African knowledge systems and scholarship to foreground indigenous epistemologies, cultural heritage, and creative knowledge practices, the project integrates digital humanities' tools with community-centred data collection. This approach demonstrates how intangible cultural heritage can be safeguarded and made globally accessible while respecting local contexts and ethical standards. The findings provide a model for similar initiatives in African oral traditions and contribute to a broader rethinking of Afrikanistik scholarship in the digital age.

Keywords: Igbo Oral Poetry, Digital Archiving, Cultural Remediation, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Afrikanistik
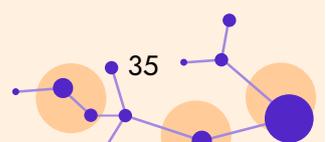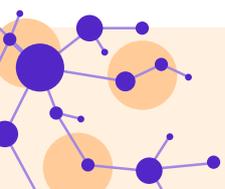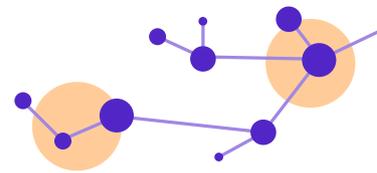
|	
Microbial Marker Variability in Water Quality Assessment: Impact of Sampling Location, Short-Term Temporal Fluctuations, and Sample Processing <u>Kanchan Samadhiya</u>[1], Urda Düker[1], Julius Look[2], Ingeborg Joost[2], Yao Yao[3], Frank Klawonn[4], Markus Wallner[2], Regina Nogueira[1] *(1) Institute of Sanitary Engineering and Waste Management, Leibniz University Hannover, Hannover, Germany* *(2) Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering & Center for Hydrosystems and Health, Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Suderburg, Germany* *(3) Institute for Information Engineering, Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Wolfenbüttel, Germany* *(4) Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Biostatistics Research Group, Braunschweig, Germany*	**P15**

Understanding variability in microbiological water quality assessment is crucial for managing water resources and identifying pollution sources effectively. This study evaluates and compares three factors affecting fluctuations in the concentration of four microbial markers; (i) sample location, (ii) short-term temporal fluctuation, and (iii) variation introduced by sample processing. We analyzed four microbial markers Total Bacteria, Escherichia coli, CrAssphage (a human-associated viral marker), and bla-TEM (an antibiotic resistance gene). Water samples were collected from five sites in Celle, Germany: a manhole, wastewater treatment plant influent and effluent, the river Aller, and an agricultural drainage ditch. To analyze short-term temporal fluctuations, twelve grab samples were collected at one-minute intervals (temporal samples). Eleven technical replicates were prepared from the twelfth sample to assess variability introduced by sample processing and analysis. Total nucleic acid extraction and quantitative PCR (qPCR) were performed for both temporal sample and technical replicates. Significant differences in microbial marker concentrations were found across the five sites, with consistently higher levels in the manhole and influent compared to the river, effluent, and drainage ditch. Principal component analysis and ANOVA indicate that spatial variability is the primary driver of variation in microbial marker concentrations, followed by processing-related variability, whereas short-term temporal fluctuations contribute comparatively less. The dynamic matrix of the manhole samples makes it more susceptible to rapid changes than river or effluent samples. This study highlights the importance of adapting sampling strategies to the specific variability and characteristics of different water matrices to improve microbiological water quality assessment.
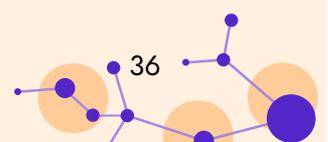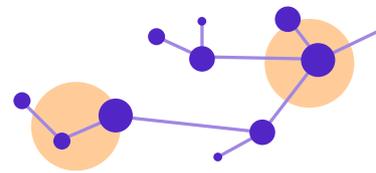
Dynamic Immune Profiling of iPSC-Derived Macrophages in Tuberculosis Infection Models

Daniela Paasch[1], Hannah Schevel[1], Andrea Riehle[2], Bibiana Costa[3], Hassan Toufaili[1], Tabea Gehnen[3], Julia Dahlmann[4,5], Andreas Pavlou[3], Anna-Lena Neehus[6,7,8,9,10], Ariane Hai Ha Nguyen[1], Erika Schiering[1], Theresa Buchegger[1], Jacinta Bustamante[6,11,12], Gesine Hansen[1,5,13], Ulrich Kalinke[3,13], Erich Gulbins[2], Heike Grassmé[2], Nico Lachmann[1,5,13,14]

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(2) Department of Molecular Biology, University of Duisburg-Essen, University Hospital, Essen, Germany
(3) Institute for Experimental Infection Research, TWINCORE, Centre for Experimental and Clinical Infection Research Hannover Medical School and Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research, Hannover, Germany
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(7) Division of Hematology/Oncology, Boston Children's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts USA
(8) Department of Pediatric Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
(9) Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
(10) Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
(11) St Giles Laboratory of Human Genetics of Infectious Diseases, Rockefeller Branch, Rockefeller University, New York, New York, USA
(12) Study Center for Primary Immunodeficiencies, Necker Hospital for Sick Children, AP-HP, Paris, France
(13) Cluster of Excellence RESIST (EXC 2155), Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany
(14) Fraunhofer Institute for Toxicology and Experimental Medicine (ITEM), Hannover, Germany

