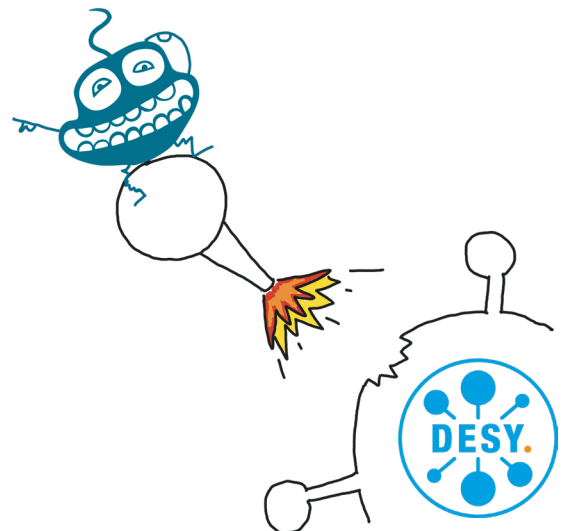




# **COAST CAREERGUIDE.**

**Think. Plan. Act.**  
**A Workbook for Postdocs**



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# Introduction



Welcome to the COAST Career Guide! We are delighted to assist you in navigating your career path at DESY and beyond. Whether you are considering a career in academia or exploring opportunities outside of it, this guide is designed to provide you with valuable insights and resources.

The primary goal of this e-book is to help you identify and develop the skills necessary for your desired career. We aim to inspire and equip you with the tools you need to make informed decisions and take proactive steps towards achieving your professional goals.

Each chapter of this guide covers a different aspect of career development, from identifying your needs to building leadership skills. Feel free to navigate through the chapters in order or jump to the sections that are most relevant to your current stage in your career journey.

# About COAST

COAST is the career center for postdocs at DESY and offers career orientation and skills training. It is your personal incubator for developing relevant career skills. We are dedicated to helping you identify your individual career needs and provide you with the resources to achieve your professional aspirations – regardless of your fields of interest.

Our mission is to support you in exploring a wide range of professional job options, both within and beyond academia. We envision a future where all DESY professionals are equipped with the skills and confidence to pursue their chosen career paths successfully.

## What we Offer

**Counseling:** Personalized career counseling sessions to help you clarify your goals and plan your career trajectory.

**Training Programs:** Workshops and training sessions to develop specific skills and enhance your professional profile.

**Networking + Role Models Events:** Opportunities to connect with industry professionals, DESY scientists, alumni, and peers.





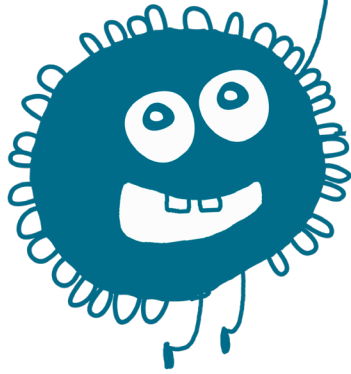
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# Identifying Your Career Needs





3



## Identifying Your Career Needs

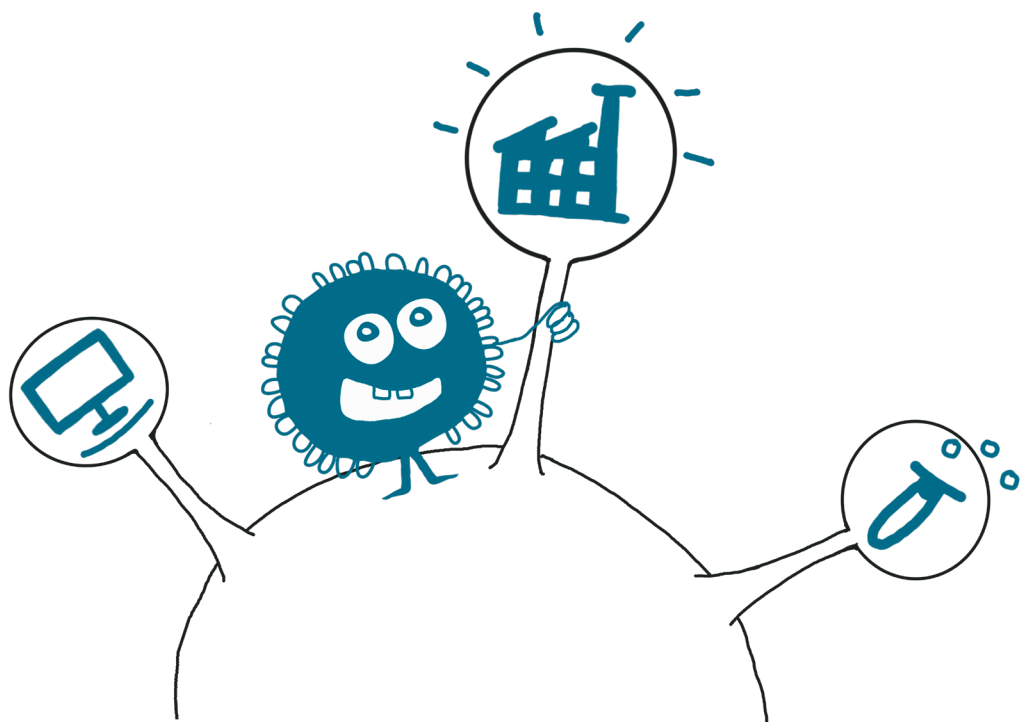
Career development begins with self-awareness and clear goal-setting. To navigate your career path effectively, it's essential to understand what you want to achieve and recognize your strengths and weaknesses. This section will guide you through setting meaningful career goals and help you assess your abilities so you can focus on areas that require attendance.

# 3.1

## Setting career goals

Setting career goals is the cornerstone of professional development. Clear, actionable goals provide direction and motivation, helping you to stay focused on what matters most in your career. Whether you aim to secure a leadership position, transition into a new field, or simply enhance your current skills, having well-defined goals will make your journey more structured and achievable.

Effective goal-setting involves more than just identifying what you want to accomplish. It requires a deep understanding of your professional values, long-term aspirations, and the steps needed to reach your objectives. This process will help you stay aligned with your broader career vision, ensuring that your daily efforts contribute to your overarching goals.

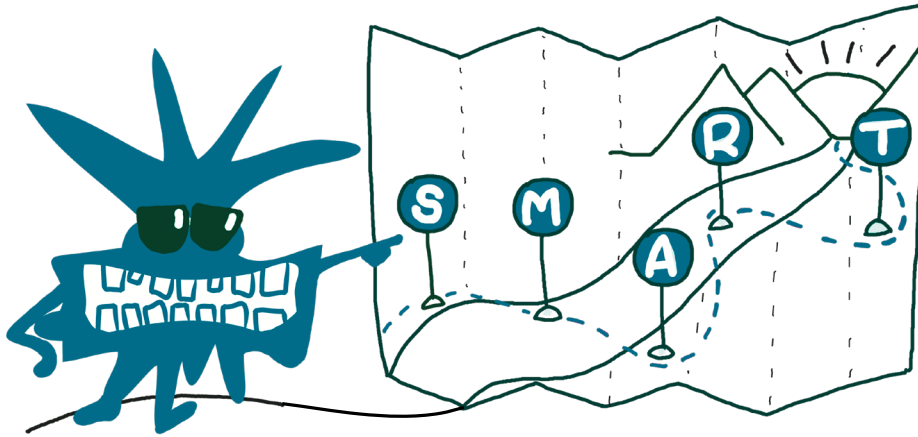




## Practical Exercise

### Setting SMART Goals

To create clear and attainable career goals, consider using the SMART framework. SMART goals are:



#### **S**PECIFIC:

Clearly define what you want to achieve.

