Postdoc Action Plan IE

The aim of this action plan is to establish a set of measures and initiatives aimed at increasing the quality of post-doctoral fellowships at IE, both for the individual postdocs and for NTNU. More concretely, the aim is to increase the career readiness by raising career awareness and supporting postdocs at the faculty in their career development and to improve the attractiveness and quality of postdoctoral positions at IE.

Important background material for this action plan is NTNU’s post doctor action plan (draft) (Appendix A), the Norwegian regulations regarding postdoctoral fellowships (Appendix B) and the *European Framework for research careers* (Appendix C). The most relevant parts of these documents are given as appendixes.

This document is aimed at the leader group at the IE faculty, as a suggestion for an action plan. It is developed by the following working group:

* Ingelin Steinsland, Vice Dean of Research
* Katrien De Moor, Associate Professor, IIK (Member of Action committee for NTNUs Postdoc Action Pilot Project)
* Paula B. Garcia Rosa, Postdoc, IEL, (Participant of the NTNU Postdoc Action Pilot Project)
* Michail Giannakos, Associate Professor, IDI
* Gunnhild Oftedal, Research Coordinator

# Action plan

**Summary**

* Clarify responsibility between faculty and departments.
* Increase career awareness for postdocs.
* Establish roles as administrative Postdoc coordinator at faculty and departments.
* Make resources available and establish communication channels for postdocs and others involved.

**Roadmap for postdoctoral position**

**Action 1:** Establish a roadmap clarifying the requirements for postdoctoral positions.
Responsible: Vice dean of research in collaboration with leader group.

The goal of the position should be to qualify for permanent academic positions and to reach the level of an established researcher (R3) (See Appendix C for required competence)

* Must be within an area where there is active research at the department.
* The position should offer enough scientific freedom and independence to give possibility to develop into an established researcher (R3) (relevant for e.g. Research Council of Norway and EU projects with clear deliverables).
* Teaching responsibilities should be actively considered before a position is announced, and/or at the interview.
* The position should be between 2 and 4 years and preferably more than 2 years to provide further opportunities for career development.
* Time for career development, at least 15% of the time for a 2-year position, for example:
	+ Opportunity to gain teaching experience (if not part of the position)
	+ Opportunity to gain experience with writing proposal
	+ Opportunity of attending courses etc.
* Opportunity for internationalization.
* Opportunity for mentoring.
* To be clarified at the start of employment: dedicated scientific permanent staff member(s) active in research who will be responsible for the scientific follow-up and guidance
* Research plan should be part of the application for a postdoc position (and include an evaluation of the feasibility)
* An individual career plan should be developed at the start of the employment period and followed up.

## Recruitment

The goal should be to recruit highly qualified candidates from the international research arena. As recruitment of top candidates is competitive, it is important that recruitment processes are fast and well-organized. Additionally, it is recommended to actively reach out to potential promising candidates (e.g., by inviting them to NTNU and by actively using one’s network) to ensure high-quality and relevant applicants.

 The main steps of the recruitment process are illustrated in the figure below.

An efficient recruitment process should also be supported by information, guidelines and templates. This is partly developed, but specific Wiki pages and templates to be applied specifically for recruitment of postdocs are not in place.

**Action 1:** streamline recruitment process for postdoc positions
Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator in collaboration with HR (department and faculty) and department postdoc coordinators.

* Develop Wiki page with best practice and (links to) regulations and procedures:
	+ Preparation before recruitment, see roadmap;
	+ Recruitment process with links to templates and other relevant documents (Appendix A)
	+ Announcement (link to JobbNorge)
	+ Evaluation and Interview guides
* Develop templates/examples for
	+ Recruitment committee report (existing report to be updated)
	+ Department’s recommendation report (Innstilling) (to be developed based on the one for PhD)
	+ Interview guides (to be developed)
* Include in the announcement template at JobbNorge specific formulations relevant for postdoc positions, including that it is meant for carrier development. (Make suggestions for NTNU centrally.)