P16

Introduction: Tuberculosis (TB), caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb), remains a leading cause of infectious mortality worldwide. Current antibiotic treatments are limited by prolonged regimens and the increasing emergence of multidrug-resistant strains.
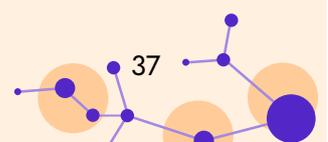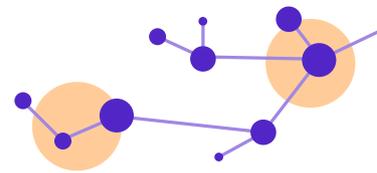
Disease outcome is strongly influenced by interactions between Mtb and macrophages, which serve as the primary cellular niche for infection and are central mediators of antimicrobial immunity. Blood monocyte-derived macrophages (MDMs) are widely used in TB research but are limited by donor variability, restricted scalability, and finite lifespan. Induced pluripotent stem cell—derived macrophages (iMacs) provide a complementary, reproducible, scalable, and donor-independent alternative. Systematic comparison of immune responses between iMacs and MDMs is therefore essential to validate iMacs as a TB model and to explore their potential for cell-based immunotherapy and translational applications.

Methods and Materials: Human iMacs were generated from two healthy donors and compared with MDMs. Cells were challenged with the live attenuated Bacillus Calmette—Guérin (BCG) strain or heat-killed Mtb (HKMT). Migration, phagocytosis kinetics, autophagy- and apoptosis-related responses, reactive oxygen species production, cytokine profiles, and phagosome maturation and acidification were assessed.

Results: Both macrophage types efficiently phagocytosed BCG and HKMT; however, iMacs exhibited enhanced migration and more rapid phagocytosis. Following infection, iMacs showed increased expression of autophagy- and apoptosis-associated proteins, elevated reactive oxygen species production, and enhanced phagosome maturation and acidification, as demonstrated by co-localization with V-ATPases and LAMP-1. In addition, iMacs mounted a stronger pro-inflammatory cytokine response to both BCG and HKMT, which was followed by rapid resolution to baseline activation.

Discussion: The faster and more robust functional responses observed in iMacs suggest that macrophage ontogeny plays a critical role in host—mycobacteria interactions, supporting iMacs as a physiologically relevant and complementary model for TB research.

Outlook: Collectively, these findings establish iMacs as a robust in vitro platform for TB research and, by using genetically-defined and scalable cells, highlight their potential for precise modeling of TB pathogenesis and the development of novel cell-based immunotherapeutic strategies.
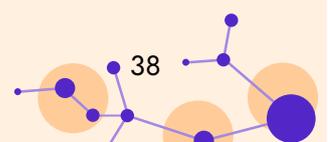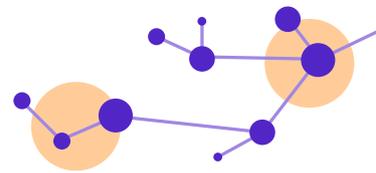
## Circadian Regulation of Tumor Metabolism in Glioblastoma

Rima Siauciunaite[1]

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P17

Glioblastoma (GBM) is among the most aggressive forms of brain cancer, with few effective therapies and a very poor prognosis. Circadian misalignment driven by modern lifestyle factors, such as irregular eating patterns, shift work, and smoking, has been shown to accelerate tumour development, while dysregulation of lipid metabolism contributes to metabolic flexibility and the maintenance of stem-like tumour cell states. In my research, I am establishing advanced in vitro and in vivo models to investigate how circadian regulation influences lipid metabolism in GBM. Once these models are established, I will combine multi-omics and high-content imaging data using explainable AI methods to support chronotherapy optimization and improve glioblastoma risk assessment. In summary, this work aims to improve treatment outcomes through personalized, time-dependent treatment approaches for glioblastoma.
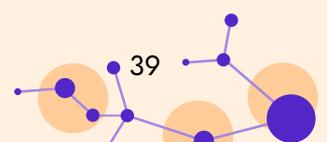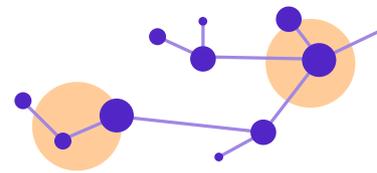
| 'It can be very complicated': A qualitative analysis of clinicians' practices and perspectives on treating adolescents with nonspecific persistent back pain <u>Sara D. Hauber</u>[1], Katie Robinson[1], Kieran O'Sullivan[1] *(1) Health Research Institute, School of Allied Health, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland*	P18

Objective: To explore the practices, perspectives, and beliefs of clinicians treating adolescents with nonspecific persistent back pain.

Design: A qualitative descriptive study using individual, semi-structured interviews. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to code interview transcripts and generate relevant themes.

Participants: Ten clinicians (eight chartered physiotherapists, one nurse, and one psychologist) who currently treat or have treated adolescents with nonspecific persistent back pain.

Results: Five themes were generated which captured the practices, perspectives, and beliefs of clinicians treating adolescents with nonspecific persistent back pain: (1) Multiple relationships, one priority, (2) Without buy-in, it won't work, (3) Managing pain, living life, (4) No one-size-fits-all treatment, and (5) Who you see is what you get.