#### **M**EASURABLE:

Establish criteria to measure your progress.

#### **A**CHIEVABLE:

Ensure your goals are realistic given your current situation.

#### **R**ELEVANT:

Align your goals with your broader career objectives.

#### **T**IME-BOUND:

Set a deadline to keep yourself on track.

# Exercise Steps:

## 1. Reflect on Your Long-Term Vision:

Write down where you see yourself in 5 to 10 years. Consider your ideal job, the skills you'll need, and the impact you want to make in your field.

Be creative and aim high: are you dreaming of becoming a professor, being a well-known expert in your field, having your own company or living in the Caribbean? That's the vision you're looking for.

# Break Down Your Vision into Short-Term Goals:

## 2. Break Down Your Vision into Short-Term Goals:

Identify 2-3 short-term goals (6-12 months) that will bring you closer to your long-term vision. Make sure these goals are SMART.

### **3. Create an Action Plan:**

For each goal, list the specific actions you need to take. For example, if your goal is to publish a research paper, actions might include conducting research, writing a draft, and submitting it to a journal.

### **4. Review and Adjust:**

Regularly review your goals and progress. Adjust them as needed based on new information or changes in your career aspirations.

### **5. Accountability Partner:**

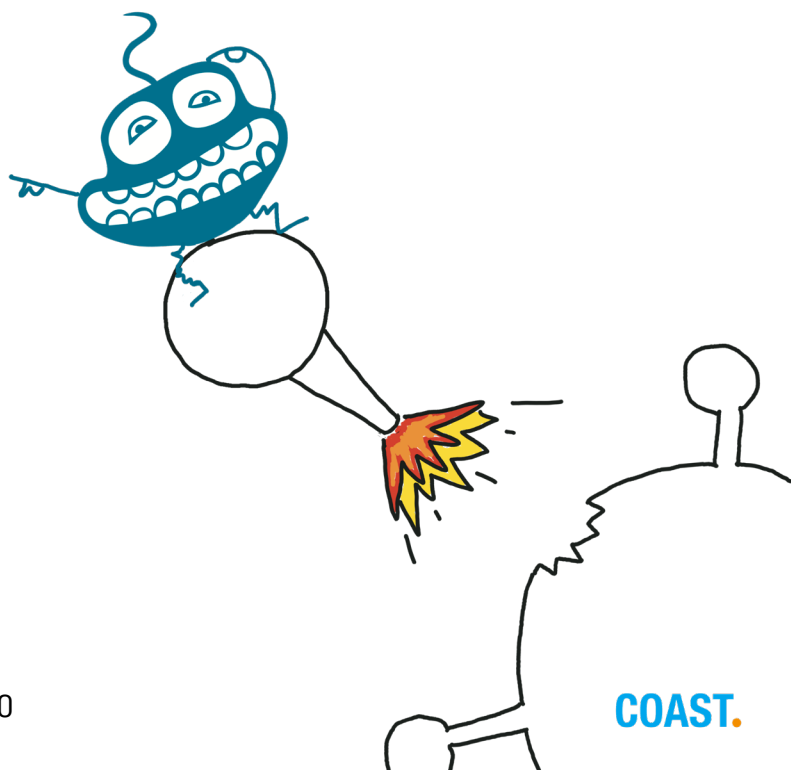
Share your goals with a mentor or colleague who can provide feedback and help keep you accountable.

## 3.2

# Understanding Your Strengths and Challenges

Understanding your strengths and challenges is vital to personal and professional growth. Recognizing your strengths allows you to leverage them effectively in your career, while being aware of your weaknesses enables you to address them or seek complementary skills in others. For postdocs, this self-awareness is crucial as it influences your career choices, professional development, and the way you navigate opportunities and challenges.

This self-assessment will also guide you in setting realistic career goals, choosing the right training programs, and identifying areas where you may need additional support or mentorship.







## Practical Exercise

### Strengths and Skills to Improve Inventory

To gain a deeper understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, try this reflective exercise.

#### Exercise Steps:

##### 1. Self-Reflection:

**A Strengths:** List your top 5 professional strengths. Consider your technical skills, research abilities, communication skills, and any other attributes that set you apart. Ask yourself:

**W**hat tasks do I excel at?

**W**hat do colleagues often seek my help with?

**W**hat achievements am I most proud of?

**W**hat is it I really enjoy?

**B Skills to Improve:** List 3-5 areas where you struggle or where you feel less confident. These might include technical skills you lack, areas where you receive constructive criticism, or tasks you find challenging. Ask yourself:

**W**hat do I find most challenging in my work?

**W**here do I frequently make mistakes or receive critical feedback?

**W**hat skills or knowledge do I wish I had?

## **2. Seek External Feedback:**

Ask a trusted colleague, mentor, or supervisor to provide feedback on your strengths and weaknesses. Compare their insights with your self-assessment to identify any blind spots.

## **3. Analyze the Results:**

Reflect on how your strengths can be further developed or leveraged in your current role. Consider how your weaknesses might be addressed through training, mentorship, or delegating tasks.

## **4. Action Plan:**

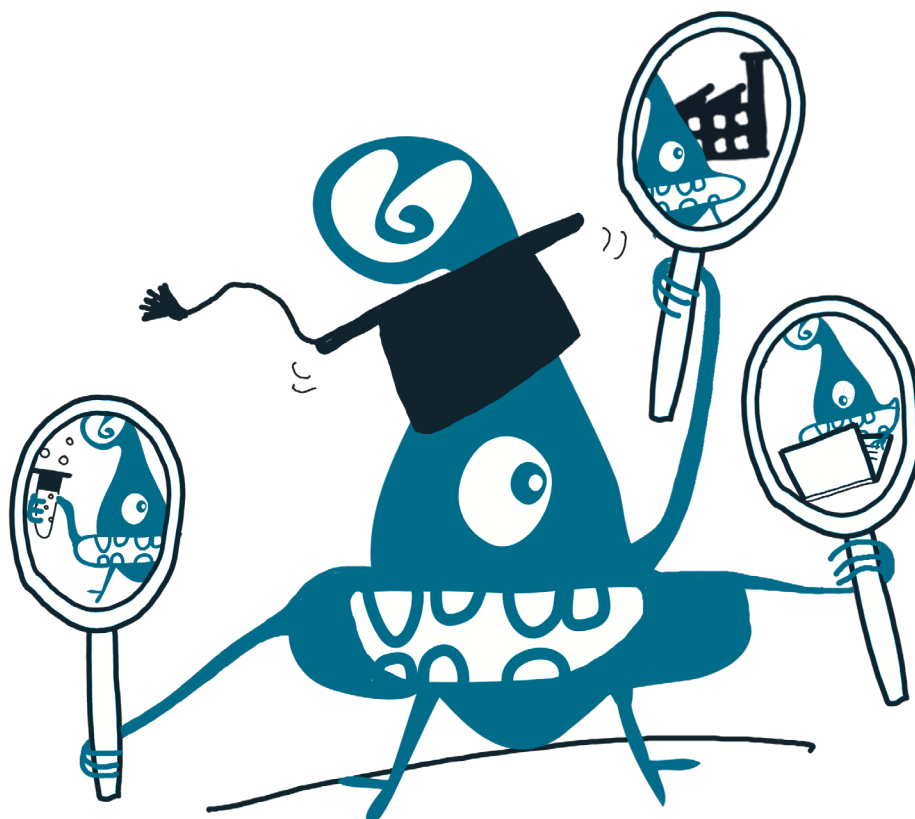
- For each identified weakness, outline specific steps you can take to improve. For instance, if public speaking is a weakness, consider enrolling in a communication workshop or volunteering for speaking opportunities.
- For each strength, outline steps to further use and develop it by identifying areas of application, setting specific goals for improvement, seeking feedback, and finding opportunities to challenge and refine the skill.

