

## Career talk – Guideline for doctoral candidates / young researchers

### What it is about?

The idea of the career development conversation is to get advice from your supervisors on how to steer your career development. This conversation is designed to be led by you, allowing you to emphasize your current and unique needs and questions, and giving you control over the amount of personal information you choose to disclose. Supervisors are encouraged to offer suggestions and broaden the scope of the discussion, which ultimately aims to encourage you to think about your professional development more widely. The following list serves as a template for analyzing your current professional and contextual status, which you should prepare in advance. During or after the interview, you can document the results in the designated boxes and share them with your supervisor(s). The discussion can take approximately 15-30 minutes, making it suitable for a coffee break or a short meeting between you and your supervisor. Ideally, you will have some tangible recommendations and next steps after the conversation.

**Please consider this document as a guideline and adapt it to your needs.** In some cases, you may want to schedule a longer meeting with your supervisor or follow-up after a discussion with a longer meeting. Ideally, the career development conversation guidelines **complement** an annual performance review [<https://www.fau.eu/graduate-centre/for-supervisors/performance-review-meetings-with-doctoral-candidates/> or <https://www.intern.fau.de/files/2022/02/das-jahresgesprach-an-der-fau-1.pdf>], which should provide a more comprehensive and detailed assessment of your progress, performance, development and next steps. You can also use these guidelines to deepen the discussion in the annual performance review, specifically in the area of career development.

The measure “Career talk” is part of the target agreement between the Faculty of Engineering and the University to increase the proportion of women in science. Contact: [tf-frauenbeauftragte@fau.de](mailto:tf-frauenbeauftragte@fau.de)

### Preparation

#### What is your status / framework / conditions right now?

- What are the characteristics of your network (e.g., its size and location)?
- Would you prefer to stay in the area or move to a different place for your next career step (e.g., industry vs. academia)?
- How long have you been in the research group, and how much longer is the planned duration (contract) of your current career stage?
- What specific next steps have already been planned?
- How specific are your ideas for your professional future? Which aspects could be refined or clarified?
- Are you looking for job opportunities in a regional, national or international range?
- Is the current workload allocation helpful for the career progression? How much teaching is needed/ beneficial for your own career goals?
- Are teaching and/or other duties necessary and beneficial?

#### What is your personal status/ plan right now?

- Where do you see yourself long-term, what are you passionate about? What do you enjoy? Any concerns? Wishes?
- What is your current status & satisfaction (scientific, personal, prospective)?
- If you look at your personal and professional environment, whose job would you like to have? What job would you not like to have?
- What do you need for that (skills, time commitment, personality)?
- What difficulties or problems would come with that job? What opportunities?
- What points/actions have you already addressed or completed?
- Do you know where you can find information on career planning or do you need help with that?
- Where do you have specific questions? What information are you seeking, and who can provide it?

# Discussion Guideline

## A) Personal situation and goals:

*Inform your supervisor about your situation and goals determined in your own preparation.*

1. Do you see me in an academic/research-affiliated/industry/other career?  
*(select individual career options based on own preparation)*
2. How realistic do you see me achieving these goals?

## B) Involvement in the network:

*Inform your supervisor about your access to communities/networks and your outreach activities.*

1. Which academic community or professional network can you introduce me to? How can I improve my visibility in these communities/networks?
2. Are there opportunities to organize or participate in outreach activities (e.g., supporting conference organization, networking events etc.)?
3. Which conferences, research stays or professional activities are relevant to my career goal?

## C) Focus and priorities:

*Inform your supervisor about your personal priorities (e.g., gaining teaching experience vs. finishing the PhD more quickly vs. focusing more on research)*

1. Does the research focus match my future career plans? Are there additional topics you would suggest me to explore to enhance my career opportunities that area?

## D) Further education and courses:

*Inform your supervisor about areas in which you would like to develop further.*

1. Which (soft) skills (e.g., leadership skills) would you suggest me to acquire/refine and how can you support me with that?
2. Which other courses/ workshops/ summer schools etc. may be interesting for me?
3. Do you think I should consider additional perspectives (e.g., from outside academia)? What alternative career counseling options are available?

Notes: