

# Exploring the German Academic Labour Market as an International Candidate

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# Outline

1. Academic careers in Germany
2. Postdoc positions in Germany
3. Career planning and development

# 1. Academic careers in Germany

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# Working in another country as a researcher or scientist is great...

Intellectual and personal growth: new ideas and more (diverse) knowledge

Professional development: new skills and career perspectives, access to additional research and funding initiatives, extended and more diverse networks

Prestige

...



# ... and it comes with real challenges and risks

To be perceived as not belonging in either/ any system

Not being part of the right networks, not having identified the key players

Losing networks 'at home', or lacking networks in the system you want to end up in

...



# How to seize opportunities, and how to deal with challenges and risks

Continue to be proactive, and to develop relevant skills

Find people who are able and willing to support you, and stay connected

Learn more about the culture and the language, as well as about other issues such as cost of living, visa regulations etc.

Understand the relevant academic systems as well as possible

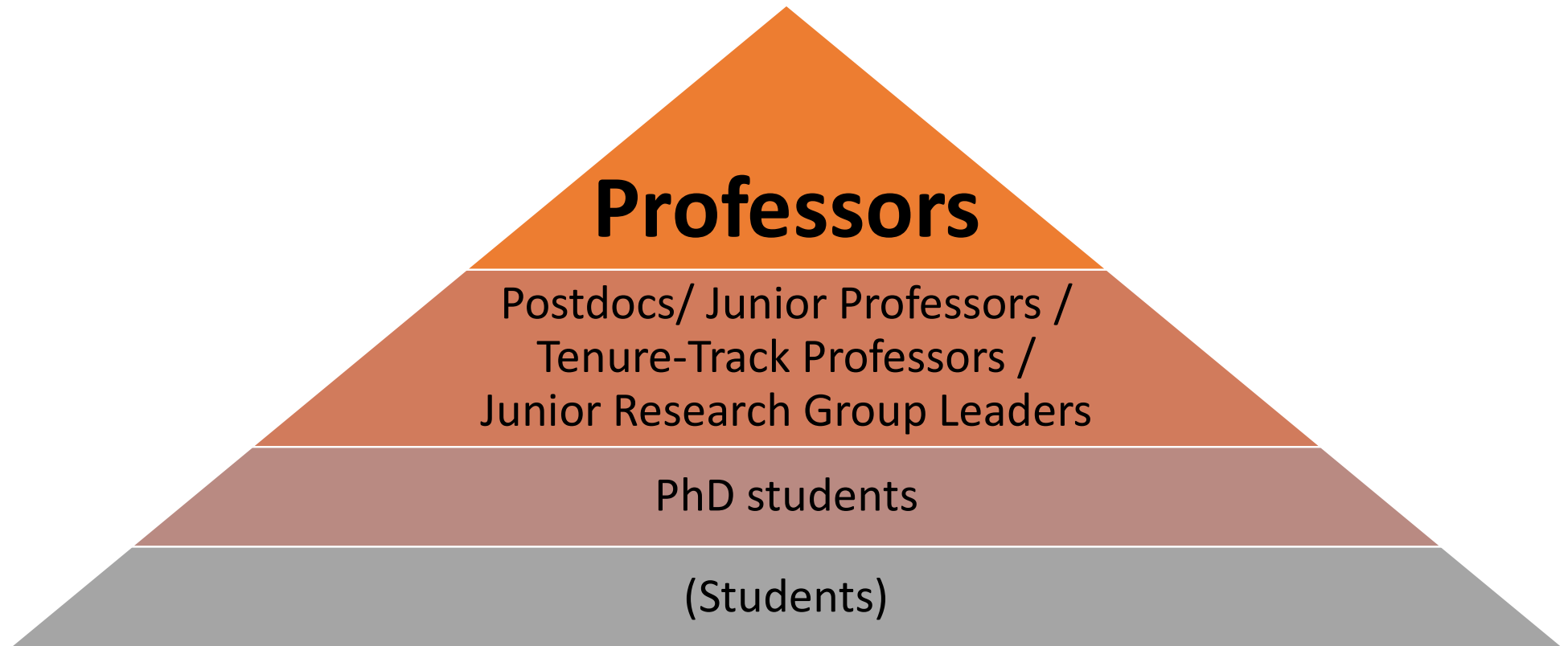
# Academic careers in Germany: relevant aspects

Relatively large number of relevant institutions and funding bodies/ opportunities

Few permanent positions at the (post-)doctoral level → vast majority of PhD students and – to a slightly lesser extent – postdocs work on fixed-term contracts

University professors as key players in the system → rational goal for a postdoc to pursue

Hence: Exploring the German academic labour market may be reformulated as: ‘How do I become a professor in Germany?’