Conclusions: Treating an adolescent with nonspecific persistent back pain is not the same as treating an adult with the same condition. Specifically, clinicians must attend to the needs, concerns, and beliefs of both adolescents and their parents, reflecting the diminished autonomy of adolescent patients. Clinicians aim to offer person-centred care to adolescents with nonspecific persistent back pain. However, they currently lack guidance on how to foster effective treatment relationships with parents and how to achieve buy-in to a modern conceptualization of persistent back pain as a biopsychosocial phenomenon.
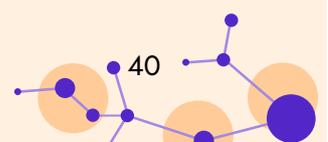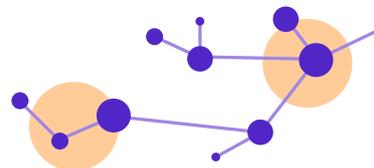
| Women in chemistry networking and proteomics	41
Sara Gutkin[1], Stephan A. Sieber[1]	P19
(1) Department of Bioscience, Center for Functional Protein Assemblies (CPA), Technical University of Munich, Garching bei München, Germany	

Being a female postdoc in the STEM area, raises many challenges related to both research and the gender gap. In this poster I will present my research as well as how I encourage idea sharing and networking in the female chemistry community at TUM.
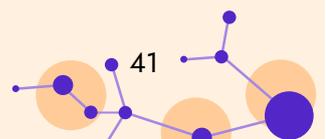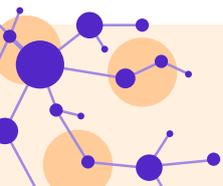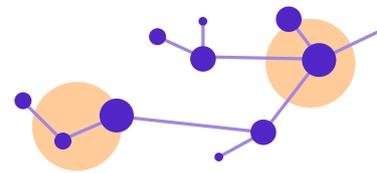
| Using spatial omics technologies to study combination drug therapies in lung cancer <u>Sabrina Lewis</u>[1], Lilly Pfister[1], Nils Englert[1], Petros Christopoulos[2], Oliver Jonas[3], Marc Schneider[2], Peer Fischer[4], Denis Schapiro[1] *(1) Heidelberg University Hospital, Heidelberg, Germany* *(2) Thoraxklinik Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany* *(3) Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA* *(4) Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany*	P20

Lung cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related death worldwide and is often linked to smoking and exposure to harmful environmental factors. Despite advances in treatment, some patients do not respond to therapy; the reasons for this therapeutic resistance are not fully understood. The spatial organisation of cells within a tumour, and the interactions between cancer cells and their surrounding microenvironment, play an important role in therapeutic success. Using state-of-the-art spatial omics technologies (such as the Lunaphore COMET platform), we can evaluate the effects of combination drug therapies and identify tissue patterns associated with better treatment responses. This approach offers new insights into why therapies succeed or fail in lung cancer and may help guide personalised treatment options in the clinic.
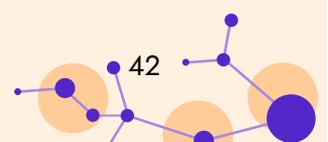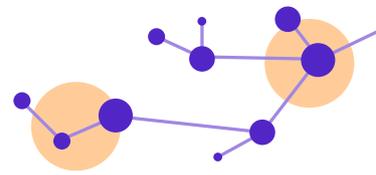
| Navigating the Many Sides of Academia: Lessons from Interdisciplinary Research and Academic Coordination	
Jayana Mukeshkumar Jain[1] (1) University of Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany	P21

Should postdocs focus exclusively on their research, or is it possible and legitimate to combine research with coordination, teaching, and support work? Does taking on multiple forms of academic roles strengthen an academic profile, or does it risk being seen as a distraction from "core" research? These questions shape not only everyday decisions but also how many postdocs understand their roles, identities, and futures within a fast-paced academic landscape shaped by persistent and often outdated policy structures in Germany.

This poster reflects on lessons learned from working in overlapping academic roles, combining postdoctoral research with academic coordination work. It brings together experiences from interdisciplinary research in migration, diaspora, and intermedial studies with insights gained through coordinating postdoc career development. Across both roles, some questions and challenges begin to merge. Research on narratives and interpretation involves translating complex knowledge across contexts and audiences; career coordination work similarly requires making implicit competencies, career paths, and institutional expectations visible. Rather than framing overlapping roles as risks or detours from research careers, the poster argues that they can function as meaningful learning spaces, thereby, expanding understandings of what counts as academic work. It invites discussion on how postdoc networks can better recognize, support, and value this diversity of academic labor as part of more sustainable postdoctoral career paths.
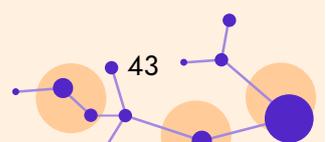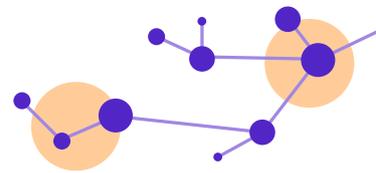
| Influence of design choices on self-supervised artificial intelligence for computer vision	P22
Ladyna Wittscher[1]	
(1) Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena, Jena, Germany	

