



swiss young  
academy



# Innovative Policies for Fostering Academic Careers in Switzerland

## Policy Highlights

### How to become a professor - moderated peer coaching for postdocs

#### Motivation

The path to an appointment to a professorship always requires strategic consideration and decisions about priorities:

- What kind of position is attractive to me and what does that mean for the development of my academic profile?
- How can I balance different requirements, e.g. in teaching and research?
- What should I consider when building my individual research profile?
- How important is participation in academic (self-)administration and what kind of committees are useful?
- What kind of networks do I need and how much time and energy do I invest in building and maintaining them?

#### Action

The moderated peer coaching format offers the opportunity to discuss questions and issues that are important to postdocs with colleagues at a similar career stage. Throughout the whole process, participating postdocs are supported by an experienced academic coach. The framework for the coaching is formed by two in-person meetings at the beginning and the end. In between, participants meet as self-organized peer groups (suggest at least once per month). Additionally, participants receive inputs and impulses in digital form from the coach.

#### Learning

The combination of expert input, individual coaching, and peer coaching has thus far been well-received by participants and has led to professorial appointments. That said, there are inherent challenges, in terms of peer coaching, of bringing together researchers with varying degrees of experience and differing research fields. Though, for the most part, the interdisciplinary constitution of participants is a benefit for all, I would perhaps consider offering multiple courses aimed at different research areas. Also, it is difficult for one coach to have enough knowledge and insight into different appointment procedures on a global scale, perhaps having input from multiple experts with different expertise might be interesting.

**Contact Person**

University of Zurich, Graduate Campus

Eric Alms

Webpage: <https://www.grc.uzh.ch/en/skills.html>

Email: [eric.alm@uzh.ch](mailto:eric.alm@uzh.ch)