## **5. Periodic Review:**

Revisit your strengths and skills to improve periodically to track your progress and update your development plan as you grow professionally.

## 3.3

# Finding the right workplace for you



This exercise is designed to help you reflect on your personal preferences, values, and skills to identify the type of workplace that best aligns with your needs and goals.

# Step 1:

## Self-Reflection

Think about what makes you feel motivated, fulfilled, and productive. Answer the following questions honestly to uncover your workplace preferences.

### **A** Values and Purpose

What core values do you want your employer to share with you? (e.g., sustainability, diversity, innovation)

Do you prefer working for a university, research organisation or company with a clear social mission? Why or why not?

## **B Work-Life Balance**

How important is flexibility in your work schedule?

Would you prefer remote, hybrid, or in-office work? Why?

How do you define a healthy work-life balance?



## **C Work Environment**

What type of environment helps you thrive? (e.g., quiet, collaborative, fast-paced)

Do you enjoy working independently or in a team?

How do you feel about a hierarchical structure versus a flat structure?

## **D Learning and Growth**

How important is it to you that your workplace offers opportunities for learning and career advancement?

What specific skills or knowledge do you want to develop in your next role?



## Step 2:

### Skills and Strengths Assessment

Now that you've reflected on your preferences, let's examine your strengths and skills to find the right fit.

#### **A** Top 3 Skills

List three professional skills you are most confident about (e.g., problem-solving, communication, technical skills).

**Skill 1:**

**Skill 2:**

**Skill 3:**

## **B Areas for Improvement**

Identify two areas where you'd like to grow or improve.

**Area 1:**

**Area 2:**

## **C Work Style**

How do you best accomplish your work? (e.g., structured, creative, deadline-driven)

**Describe your work style:**

## **D Preferred Role**

What type of role or position would allow you to use your strengths?

**Ideal role:**

## Step 3:

### Defining Your Ideal Workplace

Using your reflections from the previous steps, describe what your ideal workplace would look like.

#### **A** Company / Organizational Culture

The culture that aligns with my values is:

## **B Team and Leadership Style**

I work best with a team that is:

I prefer a leadership style that is:  
(feel free to do a quick research on leadership styles)

## **C Work Benefits and Perks**

Some benefits that are important to me (e.g., health insurance, professional development) are:

**D Company / Organization Size [and Industry - if applicable]**

I am drawn to working in companies, universities or research organisations of this size (e.g., startup, mid-size, large corporation):

The industries, research organisations, universities, or labs that excites me most are:

## Step 4:

### Research and Match

Now, think about the organizations, industries, companies, or roles that match your values, skills, and ideal work environment. You might want to do some research first, please visit: [coast.desy.de](https://coast.desy.de)

#### **A** Industries and Roles to Explore (please skip (A) if you want to stay in research)

Based on your responses, which industries or sectors do you think are the best fit for your values and skills?

##### **Industry 1:**

##### **Industry 2:**



## **B Potential Organization**

Are there specific organization / research facility / companies you admire or would like to explore? Why do you think they'd be a good fit?

**Organization 1:**

**Organization 2:**

# Step 5:

## Action Plan

Create an actionable plan to find the right workplace for you.

### A Next Steps

What is one action you will take in the next week to move towards finding your ideal workplace? (e.g., research organization, universities, update resume, reach out to your network)

**Action:**

## **B Networking**

Identify three people in your network who might be able to help you learn more about your preferred industries or (scientific) organization.

**Contact 1:**

**Contact 2:**

**Contact 3:**

## **C Job Search Resources**

What job search platforms or resources will you use to explore your options? (e.g., LinkedIn, company websites, job boards)

**Resource 1:**

**Resource 2:**

## Conclusion: Your Ideal Workplace

Based on your answers, summarize what your ideal workplace looks like in one or two sentences:

My ideal workplace is an organization that

(values, environment),

where I can

(skills, strengths),

and which offers

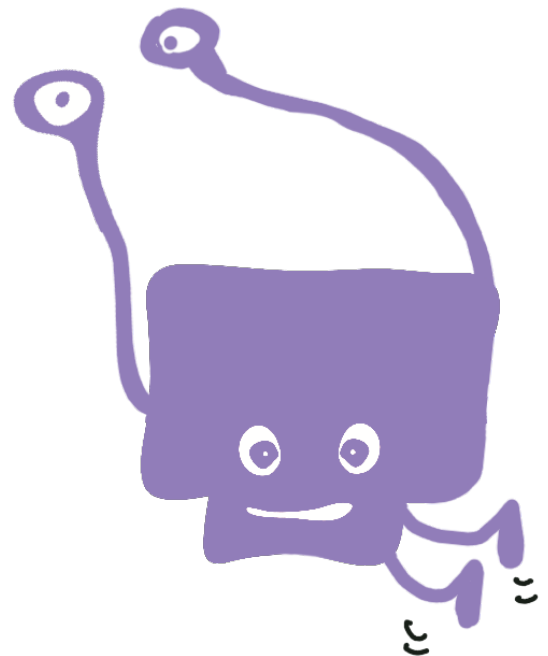
(benefits, opportunities).



4

# Exploring Career Options

# Exploring Career Options



Scientists can find job opportunities in a variety of sectors, including academia, industry, government, and nonprofit organizations.

Important note: Please note that this chapter does not claim to be complete or absolutely up-to-date, but should serve as a starting point for your research.

# 4.1

## Academic Institutions



### **Tenure-Track Faculty Positions:**

Many postdocs seek tenure-track roles at universities, which focus on both research and teaching. These positions are often advertised on academic job boards or through university career pages.

### **Non-Tenure-Track Positions:**

These include lecturer or adjunct roles, which are more teaching-focused, or research positions where postdocs can continue their work under the supervision of senior faculty.

### **Postdoctoral Fellowships:**

Postdocs often seek a second or extended postdoc position if they want more research experience before applying for permanent positions.