Self-supervised learning is an effective approach for training neural networks in computer vision, particularly in settings where labeled data are scarce. Instead of relying on human-annotated labels, this approach introduces an additional pretraining task that learns from inherent structures and patterns within the data itself, which can also improve model robustness. Combining this pretraining stage with subsequent training on a specific downstream task, however, increases the complexity of model design. Developers must make several additional design decisions, and these choices can substantially influence both model performance and robustness. This raises important questions: How should pretext tasks be designed to be both effective and broadly applicable? Which properties of pretraining datasets are especially beneficial? And to what extent should pretraining data resemble the data used for the downstream task? To address these questions, a comprehensive meta-study was conducted, analyzing results from a wide range of models and publications that employ different self-supervised design choices. The findings demonstrate clear advantages of in-domain pretraining and underline the importance of consistently aligning design decisions in order to achieve optimal performance.
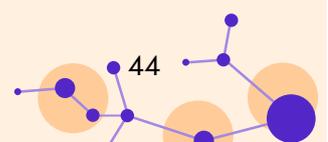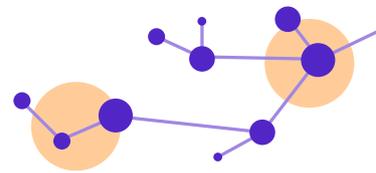
| The IMB Postdoc Programme (IPPro) at the Institute of Molecular Biology in Mainz	
Chiara Galante[1]	P23
(1) Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB) gGmbH, Mainz, Germany	

The Institute of Molecular Biology (IMB) in Mainz established the IPPro in 2014 to provide all postdocs at IMB and in our Adjunct Groups with the necessary scientific and technical support as well as tailored mentoring to fast-track their careers. The IPPro is therefore designed to offer postdocs a stimulating scientific environment and comprehensive training in theoretical and practical scientific skills, as well as key professional skills and support with raising funds. The training curriculum is elective and each IPPro postdoc can choose which training opportunities are best suited to their career needs.

We've also established a Career Development Programme for our postdocs and PhD students, where interested participants will benefit from a holistic approach to career development, including individual assessments, appraisals with your PI, career mentoring, workshops, career events and in-house career coaching.
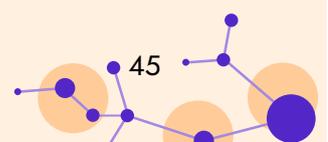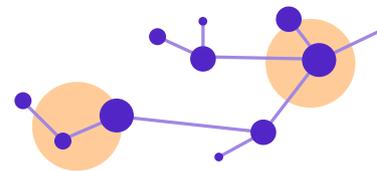
Presenting the Working Group Advocacy

Yves P. Klinger[1], Stefan Pieczonka[2], Nadezda Dolgikh[3], Christophe Bousquet[4], Members of the WG Advocacy

(1) Justus Liebig University Gießen, Gießen, Germany
(2) Technical University of Munich, Munich, Germany
(3) University Medical Center Mainz, Mainz, Germany
*(4) University of Konstanz, Konstanz, Germany*

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The Working Group Advocacy of the German Postdoc Network (GPN) works to strengthen the voice of postdoctoral researchers in Germany and to improve the conditions for postdoc careers. This poster presents the working group's overarching goals, its thematic focus groups, and its emerging role as a national stakeholder connecting postdocs, institutions, and policymakers.

The working group's overarching aims are to (i) provide career-relevant information to postdocs, (ii) raise awareness of the situations of postdocs across disciplines, (iii) to represent their interests in national debates, and (iv) to empower them to advocate for themselves. To achieve this, the group gathers and synthesizes information on framework conditions, possible career paths, and working conditions, and uses this knowledge to lead evidence informed advocacy debates. The working group works closely with the GPN coordination office and the other GPN working groups.

In 2025, the WG established four thematic focus groups that address key dimensions of postdoc life in Germany: Postdoc Definition, WissZeitVG, Postdoc Situation, and Career Paths.

- The Postdoc Definition group is working toward a clear and broadly accepted understanding of what constitutes a "postdoc," thereby clarifying the target group for better support and future policies.
- The WissZeitVG focus group informs and empowers postdocs regarding the German Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, and uses the window of upcoming reforms to articulate postdoc perspectives for a fairer and more predictable academic career system.
- The Postdoc Situation group collects institutional data, survey results, and personal accounts to map the heterogeneous realities of postdoc work, highlighting both challenges and positive examples.
- The Career Paths group supports informed career decision making by showcasing trajectories of postdoc careers within and beyond academia and highlighting transferable skills helping in pursuing these trajectories.

The WG Advocacy positions the GPN as a hub that aggregates knowledge, builds community, and facilitates structured dialogue with stakeholders at institutional and national levels. Outcomes of 2025-2026 lay the foundations for national advocacy efforts, e.g. by advancing a shared postdoc definition,
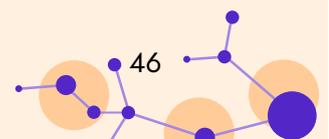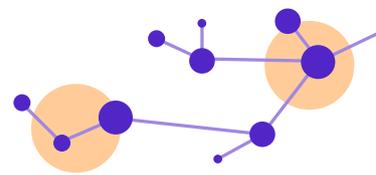
and creating accessible outputs such as blog posts, organizing community meetups, and advocating for postdocs at different events. The WG invites all participants to discuss future activities, events, and advocacy priorities. The poster highlights the group's structure, tools, and first results, and calls on postdocs, institutional representatives, and policymakers to work together toward a more transparent, supportive, and equitable postdoc landscape in Germany.
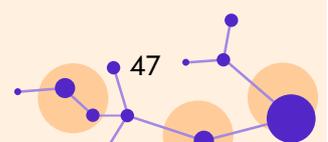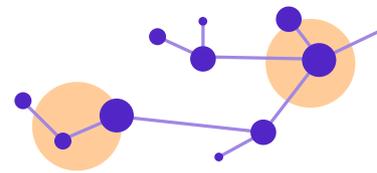
The Survey Working Group of the German Postdoc Network

Maria Dorofeikova[1], Roman Pauli[2], Manuela Tischler[3], and Members of the Survey WG

