

# HBP (Scientific) Career Planning Workshop

PhD++ Fast Forward!

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## Introductory Questions:

1. What is so special about a career in academia vs. other sectors e.g. industry, private, public?
2. What are some especially positive/negative sides of academic careers?
3. What are some crucial success factors for academic careers?

# Merit, Money, Mobility

Gains and Pains of Academic Careers

# Merit comes with publications AND: with being part of a tribe!\*



\*Robert MacIntosh, 2016  
It's Not You, It's Your Data.  
Heriot Watt's PhD support site

<https://openclipart.org/detail/167387/tribal-masks> by „Viscious-Speed“

# Academia is a world where merit is (almost) everything.

- As Robert MacIntosh phrases it in his **10 top tips for early career researchers** (originally appeared on Heriot Watt's PhD support site, [It's Not You, It's Your Data](http://www.itsnotyouitsyourdata.com). July 13, 2016): **Academia is characterised by tribes**, with hierarchies and clear signs who belongs to one tribe and who belongs to a different tribe. This leads to disputes within one tribe and clear demarcation lines towards other tribes. These lines become evident when “outsiders” are cited only to prove their flaws.
- That means: You not only need to be productive and innovative, unique – you need to be part of a community.
  - You are strongly advised to find a clearly identifiable community until your reputation has a solid base: **Identify the community you want to belong to**, your research must fit to it.
  - Be aware that when striving early for an **interdisciplinary approach** it might become much harder to identify the community and to be recognised; publishing might become difficult.
  - Cite the members of your tribe, know their work well and don't criticise members of your tribe too harshly. Make sure you know the related journals, be at the right conferences, and start to build your networks as early as possible. **Find friends in your community, friends who come from different universities and countries.**

See also: <http://www.itsnotyouitsyourdata.com/life-after-phd/top-ten-hints-on-building-your-academic-reputation/>

## be helpful to – and careful with – your supervisor (...), „befriend a local chieftain\*“

- \*Robert MacIntosh also advises you to be helpful and reliable towards your supervisor, to volunteer to jobs and to make yourself indispensable.
- **My advice: be cautious.**  
**Don't be too helpful with work that is not supportive for your career.**  
**This is especially important for women**, who, as research has shown, tend to spend more time with administrative support work, in the labs and with other duties important for the institute but not contributing to their personal career development.  
Make sure that you communicate your own interests and needs wisely.  
A good way to be helpful is to act as a reviewer.  
Offer to set up a session or panel for a conference, run workshops by yourself.