# Where to Look:

[Coast.desy.de](https://coast.desy.de)

## Academic Job Boards:

[AcademicJobsOnline.org](https://academicjobsonline.org)  
[HigherEdJobs.com](https://higheredsjobs.com)  
[ChronicleVitae \(Chronicle of Higher Education\)](https://chroniclevitae.com)  
[Physics Today Jobs](https://physicsjobs.org)  
[APS \(American Physical Society\) Job Board](https://apsjobs.org)  
[AIP \(American Institute of Physics\) Job Board](https://aipjobs.org)  
[Academics.com](https://academics.com)

## Job Boards Germany

<https://www.monster.de/>  
<https://www.stepstone.de/>  
<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/jobsuche/>  
<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/arbeiten-in-deutschland/jobboerse>  
<https://englishjobs.de/>  
<https://de.indeed.com/>  
<https://www.jobvector.de/en/>  
<https://truffls.de/en/>

## University Websites:

Many universities have dedicated job portals where faculty and postdoc positions are listed.

## Professional Society Career Centers:

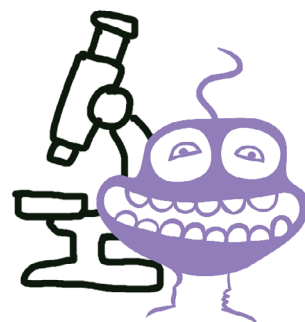
Physics societies like APS, the Institute of Physics (IOP), and others often have job listings in academia.

[Euraxess.ec](https://euraxess.ec)

[Europe.eu](https://europe.eu)

## 4.2

# National Laboratories and Research Institutions



Please note that this chapter does not claim to be complete or absolutely up-to-date, but should serve as a starting point for your research.

### **Government Labs:**

Physics postdocs can find research positions at national labs such as Los Alamos, Argonne, Lawrence Berkeley, Fermilab, or European facilities like CERN. These labs offer positions in applied physics, fundamental research, and large-scale projects.

### **Research Institutes:**

Institutes like the Max Planck Institute in Germany or other global research centers often hire postdocs for cutting-edge research projects.

# Where to Look:

## Individual Lab Websites:

National labs and research institutes list openings on their respective websites.

## Physics Organisations Around the World

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Physics\\_organizations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Physics_organizations)

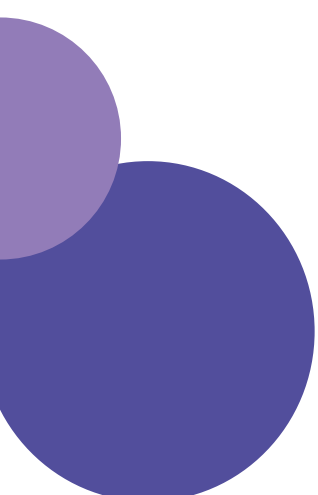
## Service.bund.de:

The portal „[service.bund.de – Service Online](https://service.bund.de)“ is the central access point for citizens, businesses, and administrations to electronic tenders, job offers, and authorities of the federal, state, and local governments in Germany.

## Karriere.bund.de:

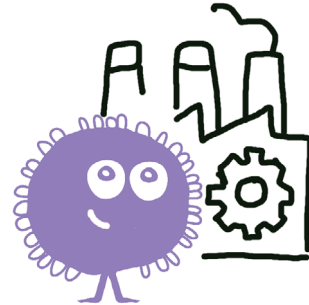
Discover diverse career opportunities, how various federal agencies drive Germany forward, and how you can contribute.

Please browse [coast.desy.de](https://coast.desy.de) for updated information and resources.



## 4.3

# Industry



### Technology Companies:

Physics postdocs can find positions in companies that specialize in areas like semiconductor technology, electronics, energy, or telecommunications (e.g., Intel, IBM, Google). They may work in R&D, data science, or applied physics roles.

### Finance and Consulting:

Physics postdocs with strong quantitative skills often transition to roles in finance (quantitative analysis, algorithmic trading) or consulting, where problem-solving and data analysis are key.

### Aerospace and Defense:

Aerospace companies (e.g., Lockheed Martin, SpaceX) hire physicists for research and development in propulsion systems, material science, and other high-tech areas.

## Where to Look:

### Industry Job Boards:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Indeed](#)

[Glassdoor](#)

Tech-Specific Sites (e.g., [Stack Overflow](#))

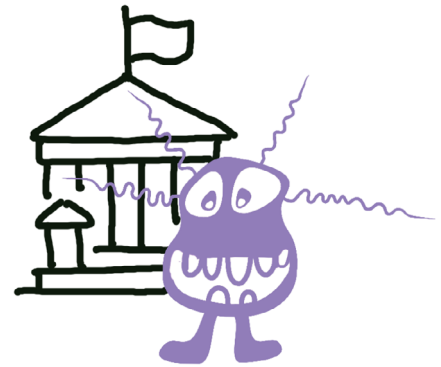
[Stepstone.de](#)

### Company Career Pages:

Physics postdocs can apply directly on the career pages of companies that align with their interests.

## 4.4

# Government and Non-Profit Organizations



### **Government Agencies:**

Agencies like NASA, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Energy (DOE), or the European Space Agency (ESA) hire physicists for research, policy advising, and technical roles.

### **Non-Profit Research Organizations:**

Groups like the RAND Corporation or science-focused non-profits may hire postdocs for research, consulting, or science policy work.

### **GSO - Guidance, Skills and Opportunities for Researchers e.V.:**

[GSonet.org](https://www.gsonet.org) – GSO empowers researchers to build careers in Germany! At GSO, they advise, connect, and support researchers through funding programs and more.

## Where to Look:

### **Government Job Portals:**

[USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) for U.S. positions.

Government-specific portals in other countries (e.g., Civil Service Jobs in the UK).

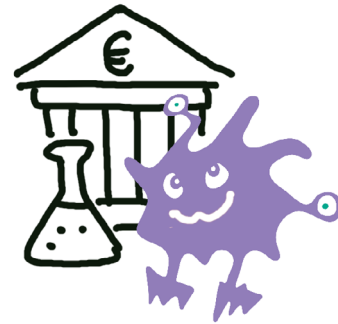
### **Non-Profit Career Websites:**

Some non-profits list their jobs on dedicated non-profit job sites.

## 4.5

# Private Research

## Institutions and Foundations



### Think Tanks:

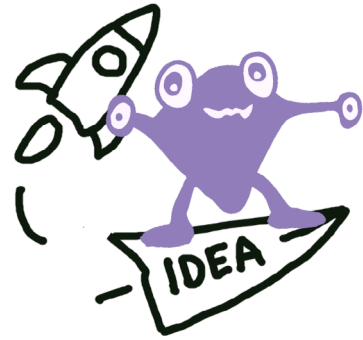
Institutions that conduct research and provide policy recommendations may hire physics postdocs to work on science, technology, and innovation projects.

### Foundations:

Some postdocs work at science-focused foundations that support research and advocacy, such as the Helmholtz Foundation, Simons Foundation or the Kavli Foundation.

## 4.6

# Entrepreneurship and Startups



### Startups:

Physics postdocs with a passion for innovation may join or start technology-based startups, especially in areas like quantum computing, clean energy, or advanced materials. – Find out more at the DESY Start-Up Office:

[https://innovation.desy.de/founding/index\\_eng.html](https://innovation.desy.de/founding/index_eng.html)

### Technology Incubators:

Postdocs can also explore entrepreneurship through business incubators, accelerators, or programs that help scientists commercialize their research.

## Where to Look:

### Startup Job Boards:

[AngelList](#)  
[Crunchbase](#)

### Technology Incubators:

Many incubators and innovation hubs (e.g., Y Combinator) have positions for researchers and postdocs.