(1) Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine, Berlin, Germany
(2) Uniklinik RWTH Aachen, Aachen, Germany
(3) Die Hochschule München, München, Germany

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Who are postdoctoral researchers? This question is deceptively difficult, as postdocs are a heterogeneous group with diverse backgrounds, research areas, family needs, and career development aspirations. While difficult, this question is vital to the future of postdoctoral researchers inside and outside Germany, as there is a notorious lack of data on postdocs, allowing lawmakers and academic administrators to make, at times, ill-informed decisions. While specific institutions in Germany have conducted surveys in recent years to collect extremely valuable data, there has yet to be a systematic survey conducted of postdocs throughout Germany. To this end, the Survey Working Group of the German Postdoc Network has set out to conduct a wide-ranging survey open to all postdocs in Germany, including both research institutions and universities. Covering topics such as demographics, career development, working conditions, and mental health, we aim to obtain, for the first time, a robust and detailed look at the postdoctoral landscape throughout Germany. This will allow us not only to properly grasp the heterogeneity of postdocs but also to create an action plan to advocate for all postdocs, creating a better future for all postdocs and, therefore, academia.
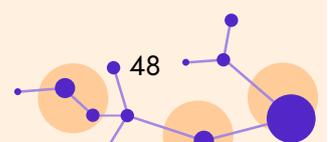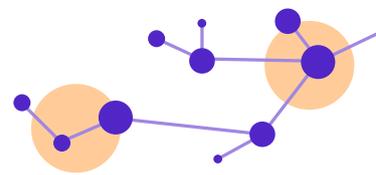
A word from our sponsors

academics

academics is the job market by DIE ZEIT and Forschung & Lehre and a leading career portal for the fields of academia, research, public sector and society.

On 13 June 2005, academics was launched as a joint project of Zeitverlag and the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (Deutscher Hochschulverband) — with the aim of making careers in academia, research, the public sector and society visible and supporting them.

Whether through targeted job offers, in-depth career advice, inspiring guides or interactive online seminars, we support academics at key moments in their careers — from entry level positions to a professorship. We are driven by a clear vision: to make careers in academia more visible and more accessible.

BioMedX

BioMed X is a leading innovation hub for pharma. With our global network of research institutes at top universities and incubators within pharmaceutical companies, we bridge the gap between academia and industry. With our unique innovation model, we identify key challenges across all therapeutic areas, recruit top academic talent, and co-create tailored solutions with our pharma partners.

Postdocs at BioMed X benefit from access to a high-level scientific and innovation ecosystem, collaborating closely with their industry partners and leading international researchers. We actively encourage and support publication in top-tier peer-reviewed journals and presentations at major scientific conferences, aligned with project objectives and confidentiality requirements. Our international and diverse environment fosters both personal and professional growth, while providing strong industry exposure and clear career pathways toward senior scientist, staff scientist, or PI-track positions. Within our dynamic ecosystem, researchers develop into future scientific leaders while contributing to next-generation therapies that improve global health.
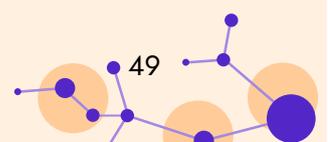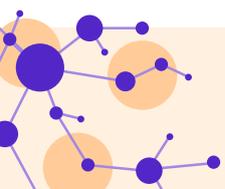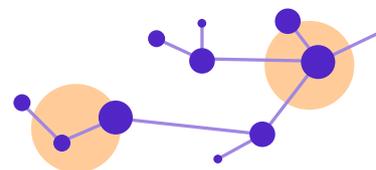
Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH

JÜLICH
Forschungszentrum

As a member of the Helmholtz Association, we aim to tackle the grand societal challenges of our time and conduct interdisciplinary research into a digitalized society, a climate-friendly energy system, and a sustainable economy. This requires not only cutting-edge research, but also people who contribute their enthusiasm and excellence to the process of thinking and shaping the future. More than 7,700 colleagues from all over the world make Jülich one of the largest research centers in Europe and a place where cooperation, curiosity, and diversity count.

Our postdocs conduct research on pressing issues of the future and at the same time find themselves in a decisive phase between qualification and the next steps in their careers. We support them in a tailored manner with advisory services from the Career Center, leadership development, excellence programs such as the Young Excellent Scientist Program (YESP), and individual mentoring by experienced leaders. There are also opportunities to establish your own junior research group.

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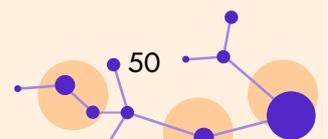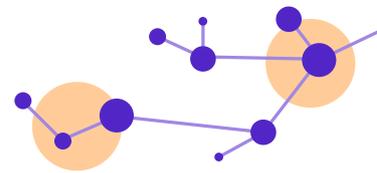
How to become involved in the GPN: Working groups (WGs)

WG Annual Conference

The goal of the WG Annual Conference is to create a platform where postdocs from all institutions and research topics are invited to:

- Come together;
- Discuss shared challenges;
- Showcase postdoc work;
- Inspire collaboration.

We aim to provide a space for postdocs to expand their professional network, meet potential future employers, and engage in interdisciplinary learning.