# Types of universities in Germany

Universitäten ,  
Technische Universitäten

Kunst- und Musikhochschulen, Pädagogische  
Hochschulen, Medizinische Hochschulen

(Fach-)Hochschulen

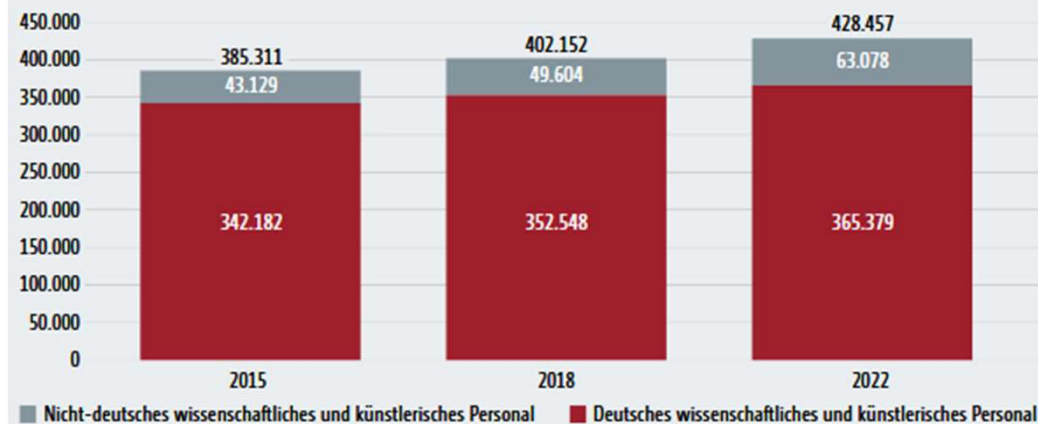
Berufsakademien / Duale  
Hochschulen

# Research Institutes – the big 4



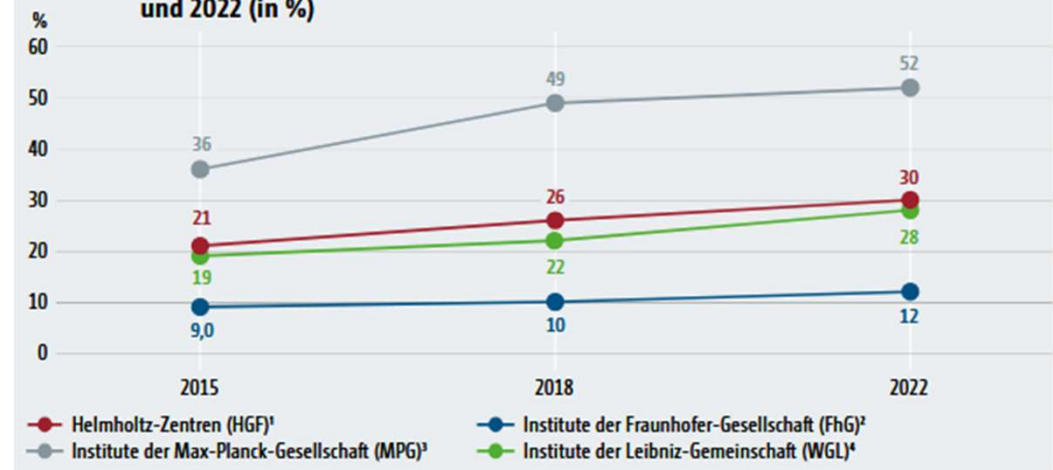
# International scholars in Germany

**Abb. B85: Wissenschaftliches und künstlerisches Personal an Hochschulen 2015, 2018 und 2022 nach Staatsbürgerschaft (in Personen)**

