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# Strategy for the Career development of early career researchers (Focus Postdoc)

## Project phase 2: Implementation of the strategy

## Q&A Session with MOL members

Christoph Tschumi / Partner / christoph.tschumi@bcp.ch / +41 61 568 70 26
Nadine Elsener / Consultant / nadine.elsener@bcp.ch / +41 61 568 70 29

BCP Business Consulting Partner AG / Gartenstrasse 95 / 4052 Basel / +41 61 568 70 00 / www.bcp.ch

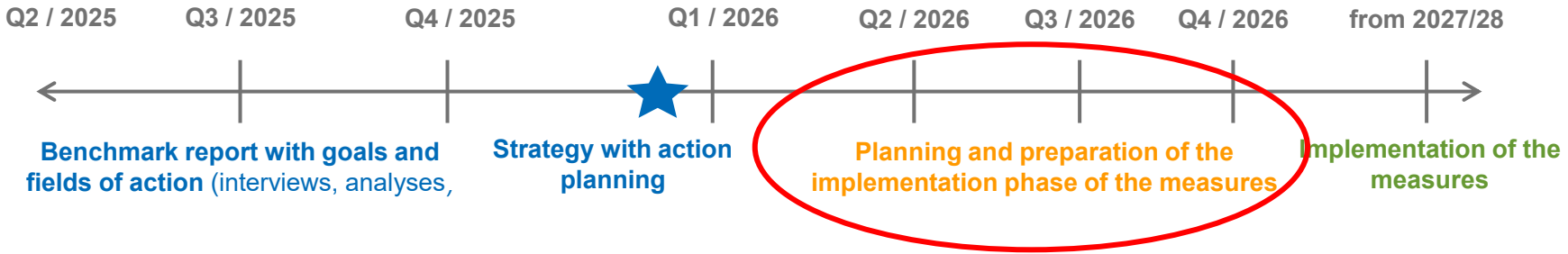
# Agenda

- Overview of the project and the measures
- Information on the conditions of employment
- Questions and answers

# What has happened so far

- Promoting early career researchers is a core mission of universities

- As part of the PgB programme of swissuniversities, the University of Lucerne has developed a strategy for the promotion of early career researchers with a focus on postdocs:
  - Analysis and strategy development took place in 2025
  - The strategy with action planning was adopted by the Senate and the University Council at the end of 2025
  - Implementation measures have been in development since Q2 2026



# Overview of the committee run

| What | When | Who, Commenar |
|---|---|---|
| Application to UL, EUL, Senate, etc. | September to December | |
| ▪ Information UL, coordination of further procedure | September 7th, 2026 | is done |
| ▪ first reading EUL, Q&A | 28. September 2026 | |
| ▪ Internal faculty meetings / feedback | October | Ships to EUL 28.9.2026 |
| ▪ second reading EUL | 16. November 2026 | |
| ▪ Development of legal circles | from November / December | |
| ▪ Treatment in the Senate and, if necessary, UR. | Senate Q1 2027, UR ev. 14.4.27 | |

Q&A Session MOL

# Goals of the strategy

- As many of the postdocs as possible make **the transition to a professorship or other academic employment with a longer-term perspective**.

- Those postdocs for whom it becomes apparent in the first few years of employment that an academic career is **rather unsuitable** or is **no longer being pursued** are prepared for an alternative career path as early as possible.

# Fields of action of the strategy

The strategy comprises **5 fields of action** with a total of **16 measures**:

| | | Progress |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Grundlagen und Strukturen** | 1.1. Postdoc-Kategorien | Advanced |
| | 1.2. Reglement für Postdocs | in planning |
| | 1.3. Besoldungsregelung | in progress |
| **2. Onboarding und Betreuung** | 2.1. Institutionalisierung Postdoc-Förderung | Advanced |
| | 2.2. Angebot für überfachliche Kompetenzen | Advanced |
| | 2.3. Onboarding-Programm | Advanced |
| | 2.4. Info-Webseite | Advanced |
| | 2.5. Kurse für Begleitpersonen | Advanced |
| | 2.6. Wissenschaftliches Mentoring | in progress |
| | 2.7. Mid-Term-Review | Advanced |
| **3. Sichtbarkeit und Vernetzung** | 3.1. CV auf Fakultätswebseiten | Advanced |
| | 3.2. Finanzierung Konferenzbesuche und wissenschaftliche Weiterbildungen | Advanced |
| **4. Karriereübergang** | 4.1. Karriere-Coaching | Available |
| | 4.2. Austrittsprozess | in progress |
| **5. Weitere Handlungsoptionen** | 5.1. Postdoc-Fellowship-Programme | in progress |
| | 5.2. Unbefristeten Forschungsstellen | in progress |