Therefore, the WG Annual Conference's main objective is to plan and execute Germany-wide annual Postdoc conference.
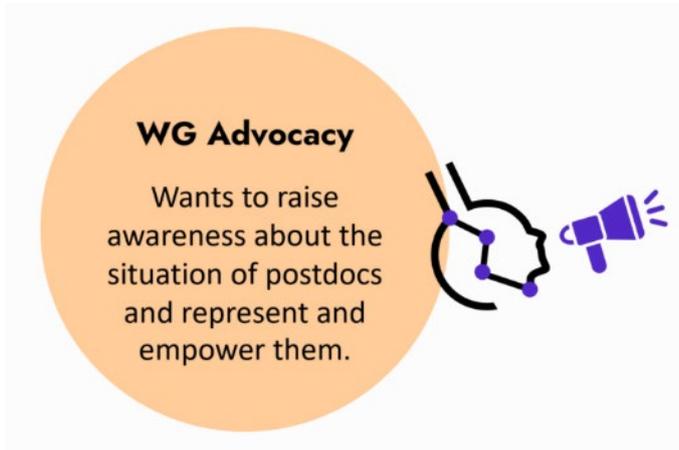
Spokespersons 2025/2026:

Dr. Laimdota Zizmare

Pharmaceutical industry-affiliate

Research Field: Spatial Immuno-Oncology Metabolomics for Translational Medicine

Dr. Mark Wever

Helmholtz Zentrum München & Leibniz University Hannover

Research Field: Medicinal Chemistry
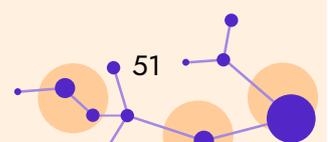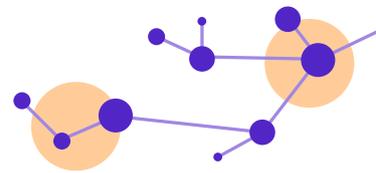
WG Advocacy

The WG Advocacy aims at representing postdocs working in Germany and advocating for postdoc rights. Our mission is to empower postdoctoral researchers in Germany by focusing on four key objectives:

- Raising Awareness: Inform stakeholders and amplify postdoc challenges;
- Empowering Postdocs: Educate on rights, obligations, and laws;
- Advocating for Accountability: Promote fairness and institutional responsibility;
- Representation: Give postdocs a unified voice;
- Highlighting Postdoc Value Beyond Academia.

It is currently organized by focus groups:

- Postdoc Definition (Lead: Stefan Pieczonka and Fotios-Alexandros Karakostis)
- WissZeitVG — German Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (Lead: Yves Klinger and Samuel Tickell)
- Postdoc Situation (Lead: Christina Müdsam and Martin Blaser)
- Career Paths for Postdocs (Lead: Judith Münch and Nadezda Dolgikh)

Join and contribute to a Focus Group!

Spokespersons 2025/2026:

Dr. Stefan Pieczonka

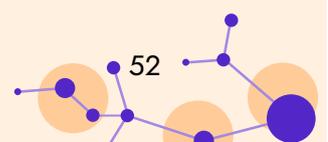The University of Queensland & TU Munich
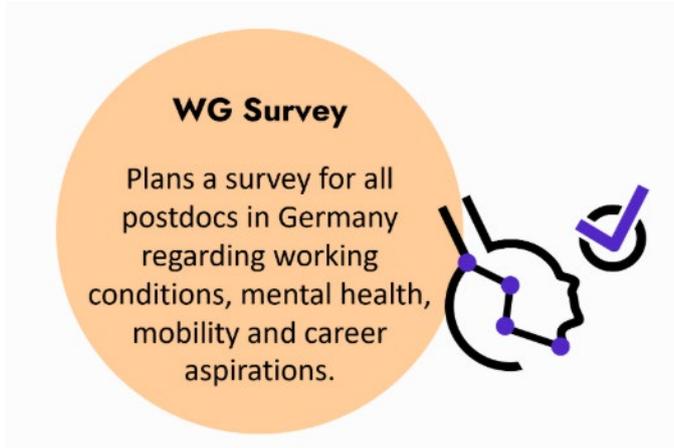
Research Field: Analytical Food Chemistry

Dr. Yves Klinger

Justus Liebig University Gießen

Research Field: Ecology

WG Survey

The WG Survey aims to gain a deeper understanding of the realities postdocs face in Germany by collecting and analyzing data on key topics such as working conditions, mental health, career trajectories, and scientific integrity.

To achieve this, the WG reviews existing literature and designs, distributes and evaluates its own survey. The findings will be shared with postdocs and institutions to raise awareness and contribute to policy discussions, working closely with the other working groups to support evidence-based recommendations.

By gathering valuable insights, this WG strives to highlight challenges, inform decision-makers, and drive positive change for postdocs in Germany.

Spokespersons 2025/2026:

Dr. Maria Dorofeikova

Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine

Research Field: Neuroscience

Dr. Roman Pauli

Uniklinik RWTH Aachen

Research Field: Occupational Health Psychology
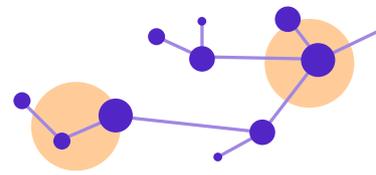
WG Strategy & Concepts

The WG Strategy & Concepts supports the GPN Coordination Office in shaping key structures like the advisory board and regional groups—ensuring they meet postdocs' needs. It also oversees the formation of new working groups, sets topics for Town Hall meetings, and contributes to the network's strategic direction.

Looking ahead, the group will play a role in financial consolidation and provide feedback on outreach activities, including talks, social media, and newsletters. It also brings forward topics relevant to postdocs.