## 4.7

# International Organizations



### Large-Scale Research Projects:

Global organizations like CERN, ITER (for fusion research), or ESA provide opportunities for postdocs to work on international collaborations.

### International Academia:

Many postdocs look for faculty positions or fellowships abroad, particularly in countries with strong academic and research infrastructure.

## Where to Look:

### International Academic Job Boards:

[Jobs.ac.uk](https://jobs.ac.uk) (UK-focused, but includes international listings).  
[Euraxess](https://euraxess.eu) (EU research and academic positions).

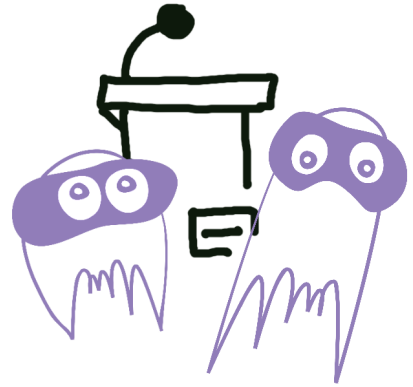
### Global Organization Websites:

CERN, ITER, and others post job openings on their official sites.



## 4.8

# Professional Conferences and Networking



### **Conferences:**

Postdocs often find job leads and make connections at conferences like those hosted by the American Physical Society (APS), European Physical Society (EPS), or the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

### **Networking:**

Building relationships through collaborations, professional societies, and academic networks often leads to job opportunities, as many positions are filled through connections rather than public job postings.

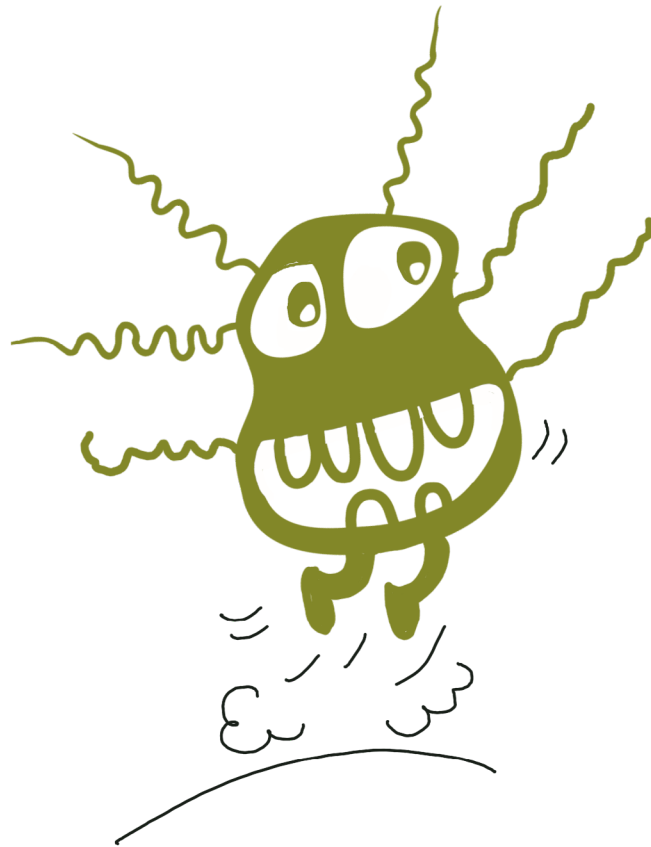


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# Career Counseling and Mentorship

5

## Career Counseling and Mentorship



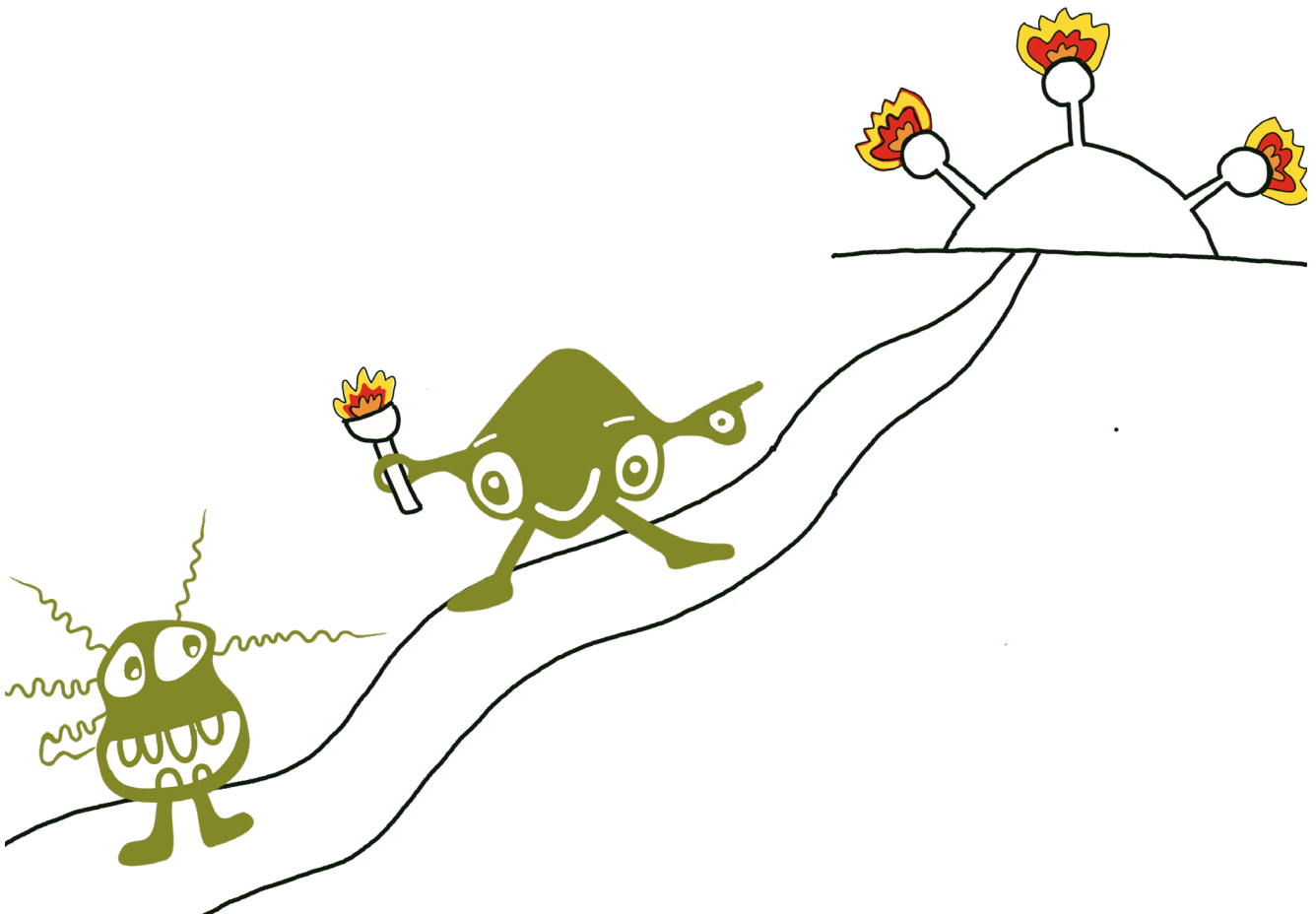
Expert guidance is key to navigating your career path successfully. Through personalized career counseling and mentorship, COAST provides researchers with the tools, advice, and support they need to make informed decisions and reach their full potential.