Today

# Graduate Academy Contributions

| No. | Measure | Description | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.2 | Transferable Skills Programme | Targeted courses based on the findings of the early-career researcher survey, with the programme under continuous development. | ongoing development |
| 2.3 | Onboarding Programme | Development of a structured onboarding concept for postdoctoral researchers, including a dedicated Postdoc Information Day introducing key services and contacts. | advanced |
| 2.4 | Information and Communication | Centralized access to relevant information, services, and opportunities through the Graduate Academy website, intranet, and newsletter. | advanced |
| 2.5 | Training for Academic Supervisors | Development of a structured curriculum for professors to support early-career researchers across all career stages, from recruitment and onboarding to career development and transition. A pilot project in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Office will be launched in November 2026. | advanced |
| 2.6 | Research Mentoring | Development of a concept for an independent mentoring scheme that connects postdoctoral researchers with mentors outside the University of Lucerne. | in progress |
| 4.1 | Career Coaching | Individual career counselling for academic and non-academic career paths. Additional coaching on academic job applications and professorial appointment procedures will be introduced,too. | available |
| 5.1 | Postdoctoral Fellowships | Development of a fundraising strategy for additional postdoctoral fellowship opportunities in collaboration with the University's Advancement Office. | in progress |

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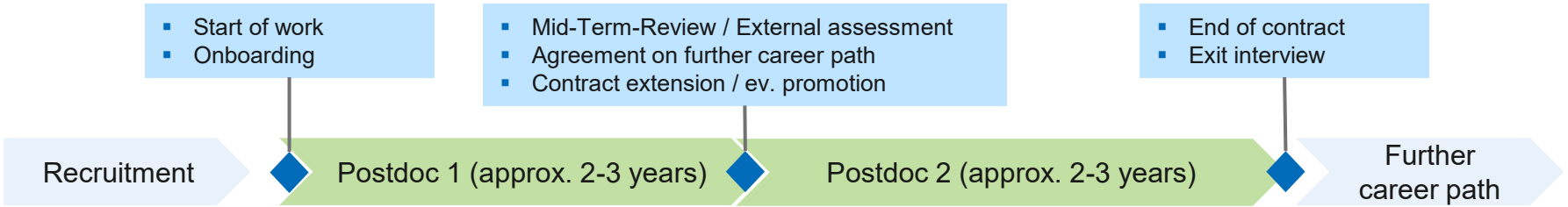
# Postdoc career (typical course of postdoc employment)




- Definition Profile
- International call for proposals
- Selection
- Conclusion of postdoc agreement
- Conclusion of employment contract

Goal: Development of research profile

- Focus on research with a proportion of teaching
- Achievement of milestones for qualification thesis
- ev. application for personal funding
- Annual MAB

Goal: Consolidation of position as a scientist

- Focus on research, teaching, networking and self-administration, visibility, networking
- Leadership responsibility
- Achievement of habilitation or equivalent
- Vocation training

Non-Academic Options

Goal: To keep options open to switch to alternative career paths (non-academic)

- Competence building alternative career path
- Career coaching and application training

# Approach – general (1/3)

- **Employment rate**: 70% to 100%. Lower FTE percentage possible if tasks in research and teaching are made possible as part of a second job (within or outside the University of Lucerne, for example in a clinic or law firm).

- **Wages: competitive in a national comparison**
  - Salary range at 100% between 95,000 and 122,000 (current maximum salary SNSF-Ambizione according to the Uni Lu salary regulation is to be retained).
  - Wage development: university-funded postdoc profiles according to the general salary system (annual step increase within the framework of the IBA as of 1.3.)
  - Salary jump from postdoc 1 to postdoc 2 (approx. 10% in the sense of a benchmark)

# Approach – general (2/3)

- **Own research:** Included in the degree of employment, at least **60%** of the employment. → Average over the entire postdoc duration

- **Teaching**:
  - University-funded postdocs have a teaching obligation of **10 - 20%** of a full-time workload (equivalent to 2 - 4 SWS at BG 100%).
  - All postdocs (including profiles DM 1 to 3) are entitled to teaching amounting to 10% of a full-time workload.

- **Care obligations**: Limited reduction employment with a correspondingly longer contract term (additional maximum 1 year).

# Approach – general (3/3)

- **Duration of employment:** usually 5-6 years, maximum 7 years, incl. contract extensions)
  - Habilitation or equivalent: usually 5–6 years. Initial contract: 3 years, then 2–3 years extension if the academic career goal continues. Earlier postdoc experience shorten the duration of the contract.
  - Without an academic career goal after the first postdoc phase: up to 1 year of continued employment possible to avoid hardship cases.
  - Other qualification goals: Contract duration depends on the goal.

- **Transitional regulation**:
  - Existing contracts will be continued in principle.
  - Newcomers will be treated according to the new regulation.
  - In the case of existing positions, the postdoc can switch to the new regulation at the request of the postdoc, provided that the financing of any additional wage costs is ensured.
    The decision to change must be made individually before the new regulation comes into force.

