

PostDoc program: revision

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1. Recruitment

a. Aim

The aim of the PostDoc program is to promote young researchers with high potential for a scientific career. In contrast to typical postdoctoral positions, the PostDoc program of the Vetmeduni Vienna offers a well-designed mentoring network and career track options for outstanding young scientists.

The first stage of the postdoctoral career development is the junior phase with two mentors (4 years). After this PostDoc phase promising scientists are offered the opportunity to continue as independent group leaders. After six years as independent group leader, she/he can apply for a Senior Researcher position at the Vetmeduni Vienna according to 3. in compliance with the Vetmeduni Vienna's development plan.

b. Rationale

While the PhD programs at the Vetmeduni Vienna aim to promote the transition from an undergraduate student to a trained researcher, the PostDoc program has been designed to foster the development into independent scientists, with an international recognition.

c. Administrative structure

Fellows of the PostDoc program are associated with one Institute or Clinic at the Vetmeduni Vienna. The PostDoc is mentored by two scientists, at least one of whom is senior and established in the field.

d. Recruitment process

Offered PostDoc positions:

To ensure that only internationally competitive PostDoc projects are offered, the Vetmeduni Vienna first makes an internal competition among institutes/clinics for the available PostDoc positions. Based on a short project description and the international standing of the PostDoc mentors at the Vetmeduni Vienna the „Profillinien Board“ selects eligible PostDoc projects and assigns a PostDoc position to them.

e. Application

Available PostDoc positions are announced on the Vetmeduni Vienna webpage and other high visibility portals. PostDoc applicants will apply for the most appropriate position with respect to their research interests and training. Applications should be sent directly to the head of the preferred institute/clinic.

f. Selection

The PostDoc program aims to promote high potential candidates with a track record above the average of students of the Vetmeduni Vienna PhD programs. Furthermore, international exposure is considered a benefit.

The selection of the PostDocs is a two-step procedure: First, the institution to which the position has been allocated will rank the applicants. Second, the 2 or 3 best candidates will be evaluated by the Profillinien Board. Only candidates approved by the Profillinien Board will be eligible for the PostDoc position.

g. Postdoc School

All PostDocs recruited according to 1.d. will be part of the Vetmeduni Vienna's PostDoc School.

h. Time line

The PostDoc phase will be up to 4 years. A one-year extension can be granted in the initial contract for PostDocs who changed their research area.

2. PostDoc Phase

The first phase is fully financed by the Vetmeduni Vienna and lasts for up to four years. The PostDoc is entitled to spend at least 75% of the time on research.

a. Benefits

- 10,000 €/year for research support
- Specialized courses for complementary skills:
 - Project development
 - Laboratory management course
 - Grant application
 - Scientific writing
 - Management skills
- Participation in seminar series on the Vetmeduni Vienna campus
- Annual PostDoc retreat
- Privileged access to technical platforms on campus (VetCore: imaging, DNA, RNA, & protein analyses)
- Access to the Lehr- und Forschungsgut (LFG)-teaching and research farm
- Library
- Teaching opportunities in Bachelor and Master program

b. Expectations

The Vetmeduni Vienna anticipates that the PostDocs develop into independent researchers with international visibility. During the time of the PostDoc phase they will develop the skills to design an independent research program and obtain funding from the FWF or funding agencies with similar evaluation criteria.

c. Mentoring

The PostDoc is fully integrated in the research activities at the home institute/clinic, and will participate in journal clubs and seminars.

Mentoring is a personal one-to-one relationship between more experienced scientists and a junior scientist aiming for mutual benefits. The mentor benefits from fresh ideas and energy, the mentee benefits from experience and encouragement.

Mentoring issues are as follows:

- Intellectual aspects: comprehension of the development of an internationally competitive research program
- Personal growth issues: adequate training of soft skills, developing confidence, creativity, independence and leadership
- Career development
- Interpersonal aspects: honesty, scientific integrity

d. Quality control

Every 12 months the PostDoc will write a report covering the following aspects: progress with research project, training measures, international exposure and networking. The report will be submitted to the Profillinien Board after consultation with the PostDoc mentors.

In the case of insufficient guidance by the PostDoc mentor, the PostDoc could ask for transfer to other mentors.

3. Further Career Options

The PostDoc phase ends when the contract between the PostDoc and the Vetmeduni Vienna expires. With demonstrated outstanding performance a PostDoc can be promoted to a group leader position based on the following procedure:

I. Self-employment through FWF (or funding agencies with equivalent evaluation procedures) funding

- a. Successful application for a grant covering the research expenses including the group leader's salary.
- b. The group Leader will start a new contract with the Vetmeduni based on the secured grant.
- c. The Vetmeduni Vienna will provide high-standard infrastructure and an excellent research environment for the new group leader. This includes full access to research facilities and all benefits described in 2.
- d. The new group leaders will be invited to participate as associated members in ongoing PhD programs at the campus. This implies that their PhD students are invited to join a PhD program that is related to their research subject.
- e. The new group leaders will be members of the Faculty ('DozentInnen') of the Vetmeduni Vienna and contribute to the training of students and young researchers.

The independent group leaders from the PostDoc program will be invited to participate as associated members in ongoing PhD programs at the campus. This implies that their PhD students are invited to join a PhD program that is related to their research subject.

II. Senior Researcher

After at least six years of self-employment through FWF (or equivalent funding agencies) funding, the candidate can apply for a tenure position as Senior Researcher at the Vetmeduni. After positive evaluation the candidate is being provided with a time line for the tenure process. The tenure position will start not earlier than after eight years of independent funding.

Requirements for successful applications are:

- a. Excellent publication performance (i.e. top 30% of their peers)
- b. Excellent performance in grant acquisition and management
- c. Independence in group leading and management

d. Teaching and supervision of undergraduate and graduate students

e. Soft skills: leadership and responsibility

The evaluation of the candidate is coordinated by the Profillinien Board.

It is expected that a Senior Researcher further contributes to the high standards of research by continuous grant acquisition.