As an advisory body, the WG operates without elected structures or appointed spokespersons.
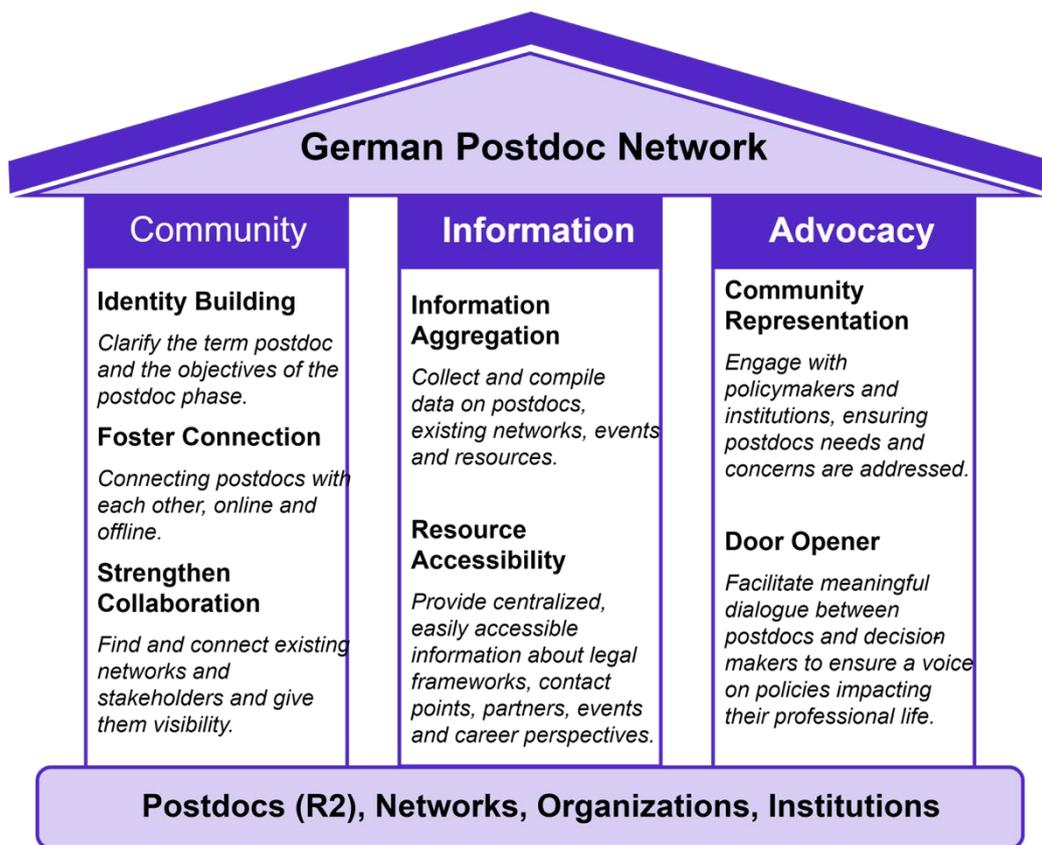
Want to join in? More info and registration via https://germanpostdoc.net/home/working-groups/
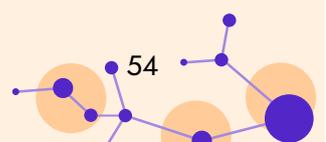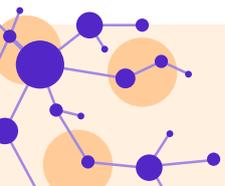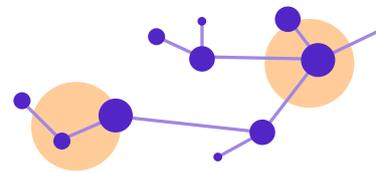
About GPN

Mission

Our mission is to improve the postdoctoral experience by creating opportunities for connection, collaboration, and identity-building. We aim to gather and disseminate crucial information ensuring postdocs are well-informed and supported. We give a voice to postdocs to represent their interests and influence policies that impact their professional and personal development.

German Postdoc Network

Community

Identity Building

Clarify the term postdoc and the objectives of the postdoc phase.

Foster Connection

Connecting postdocs with each other, online and offline.

Strengthen Collaboration

Find and connect existing networks and stakeholders and give them visibility.

Information

Information Aggregation

Collect and compile data on postdocs, existing networks, events and resources.

Resource Accessibility

Provide centralized, easily accessible information about legal frameworks, contact points, partners, events and career perspectives.

Advocacy

Community Representation

Engage with policymakers and institutions, ensuring postdocs needs and concerns are addressed.

Door Opener

Facilitate meaningful dialogue between postdocs and decision makers to ensure a voice on policies impacting their professional life.

**Postdocs (R2), Networks, Organizations, Institutions**

Vision

For the network: We envision an established network that is the hub connecting postdocs and stakeholders, driving cultural change that recognizes the value and contributions of postdocs, ensuring that they are represented and empowered to succeed.

For the postdocs: We envision that postdocs are a defined group, having clear career perspectives across all sectors and their voices are heard on all levels.
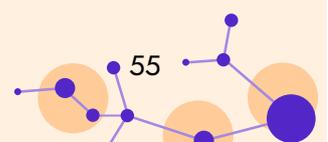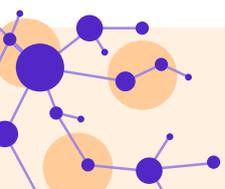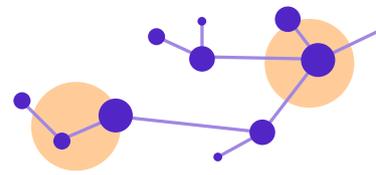
Advisory board

The Advisory Board of the GPN brings together experts from diverse backgrounds—across academia, industry, politics, and research support, both in Germany and internationally. The board was established to accompany and support the further development of our network, providing constructive feedback, strategic guidance, and helping us position the GPN within the broader academic landscape. In addition to advising on our activities and consolidation process, members act as valuable connectors, opening doors to new stakeholders and collaborations.