# Approach – postdoc profiles

| Profile | Postdoc Uni 1 | Postdoc Uni 2 (Advanced) | Postdoc DM 1 | Postdoc DM 2 (Advanced) | Postdoc DM 3 (Ambizione) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financing | University | University | SNSF, EU, third-party funding (usually project funding) | SNSF, EU, third-party funding (usually project funding) | SNSF, EU, (usually Ambizione) |
| Fee, indicative (TCHF, 100% BG) | 95 - 100 | 110 - 115 | 90 - 95 | 105 - 110 | 114 – 122 |
| Shares of activity | own research (at least 60% of the BG) | Own research with management tasks (min. 60% BG) | own research (at least 80% of the BG) | own research (at least 80% of the BG) with management tasks | Own research with management tasks and a high degree of independence |
| | Teaching / Other | Teaching / Other | Teaching / Other | Teaching / Other | Teaching / Other |

# Approach – doctoral profiles

| Profile | Doctoral Candidate Profile 1 | Doctoral Candidate Profile 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Financing | SNSF, EU, third-party funding, university | University, Third-Party Funding |
| Fee, indicative (TCHF, 100% BG) | 51 - 54 | 73 - 77 |
| BG | 100% | 70 - 100% |
| Shares of activity | own research (at least 80% of the BG) | own research (e.g. at least 60% of the BG) |
| | Teaching / Other | Teaching / Other |

# Benefits of the new regulation for postdocs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **External assessment** | Provides orientation for the further career path |
| 2 | **Higher employment rate** | Comes closer to the actual workload |
| 3 | **More protected research time** | More reliable time for own research |
| 4 | **Entitlement and obligation to teach** | Teaching becomes a firm part of the employment |

**5 Supplementary support instruments**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Transferable skills | Mentoring programme | Career coaches and application training |
| Protected budget for conferences / networking | Structured onboarding | Institutional anchoring of the promotion of early career researchers |

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# Questions and answers



# Q&A: Profiles, funding and employment (1/3)

- **Who defines the recruitment profiles for postdocs?**
  The professorship or research area defines them. The consultants suggest setting the profiles at faculty level, which would also allow interdisciplinary positions.
- **Does the duration differ for third-party-funded postdocs (projects usually run four years)?**
  Yes. Third-party-funded positions are covered by separate profiles, and their duration must match the conditions of the funding agency.
  *Suggestion:* In these profiles, describe the research share as “own research according to the project”, since the project’s research plan must be followed.
- **What happens with mixed funding (third-party and internal funds)?**
  In principle, this remains possible. Such cases are clarified individually with HR and kept to a minimum. Because the profiles overlap and salaries are close, switching between them is easy in terms of conditions.
- **What applies to employment at three universities at the same time?**
  This is possible when coordinated between the universities, and the employment rate at Lucerne is reduced accordingly. The total may not exceed 100% (e.g. 40% Lucerne, 60% Zurich).

# Q&A: Contracts, salaries and SNSF (2/3)

- **What happens to the existing contracts of postdocs and PhD students?**
  Existing contracts continue unchanged. The new regulation applies primarily to new hires. A switch is possible on request, provided that the additional salary costs are financed and the faculty agrees. The request must be decided before the new regulation comes into force.
- **How will PhD salaries remain competitive and appropriate to the work done?**
  In a Swiss-wide comparison, the postdoc salary range of CHF 95,000-122,000 (at 100%) is in the upper part. The employment rate of 70-100% is comparable to Bern and Zurich.
  Protected research time is also to be improved. Today's 30% is not competitive (Zurich and Basel: 60%, Bern: 50% of a full time position) and will be increased.
- **Can an SNSF-funded position be filled below 70% (e.g. 50%, common in practice)?**
  The proposal is a minimum employment rate of 70% for all postdocs, including those with project funding. SNSF-funded positions can have a higher rate. A lower rate is only possible if the postdoc holds another position alongside. A reduced employment rate is also possible in the case of care obligations (e.g. care of relatives). In this case, the contract term is extended accordingly by a maximum of one additional year (see Slide 12).
- **Concern regarding doctoral positions (salary at 100%, higher minimum employment rate)**
  The model is a compromise. A salary above CHF 100,000 at 100% would fit neither the salary system nor the practice at other universities (except Fribourg). The salary at 100% is set at CHF 73,000-77,000 with a minimum employment rate of 70%, so the payout stays similar. Research time rises from 30% to at least 60%.

# Q&A: Process and open points (3/3)

- **Is there still room to adjust the strategy, or is it set in stone?**
  The Senate adopted the strategy, including the planned measures, in 2025. This year the planned measures are being presented. All stakeholders, including postdocs and faculties, have already been involved in the process. Adjustments are still possible, but the faculties are now in the lead, and individuals can only contribute via their faculty. The second reading takes place in the extended university management on 16 November 2026, and the Senate follows in Q1 2027.
- **Will the slides be made available?**
  Yes, they will be shared with all participants.
- **Who takes over administrative tasks etc. that fall away when postdoc positions change?**
  The aim the strategy is to promote early-career researchers, with a specific focus on the employment and career options of postdocs. It is not about securing capacity for administrative tasks, so fewer but better-qualified postdocs are preferable. The concept does not cover this question. It is to be resolved at faculty level during implementation, and postdocs' careers must be protected in the process.