# 5.1

## Career Counseling

Career counseling is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to gain clarity on their professional path, especially during periods of transition. For scientists, career counseling can provide targeted advice on navigating the academic job market, exploring alternative career paths, and developing the skills needed to achieve your goals.

Engaging with COAST's career counselors can help you identify your strengths, address your challenges, and create a personalized career plan. This guidance is particularly crucial in a competitive job market, where strategic planning and informed decision-making can significantly enhance your prospects.





## Practical Exercise

# Career Self-Assessment

A career self-assessment is a useful first step before engaging in career counseling. This exercise will help you clarify your career interests, values, and skills, which will enhance your counseling sessions. Please note: it is an option before you go into a counseling session and it is not mandatory, but helps the process.

### Exercise Steps:

#### 1. Identify Your Career Interests

List the fields, industries, or types of work that excite you. Consider what aspects of your current position you enjoy most and what type of work you see yourself doing in the future.

## 2. Clarify Your Career Values

Write down what you value most in a job (e.g. freedom in your work, health/ work-life balance, security, respect)). Understanding your values will help you find a career that aligns with your personal and professional goals.

### 3. Assess Your Skills

Make a list of your key skills and competencies, categorizing them into technical skills, soft skills, and any specialized knowledge. Identify areas where you excel and those where you might need further development.

#### 4. Set Initial Career Goals

Based on your interests, values, and skills, outline some potential career goals. These can be short-term (e.g., improving a specific skill) or long-term (e.g., transitioning to a new field).



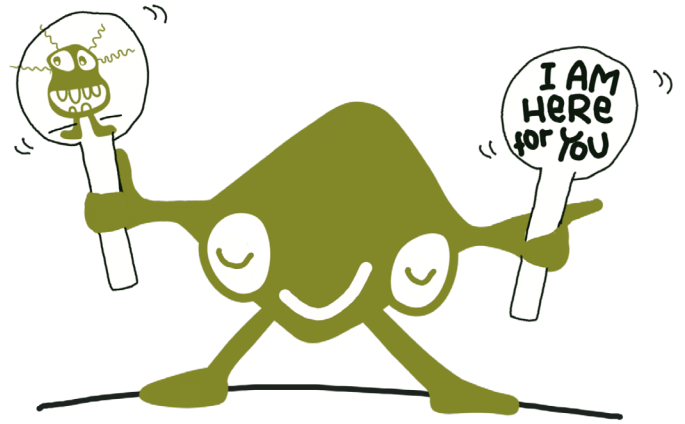
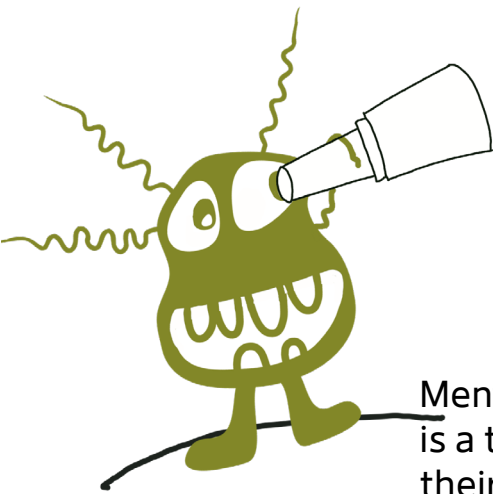
## 5. Prepare for Counseling

Bring your self-assessment results to your career counseling session. This will provide a solid foundation for the discussion and help the counselor offer more tailored advice.

What are the questions or topics you would like to bring up in the counseling session?

## 5.2

# How to Find a Mentor



Mentorship is a powerful tool for professional growth and is a two-way street. A mentor can provide guidance, share their experiences, and help you navigate the challenges of your career path. For postdocs, finding the right mentor can be a game-changer, offering support in both academic and non-academic career transitions. Yet, the mentor can also benefit from your experience as scientist.

A mentor's role is not just to provide answers but to challenge you, offer new perspectives, and help you think critically about your career decisions. Building a strong mentoring relationship can lead to lasting professional development and open up new opportunities.



## Practical Exercise

# Identifying and Approaching a Potential Mentor

Finding a mentor requires thoughtful consideration and strategic outreach. This exercise will guide you through the process of identifying a potential mentor and making a successful connection.

### Exercise Steps:

#### 1. Identify Potential Mentors

Consider individuals in your network, workplace, or broader academic community who have the experience and expertise you admire. Look for someone who has navigated a career path similar to the one you envision for yourself. Your supervisor might not be the perfect match because they will also have the task to evaluate your work and thus might be biased. Be aware that a person who is not part of your direct work environment can be more open to your questions and the communication can be more transparent.

#### 2. Research Their Background

Learn more about their professional history, achievements, and areas of expertise. This information will help you understand how they can assist you and provide context when you reach out.

### **3. Craft Your Outreach Message**

When approaching a potential mentor, be clear and concise about why you are reaching out. Mention specific reasons why you admire their work and how you believe they can help guide your career. Express your commitment to learning and your enthusiasm for building a mentoring relationship. It is advisable to suggest a limited time frame for the mentoring, e.g. 6-12 months. Keep in mind that potential mentors tend to be very busy. Adjust to their schedule.

### **4. Prepare for Your First Meeting**

If the potential mentor agrees to meet, prepare thoughtful questions and topics of discussion. Focus on areas where you seek advice or need clarity, such as career transitions, skill development, or work-life balance.

COAST offers a range of counseling services designed to support your career development. These services are tailored to the needs of postdocs and include personalized career advice, skill-building workshops, and access to professional networks. Whether you're looking to advance in academia, transition to industry, or explore other career options, COAST's counseling services can provide the guidance you need.

Engaging with these services can help you clarify your career goals, develop a strategic plan, and connect with resources that will support your professional growth.



## Practical Exercise

# Making the Most of COAST's Counseling Services

## Exercise Steps:

### 1. **Schedule an Initial Counseling Session:**

Visit the COAST website or contact our office to schedule your first career counseling session. Choose a time when you can fully focus on the discussion without distractions. We recommend to not schedule virtual counselings while you are in the lab with your peers.

### 2. **Prepare Your Questions and Objectives:**

Learn more about their professional history, achievements, and areas of expertise. This information will help you understand how they can assist you and provide context when you reach out.

### 3. **Gather Relevant Documents:**

Bring any relevant documents to your session, such as your CV, cover letter, or a list of potential career paths. These materials will give the counselor a better understanding of your current position and help them provide more targeted advice.

### 4. **Engage Actively During the Session:**

During the session, be open about your career concerns and aspirations. Be assured that confidentiality is the basis of all career counseling. Actively engage with the counselor's suggestions and ask for clarification if needed. Take notes on the advice provided and the next steps recommended.

## 5. **Follow Through on Action Items:**

After the session, review the counselor's advice and create an action plan based on their recommendations. This might include updating your CV, attending a specific workshop, or reaching out to potential mentors.

## 6. **Schedule Follow-Up Sessions:**

Career development is an ongoing process. Schedule follow-up sessions with COAST as you progress toward your goals, and continue to seek their guidance as new challenges or opportunities arise.