**Appendix D** *Recruitment Process* includes a draft for information about the recruitment process that may be part of a Wiki page, to be developed further.

**Appendix E** *Recruitment Practices* shares practices and insights that can help supervisors to improve the recruitment processes and practices they put into practice.

## Onboarding

At the start of the employment period, and in addition to the administrative start-up, the postdoctoral fellow should be invited for a scientific start-up meeting. It should be clarified who has the scientific responsibility to follow up the progress and who follows up the career development and career plan of the individual postdoc.

 **Action 1**: Establish scientific start-up meeting
Responsible for establishing: Head of department
Responsible for implementation: the same team and administrative responsible as for PhD start-up meetings

The meeting should include:

* Clarification of expectations: nature of the postdoc position, requirements regarding career plan, opportunities for mentoring, teaching, internationalization, courses etc., what is required for qualifying for permanent academic positions in Norway;
* Information on where to find relevant information (e.g., courses);
* Discussion and agreement on who has the scientific responsibility to follow up the progress and on who follows up the career development and career plan of the individual postdoc.

**Action 2:** Make and maintain checklist and other resources for the start-up meeting.
Responsible: Postdoc coordinator at faculty in collaboration with HR and Vice dean of research.

## Career plan and follow up

In the proposed additional guidelines for postdoctoral positions at NTNU, a central and new element is the postdoc’s individual **career plan**. A career plan is an awareness process and documentation that clarifies one’s career goals and concrete measures and reflections on how to (strive to) fulfill those goals. The career plan should address aspects such as:

* Short- and longer-term goals in terms of research, education and innovation, as well as concrete action points and measures
* Plan for internationalization, mobility and networking
* Project work and application writing
* Clarification of areas of competence development
* Career possibilities outside of academia/research
* Identification of potential obstacles and risk factors

The development of the career plan is considered a shared responsibility of the individual postdoc and the institution (i.e., the head of department, research group leader, etc). The career plan is developed according to decisions from the scientific start-up meeting and should be followed up in annual appraisal interviews.

**Action 1**: Ensure that career plan including a progress plan is developed, as well as followed up by the individual postdoc in collaboration with the head of department (or delegate) in the yearly appraisal interview. If teaching is part of the position, there should also be a plan for the teaching duties.
Responsible: Head of department (or department postdoc coordinator).

**Action 2**: Make template for career plan and other useful resources on career planning available for IE postdocs.
Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator.

* Part of postdoc landing page/resources wiki

**Appendix F**: *Career plan for academic staff in recruitment positions (postdoctoral fellows).* Template for Career plan developed by HR as part of the Postdoc Action Pilot.

## Training, events and courses

As part of their career development and in line with their individual career plan (ambitions and identified measures that are needed to realize those ambitions), postdocs should be offered the possibility to take both specialized and more generic, transferable skills-oriented courses and training sessions during their employment period at NTNU.

**Action 1:** Development of a landing page for current and prospective postdocs at IE. Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator in collaboration with communication.

* Provide an overview of relevant information: being a postdoc at IE, nature of the postdoc position in Norway, offered career development support: e.g., mentoring, courses, career guidance (recruitment dimension). This landing page should also link to the postdoc-pages at NTNU-level, developed as part of the Postdoc Action.

**Action 2:** Development of an Internal repository/wiki page which integrates useful resources for postdocs at IE.
Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator in collaboration with communication.

* Make material from relevant past seminars easily accessible. For instance, grant writing, sessions on EU funding possibilities and where to get help, support for incoming fellowships, information on qualification requirements for permanent scientific positions in Norway, etc.

**Action 3:** Make courses on transferable skills (PhD courses at IE) available for postdocs and revise capacity as needed.
Responsible: Vice dean of research

**Action 4:** Offer all international postdocs (regardless of type of contract) the possibility to learn Norwegian (Norwegian course offered by NTNU).
Responsible: Head of department.