# HANDOUT: My community – most relevant ....

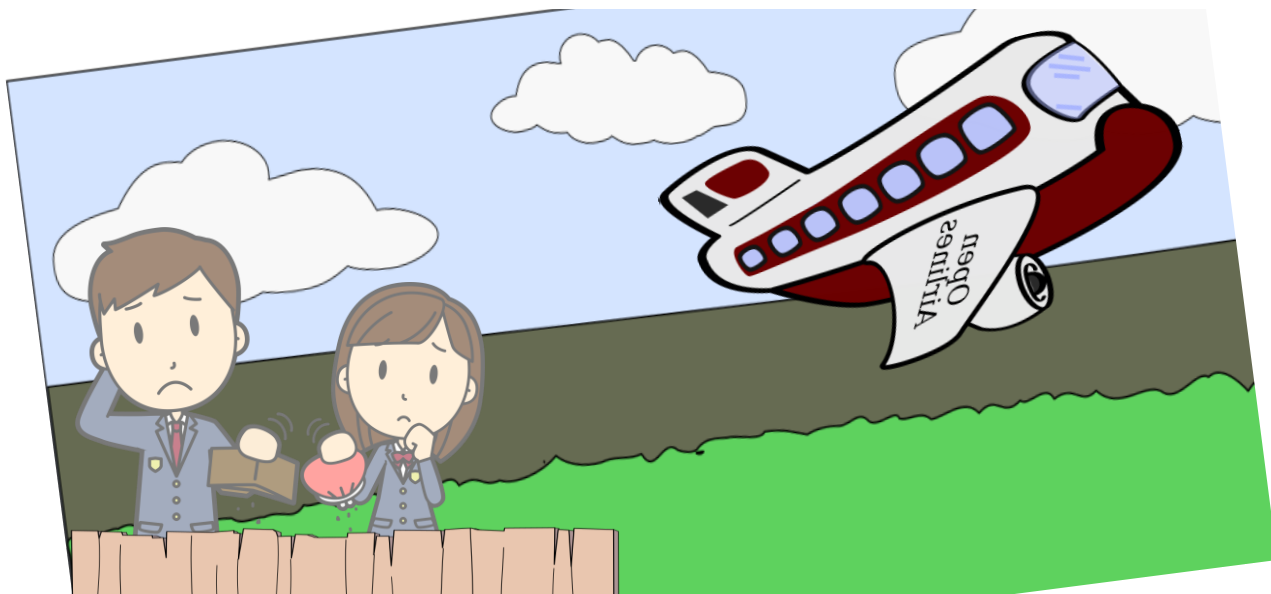
... publications

... conferences

... members I should be in touch with



# Money and Mobility: Ready for a long time with short time contracts and travel?



<https://openclipart.org/detail/300819/poor-female-2> by oksmith  
<https://openclipart.org/detail/174207/funny-airplane> by martin74

# Money and Mobility

- Employment **contracts are often only part time and short term. You will need to apply for funding and scholarships at every career stage.** You will need to be patient, deal with setbacks and uncertainty – and you will need to travel. Money is clearly related to mobility.
- The networks you build are crucial. Work with your supervisors. Be aware of their networks. You will need advice, reference letters, support, sponsorship. **You will have to prove that working with you adds value. Having built some reputation as an interesting, reliable scientist at an early career stage, you are in position to ask for support, and to address in a diplomatic, but clear voice that you are searching for a research position.**
- Start at your home base. Start at your faculty. Ask for scholarships and start funding at your university, for example get in touch with **service centres, explore and make use of training and mentoring offers at your university, career counselling, coaching, ....**
- **And: build your own peer groups**

# A career in science needs more than ...

## Scientific Excellence

Education,  
Lecturing  
Presentation  
Skills

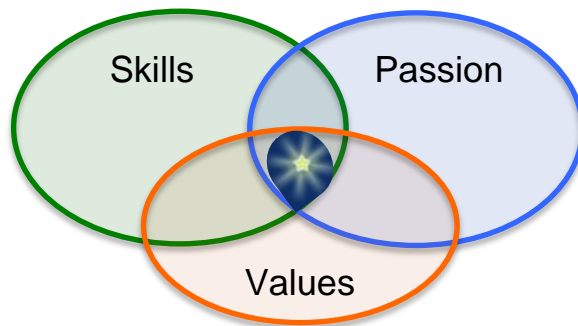
Research  
Management  
Team  
Leadership

Organisational  
Management  
Organisational  
Leadership

# What's your portfolio? What are you really good at?

## What am I good at?

What can I do particularly well?  
What am I an expert for?  
What skills are transferable?



## What do I really like to do?

What gives me real joy and full concentration?

## What is important in my life?

In relation to work and private domains

See: *Transitioning Out of Your Postdoc. A Toolkit* <https://neuronline.sfn.org/>

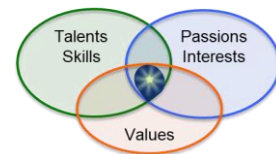
### Find out by:

- exploring your success stories: what worked well, when do you feel like in a flow
- interviewing your friends, colleagues and supervisors



**Pay special attention to transferable skills, emphasise all skills and experiences in your applications**

## HANDOUT: My portfolio - acquired across all domains of life



- my skills (organising converences, ...)
- my knowledge
- my experience and expertise (proposal writing, teaching, ...)

# You know what you want?

- All goals clearly set?

# Dream! If everything you could wish for was possible...



# If everything I could wish for was possible: ... I imagine that I have reached my most important goal ...

What will I have achieved, in specific terms?  
What exactly am I doing? How does that feel?



I imagine and describe in all detail:  
With whom am I doing this?  
What does the environment look like?  
What am I hearing? ....



Draw it,  
pin it,  
take it  
with  
you!

How does my overall life change when I reach my goal?  
What's the price? What will I miss?

Source: Grasenick, based on Bolls, 2014



## HANDOUT: My dream, my future

- If everything you could wish for was possible...
- This is a picture I can collage,  
draw and take with me:
- With all my skills, passion and experience  
I could just as well be/do the following:

# Reflect your current situation

Use signs to rate your situation from positive to negative (e.g.: ++/+/~/-/-)

Area / Aspect	3 years ago	<----> now	3 years ahead	What works well? --> What are the wildest expectations?
Body				
Personality				
Spiritual				
Friendships				
Family				
Leisure Time				
Interests				
Occupation				
Career				
Finances				
.....				