## 7. **Follow Up and Build the Relationship:**

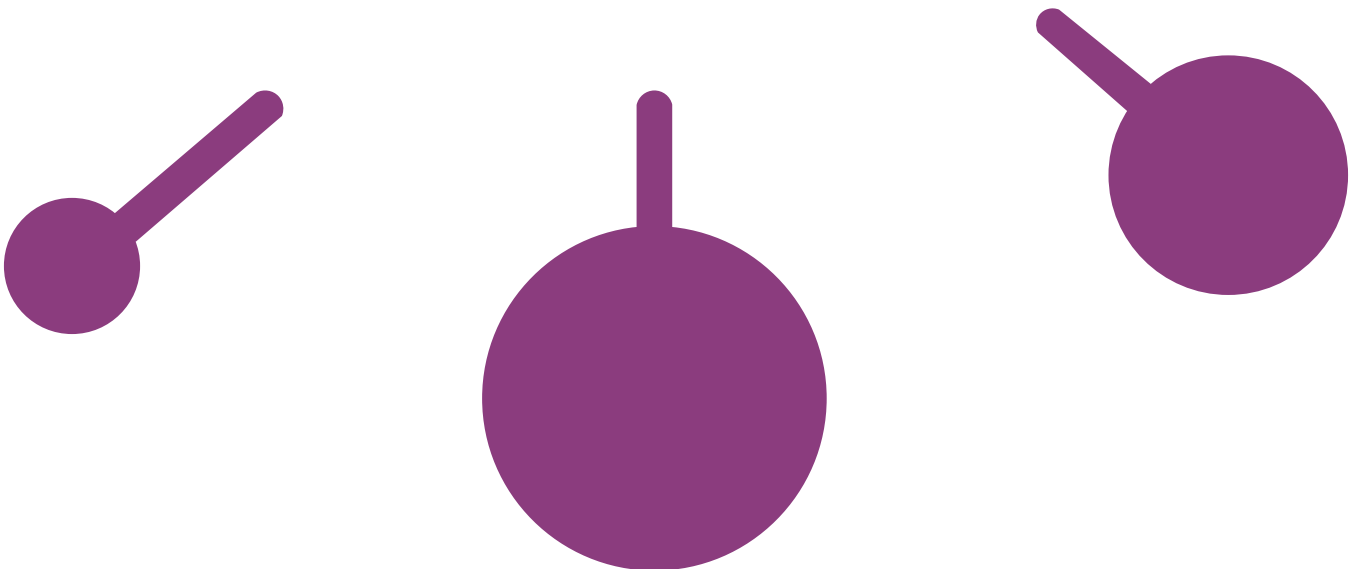
After your initial meeting, send a thank-you note and suggest regular follow-ups if the meeting was positive. Building a good relationship takes time and consistency, so be proactive in maintaining the connection.



A decorative graphic at the top of the page featuring three purple circles of varying sizes. The central circle is the largest and contains the number '6' in orange. It is connected to two smaller circles by thin purple lines. The other two circles are also connected to each other by a thin purple line.

6

# Networking Opportunities





6

# Networking Opportunities



Networking is a critical component of career development, especially for postdocs aiming to advance in their fields. Building and maintaining professional relationships can open doors to new opportunities, provide access to valuable resources, and foster collaborations that can propel your career forward. In this section, we'll explore why networking is essential, introduce COAST's networking events, and offer practical tips for effective networking.



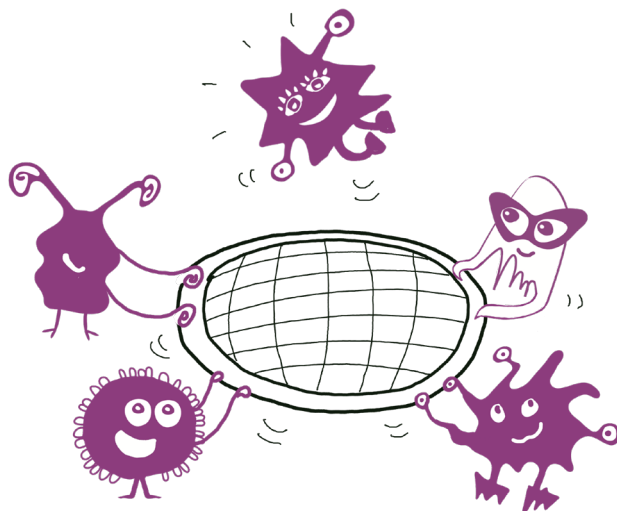
## 6.1

# Why Networking Matters

Networking is more than just exchanging business cards or adding connections on LinkedIn; it's about building meaningful relationships that can support your professional growth. In academia and beyond, who you know can often be as important as what you know. A strong network can provide mentorship, introduce you to new job opportunities, and offer insights that you would not have access to otherwise. If you are starting to build a network you might think you do not have a lot to offer in exchange if you ask someone for a favor, a contact or a piece of information. Don't worry about that. Eventually, there will be an opportunity to reach out and "pay back", even if it takes time. Experienced networkers know that.

For postdocs, networking is particularly crucial. It can help you navigate the transition from academia to industry, connect with potential collaborators, and stay informed about the latest developments in your field. By cultivating a robust network, you'll be better positioned to achieve your career goals. Be sure to allocate time to this in your schedule.

As an introverted person, staying in touch with others can feel overwhelming, but networking doesn't have to be daunting. Focus on building meaningful, one-on-one connections instead of large group interactions. Use tools like LinkedIn or email to maintain contact in a more comfortable, low-pressure way. Set manageable goals, like reaching out to one or two people a month, and engage with their work by commenting on posts or sharing articles that might interest them. Remember, networking is about quality over quantity, and nurturing a few strong relationships can be just as valuable as having a wide network.



## 6.2

# Mapping Your Current Network



## Practical Exercise

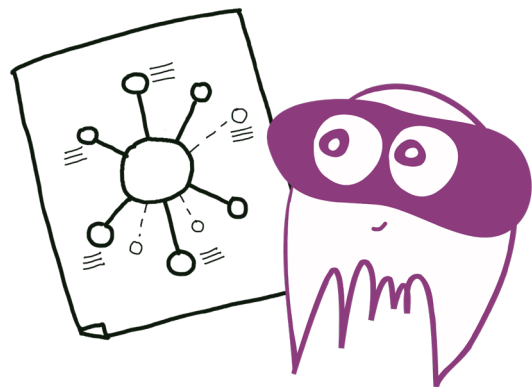
### Mapping Your Current Network

Understanding your existing network is the first step toward expanding it. This exercise will help you identify who is already in your network and where there may be gaps.

#### Exercise Steps:

##### 1. List Your Contacts:

Write down the names of your current professional contacts. Include colleagues, mentors, supervisors, collaborators, and anyone else you interact with regularly in a professional context.



## 2. Categorize Your Network:

Organize your contacts into categories such as:

- Academic peers
- Industry professionals (from undergraduate studies, doctorate, postdoc phase)
- Mentors and advisors
- Collaborators
- Potential employers or recruiters

## 3. Identify Gaps:

Reflect on areas where your network may be lacking. For example, if you're interested in transitioning to industry but have few industry contacts, this is a gap to address.