The Advisory Board meets twice a year and receives regular reports on the network's activities and plans. During these meetings, representatives from the coordination office, regional groups, and working groups present their work and receive direct feedback and input. Beyond the meetings, board members remain available as points of contact for ongoing dialogue.

We are deeply grateful to our Advisory Board members for their commitment and engagement, and we look forward to continuing to develop the GPN together in line with our shared mission and vision.

Advisory board members

Dr. Anjana Buckow
Programme Director Research Careers at German Research Foundation, DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft)

Prof. Dr. Timo Lorenz
Juniorprofessor in Work and Organizational Psychology, Medical School Berlin

Bettina Martin
Minister for Science, Culture, Federal and European Affairs in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Former president of the Conference of Ministers of Science, WMK

Mirjam Müller
Head of Postdoc Affairs, Academic Staff Development, University of Konstanz

Dr. Thomas Rückle
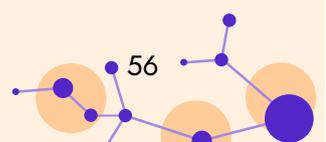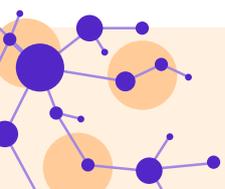Senior Vice President, Head of Research Europe, BioMedX Germany GmbH
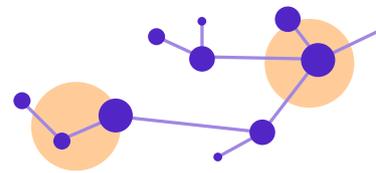
Dr. Pil Maria Saugmann
Former president of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, Eurodoc

Dr. Anne Schreiter
Executive Director of Guidance, Skills & Opportunities for Researchers, GSO

GPN info and imprint

**Contact info:** contact@germanpostdoc.net

Website: https://germanpostdoc.net/

About: The GPN is a project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation under their "Pioneer Projects - Impetus for the German Research System" line of funding with 500.000 € for three years. This funding enables us to establish the network and firmly anchor its activities in the German scientific system. The funding period started in June 2024.

Given the dynamic nature of the postdoc phase, we believe it was crucial to hire two network coordinators who are leading the Network's Coordination Office and collaborate with research institutions and existing networks.

The proposal of the funding was created jointly by the three initiators Dr. Neele Meyer (Helmholtz Munich), Dr. Camila Hernández Frederick (Max-Planck-Institute of Biochemistry) and Dr. Tina Scheibe (Hochschule München) and supported by several partners.
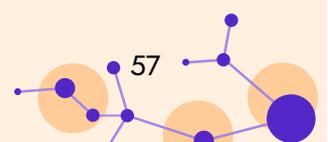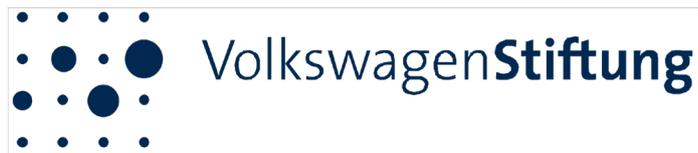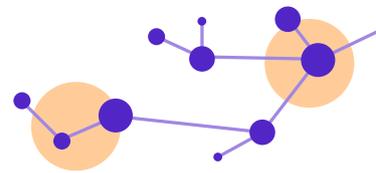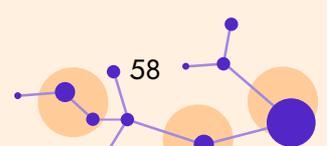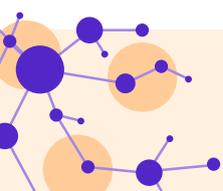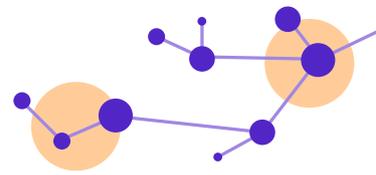
Partners

We are proud to be part of a larger community of organizations, networks, and institutions, that support postdocs in Germany. Some of those partners were with us from the very beginning of our journey and endorsed the proposal at the Volkswagen Foundation for the funding of the GPN. Thank you for initial and continued support!

Thank You

Thank you to Helmholz Munich for providing us with the location to meet and exchange.

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Thank you to everybody for being here: All the postdocs attending the event, all the postdoc supporters and friends, contributing to better postdoc future in Germany!

Special thank you to the GPN Annual Conference 2025/2026 working group active members:

Al Sardy, Loui	Ramachandran, Dhanya
Blaser, Martin	Rajendran, Anuradha
Fabian, Simone	Ratolikar, Mangesh
Gautam, Umesh	Singh, Meenu
Germani, Elodie	Tamang, Pravesh
Gilmore, Rachel	Tanoey, Justine
Haga Jäger, Raquel	Vilser, Melanie
Hemandhar Kumar, Nisha	Wever, Mark
Knopf, Jasmin	Ziegler, Mario
McCormack, Alexandra	Zizmare, Laimdota
Puls, Jan-Samuel	