## The art of saying a positive no

- According to William Ury, saying NO means that you are saying YES: to your own priorities, to what is important for you.
- If you can formulate this “yes” to your priorities, what you want and what’s important for you clearly, saying “no” to distracting obligations becomes much easier.
- But still value priorities of your colleagues and keep a good relationship

## Tips on how to say a positive no:

1. Make sure you listen carefully to the person approaching you with a request. Express that you understand why the request is important.
2. Take your time, do not answer spontaneously. Say “may I come back to you in XY time”?
3. Prepare well: consider critical reactions in advance (no-one likes a “no” as an answer). Think about what the best way to respond might be.
4. Discuss the options and impacts with friends, a coach or mentor. Roleplay what you want to say, the critical reactions and gain some feedback how your responses might be perceived.

5. Explain your priorities, what is important to you.
6. Be firm but friendly. Explain your “No” but don’t be defensive
7. Suggest alternatives, ask questions that help searching for alternatives  
 (“I understand that this is important for you, ...  
 who/what could help ...?”)
8. Keep your word as soon as you said yes. Your word should be your bond!  
 If you are realistic in your commitments, you build up credibility and respect.



# Build your Brand!



[https://opencart.org/  
detail/177831/  
logo-retro-sencillo](https://opencart.org/detail/177831/logo-retro-sencillo)  
by benya82

## HANDOUT: My brand in 60 sec (Elevator Pitch)



- What I'm doing & why it's fascinating
- My (transferable) skills and expertise
- What I would like to achieve next

# Look for support – and make best use of it!

## Whom are you already well connected with – Who might be missing?

### how many real good contacts can you turn to for ...

- advice on strategic career development
- professional expertise, collaboration
- open feedback on achievements and how to improve
- private issues, personal advice



### How many of them ...

work in the same field/discipline?	work in a different field/discipline?
are of the same gender?	are of a different gender?
work and live in the same university/country?	work and live in a different university/country?
are on the same hierarchical level?	are on a higher hierarchical level?

source: convelop (2010): questionnaire on „diversity as social capital“

# HANDOUT: My real good contacts

## People you can turn to for ...

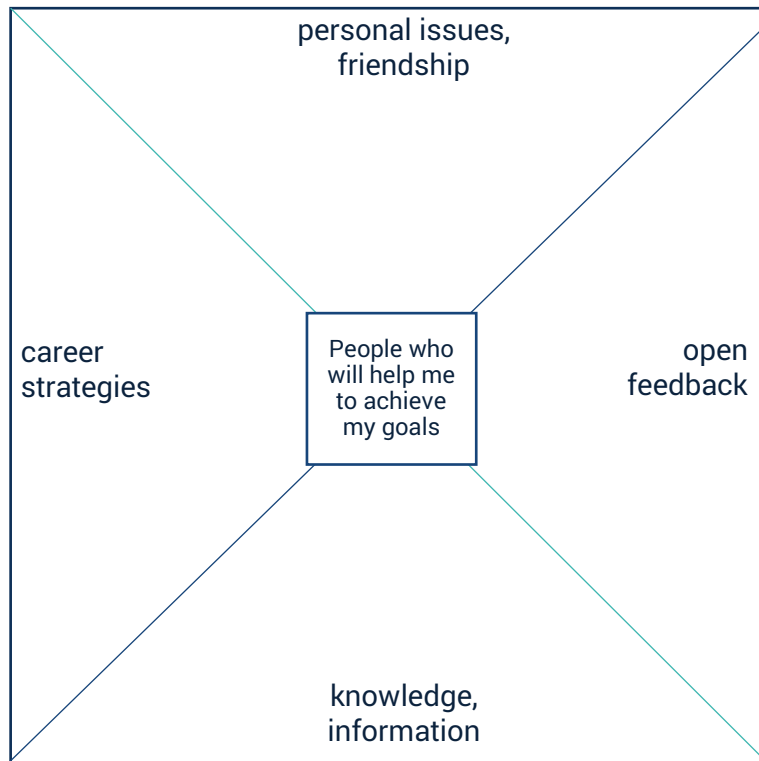
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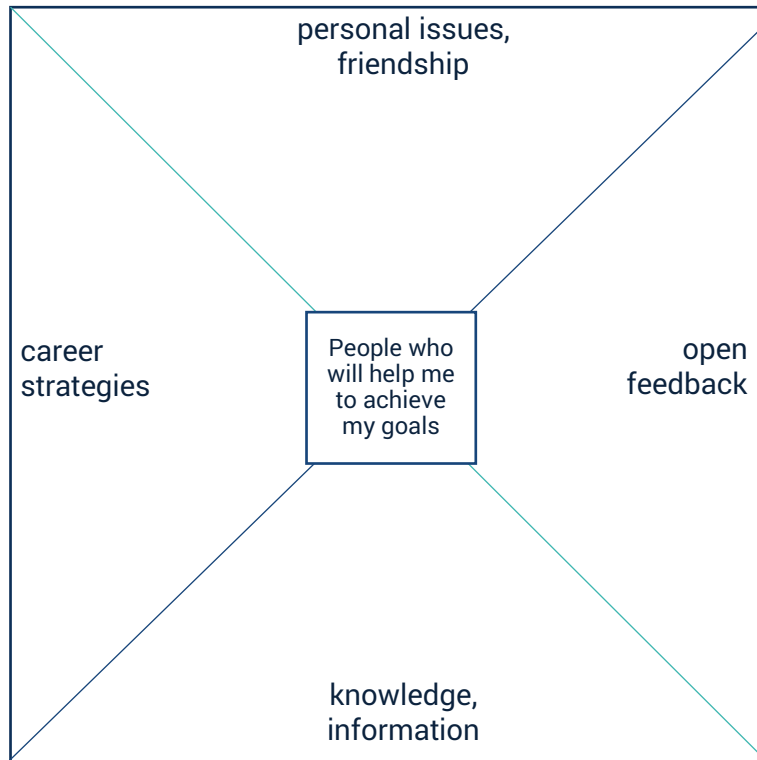
source: *convelop (2010): questionnaire on „diversity as social capital“*

# Analyse and expand your networks!



- **What exactly can people in my network do for me? In which areas are gaps?**
- **Are there colleagues, role models who could become part of my network?**
- **Who could become my mentor or even my sponsor?**
- **Who can help me to make contacts and recommendations?**

# HANDOUT: My detailed network analysis and conclusions



Colleagues and role models  
who should become part of my  
network:

Possible mentors or even  
sponsors:

People who might help me to  
make the contacts I will need:

# Mentoring vs. Sponsorship: How far will your support go?



## ■ Mentoring

- feedback, reflection, motivation, coaching
- career goals, determining strengths
- understanding of informal rules and career requirements at the university



## ■ Sponsorship

- active support for a person you truly believe in
- recommend the person
- invite him/her to participate in networks, boards

See also S. A. Hewlett (2013): Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor: The New Way to Fast-Track Your Career

# What is Needed for Effective Mentoring: Differentiate between doing the things right and doing the right things

**C**onfidence

**A**ptitude and Attitude

**K**onnection (sic!) to Resources

**E**ncouragement

**P**erformance

**I**mage

**E**xposure

**Formal mentoring (and training), especially for women and minorities, focuses more on CAKE and too little on PIE-Aspects.**

*Colantuono, Susan L (2012): Make the Most of Mentoring – Capitalize on Mentoring and Take your Career to the Next Level; Interlude Productions, Charlestown*

# Networking & Communication is the key!

## Everyone likes to hear a story about him/herself – just like Winnie Pooh

- **Listen** carefully, make sure you find good connectors
  - First seek to understand, then to be understood!
- **Identify** a need of your conversation partners
- **Offer:** What might you be able to contribute?
- **Benefit:** How might your conversation partner benefit from you and your conversation?
- **Brand:** Add more details on you and your brand
  - **elevator pitch:**
    - you, your current position at xy university,
    - what you are really passionate about,
    - your next steps
  - **“Memory Hook”:**  
something people might remember easily



## PS on handshakes and eye contact – be aware of cultural differences

<https://openclipart.org/detail/266021/winnie-pooh> by eitschkel



## HANDOUT: My Networking Strategy

- My profiles on LinkedIn, researchgate, academia.net, ...
- My professional memberships, contributions to workshops, conferences, ...
- My way to keep in touch with ....

