

## Guidelines for an initial agreement between postdoc and group leader<sup>1</sup>

This guideline provides an overview of points to be discussed between postdoctoral researcher (postdoc) and group leader at the beginning of the work contract, ideally before the contract is signed and latest within the first two months of employment. The aim of this document is to ensure a friendly and productive working environment for both parties, and to achieve a mutual agreement with regard to the rights and duties of the postdoc.

The points that have been discussed should be ticked and this document should be signed by both parties. If points are not relevant or not discussed for some reason, they should be marked accordingly (e.g. 'n.r.'). A copy of the signed document should be handed over to the postdoc after the discussion.

These points should be discussed anew when important changes in the working relationship between postdoc and group leader occur. Such changes may include the change of employment within the university, the successful raising of grant money by the postdoc or other circumstances.

The work contract remains the only legally binding document.

The postdoc and the group leader are reminded about the rules of good scientific practice:

Regulations of the university: [https://www.uni-freiburg.de/forschung/redlichkeit\\_in\\_der\\_wissenschaft](https://www.uni-freiburg.de/forschung/redlichkeit_in_der_wissenschaft)

Specific information from the institute: <http://www.physik.uni-freiburg.de/redlichkeit>

Conflicts which cannot be resolved between the postdoc and the group leader can also be discussed with appropriate contact persons that can be found at these web pages.

The following topics should be discussed between group leader and postdoc (explicit results may optionally be stated on the last page):

### 1. Research projects

- Which research projects should the postdoc be involved in? Can the postdoc join other projects in the group that he/she is interested in?
- What happens if the postdoc finishes the planned project work before the end of the contract? Which possibilities does the postdoc have to realize his/her own project ideas? Does the postdoc need to get the group leader's consent to work on a new research topic? Is the postdoc allowed to initiate/maintain collaborations outside of the current group? Does the postdoc have to interrupt his own research if the group leader asks him to work on a different project?
- What happens if the goals of the planned research project cannot be reached due to unforeseen circumstances or due to new findings that disprove the original goal of the project?
- Does the project rely on third-party funding? Is the postdoc expected to be involved in the application for third-party funding? Who will manage the grant money?
- Is the postdoc (unofficially) allowed to finish previous project work done in another research group? Is the postdoc given time to write job applications?

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term 'group leader' for the corresponding responsible person. This might be a supervisor (e.g. for young postdocs) or a mentor in the actual sense (for senior postdocs).

## 2. Duties besides the research project(s), teaching:

- Is the postdoc expected to participate in the organization of group and institute/faculty events, take part in committees, do outreach work, take over general responsibilities (such as laser safety, first aid) etc.?
- Teaching:
  - a. How many lectures, tutorials and courses is the postdoc expected to supervise each semester (SWS)?
  - b. What are the official and unofficial regulations within the group concerning the supervision of BSc students, MSc students and doctoral researchers? The regulations of the university/faculty require that the official supervision of BSc and MSc students rests with the group leader. However, in practice, postdocs are usually involved in such supervision tasks. How will the contribution of the postdoc to thesis supervision be acknowledged, e.g., may the postdoc state these supervision tasks in his/her CV? What about the authorship in publications related to BSc/MSc project results?
  - c. Is the postdoc requested to learn the German language in order to be able to teach BSc students?

## 3. Group meetings and project meetings:

- Which meetings should the postdoc attend regularly?
- How often should the postdoc and the group leader have individual meetings to discuss, e.g., about the progress of the project work, about the overall strategic planning (new projects, research staff, grant proposals)?
- Are there periodical staff appraisals?

## 4. Use of local resources:

- Which equipment, lab space and office space is available for use by the postdoc? Can the postdocs use the help of the secretary and technical staff at the institute? Under which circumstances can the postdoc access these resources?
- Is there a priority list for shared equipment?

## 5. Publications and presentation of scientific results:

- Who decides on the journal in which the results are to be published?
- Is there a standard order of authors within the specific research community and within the work group, e.g., alphabetical, postdoc first - group leader last? Who is the corresponding author? Does the group leader have to be included as an author in all publications?
- In general, neither the list of author(s) of a publication nor the order of authors should be fixed beforehand. These points should be based on merit, conception and execution of the project as well as personal contribution of the postdoc and of the group leader to the publication. The requirements for good practice in scientific authorship of scientific journals should be met, e.g., see <https://journals.aps.org/prl/authors/editorial-policies-practices> and <https://www.sciencemag.org/authors/science-journals-editorial-policies>.
- Can the postdoc choose which conferences/workshops he/she will attend?
- If several persons involved in the project work participate in the same workshop or conference, who is allowed to present which scientific results?

## 6. End of working contract or project:

- What are the policies of the respective funding agency regarding the use of equipment after the end of the funding period?
- Can the postdoc further use data and code/scripts that have been produced in the projects?
- Is it possible for the postdoc to further use equipment for which he/she has acquired grant money? Is the remote supervision of students possible after the postdoc has left the work group?
- How will data and other material produced during the project be backed up? In view of good scientific practice, all data and analyses must be backed up in a way such that every other person (with similar background) will be able to reproduce the results which have been published.