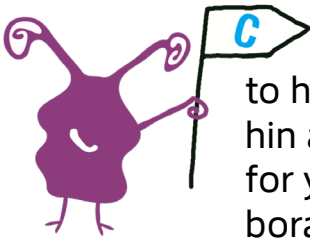
## 4. Set Networking Goals:

Based on the gaps you have identified, set specific goals for expanding your network. For instance, aim to connect with three industry professionals over the next three months or attend two networking events focused on your area of interest.

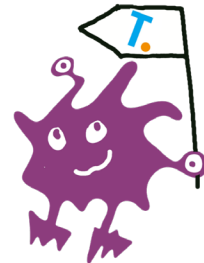
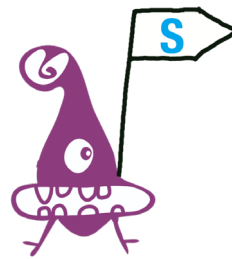
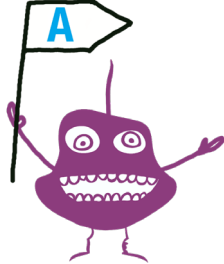
## 5. Plan Your Outreach:

Develop a plan for reaching out to new contacts. This could include attending conferences, joining relevant online communities, or asking for introductions from mutual connections.

# Networking Events



COAST offers a variety of networking events designed to help you expand your professional connections, both within and beyond academia. These events provide a platform for you to meet peers, industry experts, and potential collaborators, fostering relationships that can support your career development.



Whether you are looking to stay within academia or explore opportunities in industry, COAST's networking events are an invaluable resource. These gatherings are tailored to the unique needs of postdocs, offering targeted opportunities to connect with others who share your professional interests.

Please see here our COAST networking events:

[coast.desy.de/networking](https://coast.desy.de/networking)

and our Role Model Events: (access only for DESY employees)

[coast.desy.de/networking/meet\\_a\\_role\\_model/index\\_eng](https://coast.desy.de/networking/meet_a_role_model/index_eng)



## Practical Exercise

### Making the Most of COAST Events

Attending networking events is only the first step; how you engage with others during and after these events, is what will make your networking efforts successful. This exercise will help you prepare for and follow up after COAST networking events.

#### Exercise Steps:

##### 1. Set Clear Objectives

Before attending a COAST event, define what you want to achieve. Are you looking to meet potential collaborators? Explore job opportunities? Gain insights into a new field? Clear objectives will help you stay focused during the event.

## 2. Prepare Your Introduction

Identify 2-3 short-term goals (6-12 months) that will bring you closer to your long-term vision. Make sure these goals are SMART.

### 3. Engage Actively

During the event, make an effort to introduce yourself to new people, ask questions, and participate in discussions. Remember to listen as much as you talk—networking is about building mutual relationships.



#### 4. Collect Contact Information

Exchange contact details with the people you meet, and make a note of any follow-up actions you discussed.



## 5. Follow Up

After the event, send a follow-up email or message (e.g. via LinkedIn) to the contacts you made. Mention something specific you discussed to jog their memory and suggest a way to continue the conversation, whether it is scheduling a meeting, sharing resources, or connecting on LinkedIn.

## 6.4

# Become an Effective Networker



Effective networking is both an art and a science. It requires strategic thinking, good communication skills, and the ability to build and maintain relationships over time. While networking can seem daunting, especially for those new to it, following a few key principles can significantly enhance your effectiveness.

This section provides practical tips that will help you become a more confident and successful networker, whether you're attending an event, reaching out online, or nurturing existing relationships.



## Practical Exercise

# Developing Your Networking Strategy

To network effectively, you need a strategy that aligns with your career goals and personal strengths. This exercise will guide you in creating a tailored networking plan.

### Exercise Steps:

#### 1. Identify Key Networking Opportunities

List the types of events, communities, or platforms that are most relevant to your career goals. This could include academic conferences, industry seminars, online forums, or professional organizations.

## 2. Craft Your Personal Brand

Define how you want to present yourself to others (in 1-2 minutes). What are the key messages you want to convey about your expertise, interests, and goals? Ensure that your online profiles (e.g., LinkedIn) are consistent with this concept.

### **3. Practice Active Listening**

During networking interactions, focus on understanding the other person's needs and interests. Practice asking open-ended questions that encourage dialogue and show genuine interest in their work.

### **4. Build and Maintain Relationships**

Networking isn't just about making new connections; it's about maintaining them. Develop a follow-up plan to keep in touch with your contacts. This could include sending occasional updates, sharing relevant articles, or inviting them to other networking events.

### **5. Evaluate Your Progress**

Periodically review your networking efforts. Are you meeting the right people? Are your connections helping you achieve your career goals? Adjust your strategy as needed to ensure that your networking remains effective and aligned with your objectives.

# Helmholtz

## Science Ambassadors

Another way of practicing networking skills is to contact one of the Helmholtz Science Ambassadors (visit [coast.desy.de](http://coast.desy.de) for details). They are dedicated people who actively support the idea of career development for postdocs. They have longstanding and profound experience in academia and at DESY and have been in a leading position for at least a few years.

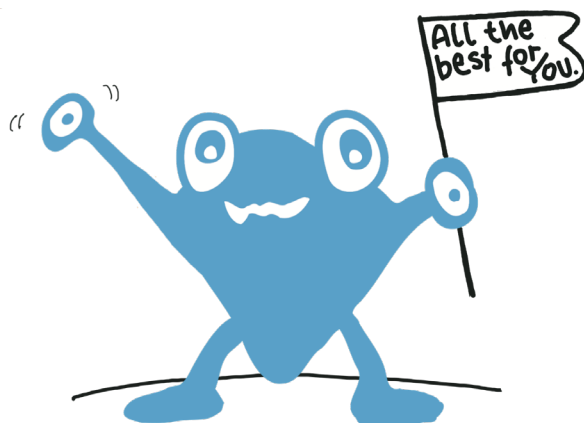
All Science Ambassadors are happy to be contacted for a confidential career chat. In this exclusive short-term counseling format (up to 60min) postdocs can:

- ask questions about next possible career steps in academia;
- discuss details of their current CV;
- get feedback on their professional networking;
- receive advice on other science or DESY-related topics.

Please note that you can contact the Science Ambassadors regardless of their affiliation with a certain division at DESY or with a specific Helmholtz center. Be aware that they don't offer professional career counseling (see [coast.desy.de](http://coast.desy.de)) or long-term mentoring (see [www.dynamment.de](http://www.dynamment.de)). They can provide you with a quick independent feedback on your questions based on their experience. And it's a great way to expand your network! When you contact the ambassadors please refer to the concept, inform them in which division or group you are working and what your question is.



# Conclusion



Building a successful career requires self-reflection, strategic planning, and proactive engagement with opportunities. Through this guide, you have explored key aspects of career development, from setting goals and identifying strengths to networking, mentorship, and leadership growth. By leveraging COAST's resources, participating in career counseling, and expanding your professional connections, you can take meaningful steps toward a fulfilling and rewarding career. Your journey is unique—stay curious, adaptable, and confident as you navigate your path forward.

# Contact Us

We are here to support you throughout your career journey. Feel free to reach out to us for career counseling, networking events, and leadership development opportunities.

**Email:** [coast@desy.de](mailto:coast@desy.de)

**Website:** <https://coast.desy.de/>

**About Us:** [https://coast.desy.de/about\\_us](https://coast.desy.de/about_us)



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