## Setting up peer mentoring

- Define a **jour fixe for short virtual dialogues**, e.g.
  - ▢ every second Monday or Friday,
  - ▢ in the morning or at lunch time,
  - ▢ facilitated by a peer or by Karin, with advice for the issues at hand
- Use slack or the [forum.humanbrainproject.eu](https://forum.humanbrainproject.eu) to bring in topics in advance or gain and provide feedback

# A peer mentoring meeting

- 1 member of the group reminds everyone of the meeting and asks to prepare specific topics if you haven't agreed on it already in advance
- The member who invited leads the meeting and takes care of time management
- Ensure full confidentiality for everyone (you might even wish to sign an agreement in your peer mentoring group)
- Start with 10-15 minutes unstructured conversation on how everyone is doing
- Collect the topics and decide on one topic/issue or case study of one member
- Define three to four roles to start with
  - The member who brings forward her/his case study/concern/issue
  - The questioner and "summarizer" who focuses solely on understanding the issue
  - The advisor who offers first suggestions, opportunities, ...
  - The observer who offers impressions on reactions, emotions, ...
- Alternative approaches:
  - 1 member presents a paper/conference presentation – the others give feedback
  - 1 member gives a trigger talk on e.g. presentation techniques, time management, ... a discussion follows

see also: <https://thriving.berkeley.edu/peer-group-guidelines>

# HANDOUT: Find a good balance of focal points in your planning

potential focal points	strengths, resources	limitations	priority	conclusion, action
Knowledge of organisational „rules of the game“				
strategic career planning				
relationships, networks				
skills and personal development				
life-domain balance				
Other factors				



# Set short term goals (e.g. one year) and plan the best possible support:

- **What do I want to achieve in the coming year?**
  - ▢ What knowledge, what competencies, what resources are required?
  - ▢ What am I good at?  
Which of these skills should be expanded and strengthened?
  - ▢ Which support, which possibilities will have a leverage effect?
  - ▢ What can be clarified well with superiors?
  - ▢ Which career questions can be clarified well in coaching?
  - ▢ Are there related training courses available?
  - ▢ In which questions might my personal network support me well?
  - ▢ For which questions and sub-targets is mentoring the optimal complement?
  - ▢ Who might contribute something new that I'm really missing now?
- **That's what I want to achieve: ....**
- **I will make best use of these trainings, support offers: ....**
- **This is how I will check my achievements: ....**

# Formulate operative goals in a process-oriented manner:

## All goals are SMART, some are smartER



- **Specific:** Goals are as clear and unambiguous as possible.  
The detailed formulation is based on clearly observable facts and figures.
- **Measurable:** the criteria used should be as objective and verifiable as possible (to what extent has a goal been achieved?).  
Attention: not all relevant goals are easily measurable!
- **Attainable:** A goal may be difficult to achieve, but never impossible.  
In the case of long-term objectives: define smaller levels, sub-objectives that can be achieved. This keeps motivation and energy upright.
- **Relevant:** Targets should not be easy to reach. Persons responsible for implementation must also be able to influence the result.
- **Terminated:** Targets must be temporary. In the case of longer-term goals, there is a risk that the time targets will depend on many influencing factors.
- **Expandable:** Objectives should grow with the knowledge gained over time. What was said at the beginning does not necessarily have to be "smart enough".
- **Revisable:** Changing framework conditions, new insights can lead to certain goals no longer making sense. Objectives should therefore be subject to rolling adjustment in terms of relevance, priority and timeliness.

## HANDOUT: Next Steps

- That's what I want to achieve during the next month/year:
- I will take the following action steps and make use of (peer) mentoring, training, personal support:
- This is how I will check my achievements:

# Publication Strategy: much more than knowing how to write a paper!










# HANDOUT: My Publication Strategy





which publication	with whom (first author?)	journal, publisher	by when	estimated effort

# Steps towards a publication strategy

## Do you know ...

-  ... how your research interests / topics fit
  - to the research field?
  - to the interests of your supervisor?
-  ... the publication practices of your community?
-  ... which publications (number, impact, co-authorship, ...) are expected for your next career step by
  - the scientific discipline(s),
  - your university,
  - funding agencies?
-  Have you considered biases towards gender, universities, non native speakers, interdisciplinary research you might have to deal with?
-  Is your publication strategy linked to a network strategy to increase the visibility of your scientific work?