**Action 5:** Alignment with PedUP on the offer of pedagogical courses.
Responsible: Vice dean of research or Dean.

* Push towards increased capacity (in general, and in English in particular, to accommodate for international postdocs).
* Clarify to which extent pedagogical courses offered at PhD / postdoc level “count” towards the new requirements for qualification for associate professor positions (200 hours in an approved pedagogical development program).

**Action 6:** Decide on a portfolio of new IE-specific courses (e.g., proposal writing, project management, writing a scientific CV, becoming independent as a researcher). To be aligned with PhD courses and/or (new) permanent scientific positions.
Responsible: Vice dean of research.

**Action 7:** Consider organizing an annual networking event for postdocs at IE.
Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator in collaboration with Vice dean of research.

## Mentoring

As part of the proposed additional guidelines for postdoctoral researchers at NTNU, postdocs should be offered the possibility to get a mentor if desired. Topics that can be discussed with the mentor include e.g., one’s career plan and career options, establishing independence as a researcher, setting work priorities, dealing with difficult situations at work.

**Action 1**: Discuss and decide on a procedure to organize the mentoring (including who is responsible for what).
Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator in cooperation with the IE leader group.

Some relevant issues:

* Individual vs. group-based mentoring
* Mentors from IE vs. from another faculty/field vs. external
* Who identifies and assigns mentors?

**Action 2:** Make resources on mentoring available to both (prospective) mentors and mentees.
Responsible: Faculty postdoc coordinator

* Clarification of roles and expectations
* Training evens for mentors /networking events for mentor-mentee pairs?

**Action 3**: Incentives for mentors?
Responsible: IEs leader group

**Appendix G** *Mentoring guidelines.* Example from Postdoc Action Pilot and relevant references.

**Appendix H**: *Mentoring in Postdoc Action.* Advise for mentees and mentors

**Appendix I**: *Making the Most of Mentors: A Guide for Mentees*

**Appendix J**: *Nature’s guide for mentors*

## Teaching

The goal of the postdoc position is to qualify for permanent academic positions, which implies a need for gaining teaching experience. As a result, it should be discussed from the beginning how teaching can and will be included as part of the position.

**Action 1**: Active use of the possibility for a full or part time leave of absence from the postdoc position to enter a teaching position for until 6 months full time equivalence during (and not after) the postdoc period. (The teaching position must end before the candidate has been employed for in total 3 years.)
Responsible: Head of department

**Action 2**: Make sure that there is a plan for teaching (part of the career development plan) and that this is clarified from the beginning.
Responsible: head of departments (or delegate) and individual postdoc.

## Internationalization, mobility and networking

According to NTNUs International Action Plan 2018-2021, “*international collaboration will be a tool to develop talented researchers and excellent research environments, to improve the overall quality of research, within and across disciplines*”.

For postdocs, who are in the phase of becoming independent, gaining additional international experience (e.g., through international project collaborations, research stays abroad, hosting visiting researchers at NTNU) and having a clear international orientation are fundamental career development elements.

**Action 1**: Development of flexible funding opportunities for longer or several shorter research visits abroad, including guidelines and suggested process.
Responsible: alt 1: leader group at the faculty; alt 2: head of departments

**Action 2**: Ensure that internationalization activities are part of the career plan and followed up and discussed during the yearly appraisal interview.
Responsible: head of departments (or delegate) and individual postdoc.

# Appendixes

Appendix A: New action plan for postdocs at NTNU 2020-2024 (draft Feb 2020, in Norwegian only)

Appendix B: Norwegian regulations of relevance for postdoctoral fellowship

Appendix C: European Framework for Research Careers

Appendix D: Recruitment Process

Appendix E: Recruitment Practices

Appendix F: Career plan for postdoctoral fellows

Appendix G: Mentoring Guidelines - Examples from Mentoring in the Postdoc Action Pilot (example guidelines)

Appendix H: Mentoring in Postdoc Action. Advise for mentees and mentors

Appendix I: Making the Most of Mentors: A Guide for Mentees

Appendix J: Nature’s guide for mentors

Appendix K: Additional material for Carrier development and Mentoring