# Are you aware of biases you might need to deal with?







-  interdisciplinary research might be more difficult to label and review (e.g. success rates of interdisciplinary proposals for ERC Grants were lower, Labastida, 2013 cited by Shapiro, 2014).
-  Native English speakers, from countries where English is the native language have a higher likelihood to be published in high ranking medical journals (Paiva et.al, 2017).
-  Women are more likely to add honorary authors (Fong & Wilhite 2017).
-  Women tend to publish less (Rørstad & Aksnes, 2015), especially in research areas that require an expensive infrastructure, they cooperate more regionally than internationally (Larivière et.al, 2013).

Mentors can draw attention to the differences and support Mentees in the development of a publication strategy that is appropriate for the discipline of science.

See end of the presentation for reference details







# What are you interested in and who is interested in it?

-  **What are the main scientific interests of the scientific superior?**
-  What research questions are discussed in the scientific discipline?
-  Should regional differences be considered?  
(e.g. , sciences of law and history are embedded in a regional context, funding agencies might request an international context).
-  Which methods are used and are currently particularly important?
-  Which research gaps are addressed in the current literature?
-  Which specific focus might be innovative and contribute to the further development of the research field or discipline?









# Does your research topic fit to the scientific community?

-  Which scientists, research institutions, communities are particularly visible in my research field (e.g. Who is quoted very frequently, who holds key-notes at important conferences,...)?
-  Who cooperates with whom?
-  Which disciplines are involved in the cooperations?
-  Who (scientists/institutions/disciplines) cooperates frequently?

# Do you know the publication practices of your discipline?

-  What type of publication is ranked highest?
-  How many authors are listed? In which order?
-  Which journals, conferences have the highest impact?
-  How are interdisciplinary contributions ranked?
-  Who publishes particularly successfully?
-  How many publications per year might be expected?
-  What is the expected time span for a "high ranking" publication?  
(review, corrections and revisions of the contribution, rejection risk)
  
-  Which alternative publications with lower rejection risks might be considered, even if they are less highly ranked?
-  Is open access an option? Can I afford it?
-  Are there any rules or regulations at the university or institute that have to be considered?

# Are you familiar with your career requirements?






-  What might be the range of scientific knowledge expected for my scientific career (high specialisation vs. fit to different institutes)?
-  Which range of scientific knowledge is covered by my role models and/or institutes I'm interested in?
-  What is the degree of specialisation of my research topic ?
-  What further topics should I cover to foster my next career step?
-  Are there guidelines regarding publication requirements for the next career step (doctoral guidelines, habilitation guidelines, performance agreements)?
-  Who can provide information on these requirements?

# Where to publish: Low impact or high impact?








## What are the metrics of the research community?

- “the value of a researcher” =  
“the impact” of his/her publications on a scientific community.
- **Impact Factor** of Journals, Number of Citations of an Article
- **Hirsch-Index / h-index**: overall work of a researcher (STEM)
- ...
- **Different communities – Different metrics and numbers!**
- **Risks:**
  - Choice of Journal: Rejection, long waiting periods vs. low impact
  - Co-Authorship: honorable authors: more citations vs. less credit

## Are you building your networks strategically?

- Which established scientists in your field of research could be supportive and how/where will you be able to contact him/her?
- Which conferences are particularly relevant for your research?
- What are the possibilities...
  -  ... to get to know editors of journals?
  -  ... to initiate special issues for my research topic?
  -  ... to become an active reviewer for journals?
  -  ... to chair a session at conferences, to take part in a panel discussion or to organise a panel?
  -  ... to build networks and peer groups by participating in summer schools, lecture series, working groups, ...?
- **networking strategy: participate in ... and meet with xy at ....**

## Conclusions: Design your publication strategy

-  This is how I will make my research topic more visible: ...
-  These parts of my research outcomes can be published independently: ...
-  For the upcoming 3-5 years, the number of publications I am dedicated to is: ...
-  I will increase the visibility of my publications by considering renowned journals, conferences, co-authorship, networking: ...
-  These are the colleagues I want to research with and publish together: ...
-  I will contact colleagues who are potential contributors at ...
-  We will have to discuss and mutually agree on: ...

Which Publication	With Whom	Where	By When	Estimated Effort
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## HANDOUT: Unconscious biases

- That's what I have learned about unconscious biases:
- This is how I will deal with these biases:

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