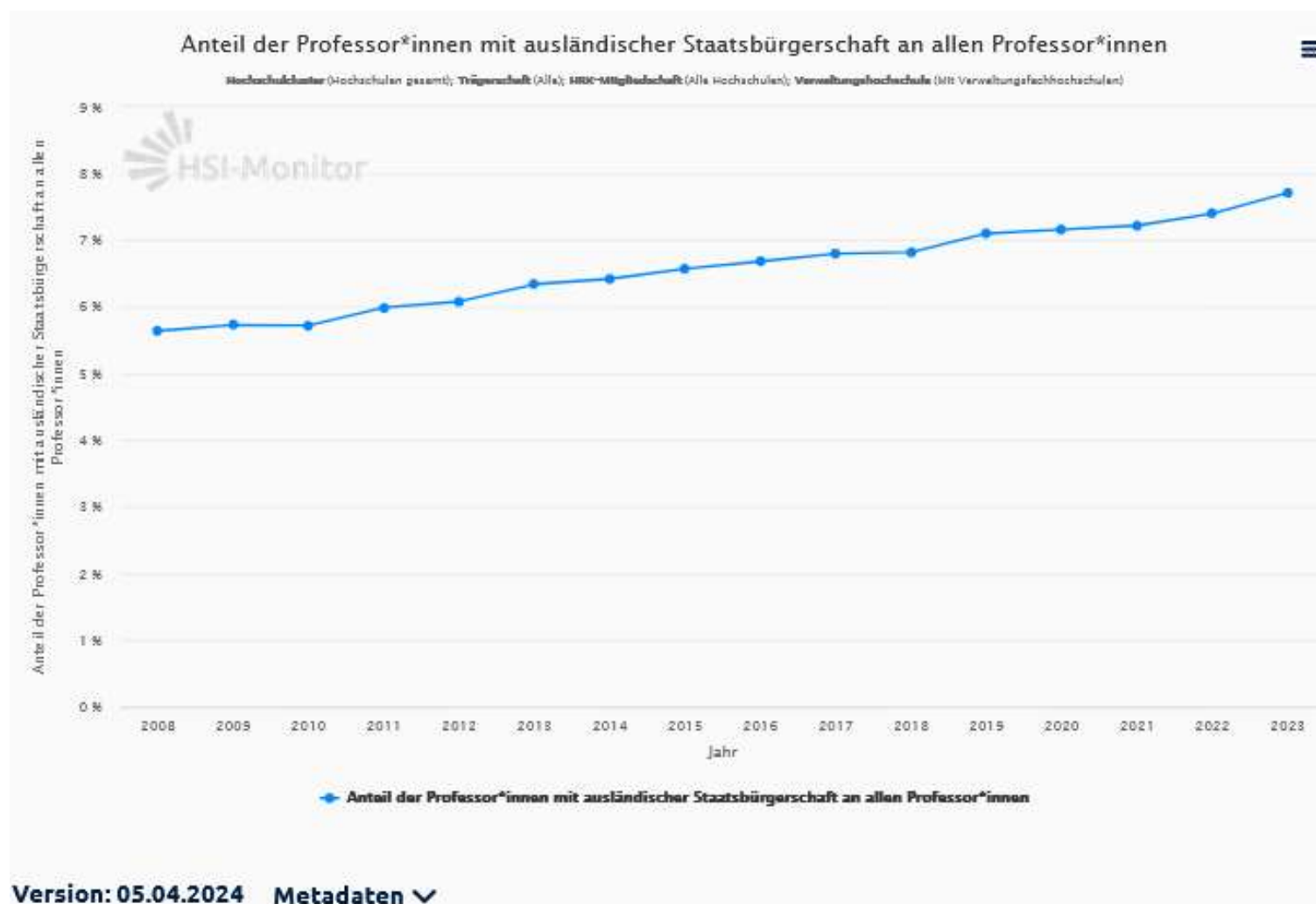


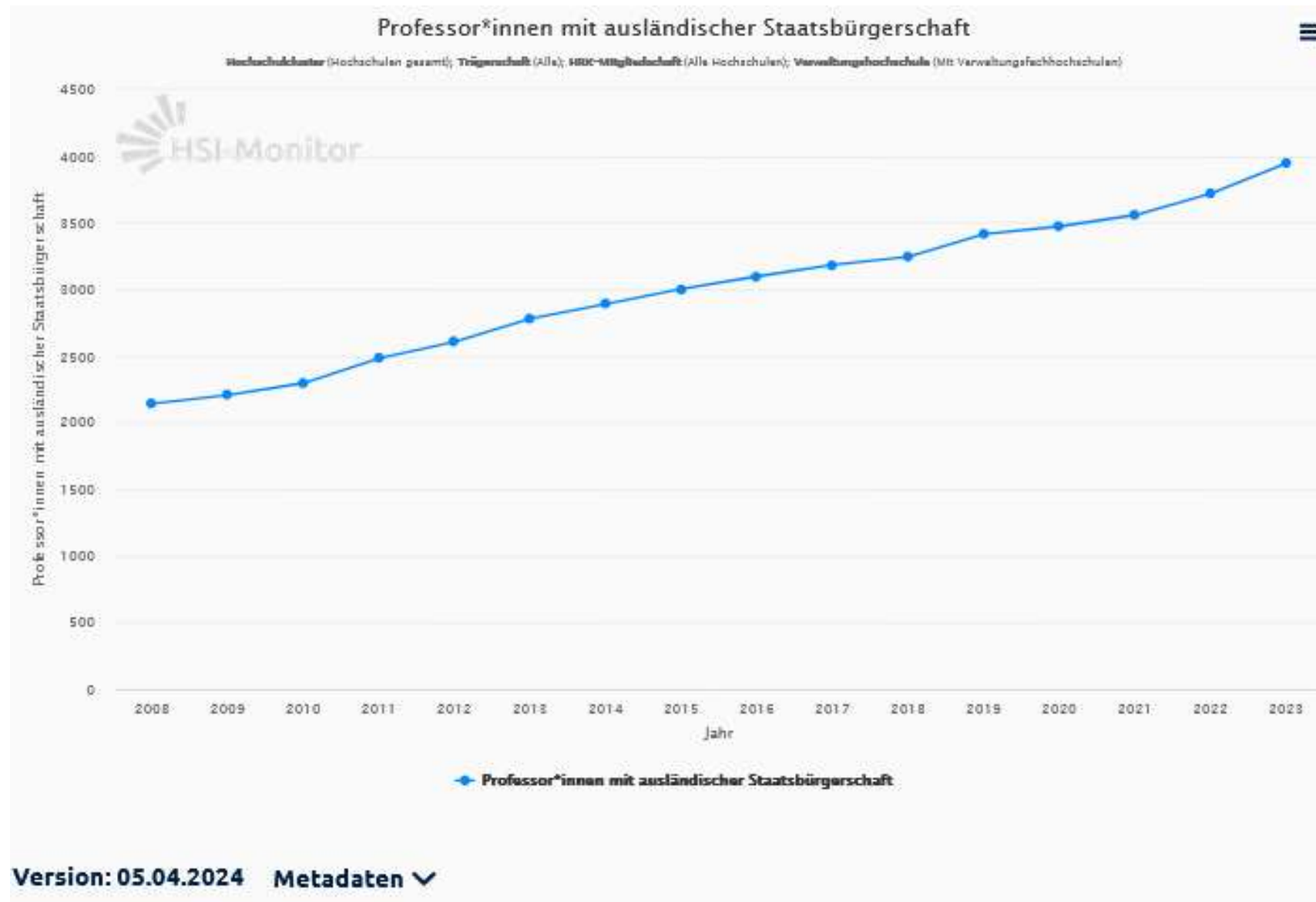
Quellen: Für das Jahr 2022: Statistisches Bundesamt (2023). Statistischer Bericht – Statistik des Hochschulpersonals, Berichtsjahr 2022, Tabelle: 21341-03, Wiesbaden; für das Jahr 2018: Statistisches Bundesamt (2019). Personal an Hochschulen 2018, Fachserie 11, Reihe 4.4, Tabelle: Zus-06, Wiesbaden; für das Jahr 2015: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016). Personal an Hochschulen 2015, Fachserie 11, Reihe 4.4, Tabelle: Zus-06, Wiesbaden; eigene Darstellung

**Abb. B90: Anteile des nicht-deutschen wissenschaftlichen Personals am gesamten wissenschaftlichen Personal an den vier Wissenschaftsorganisationen 2015, 2018 und 2022 (in %)**

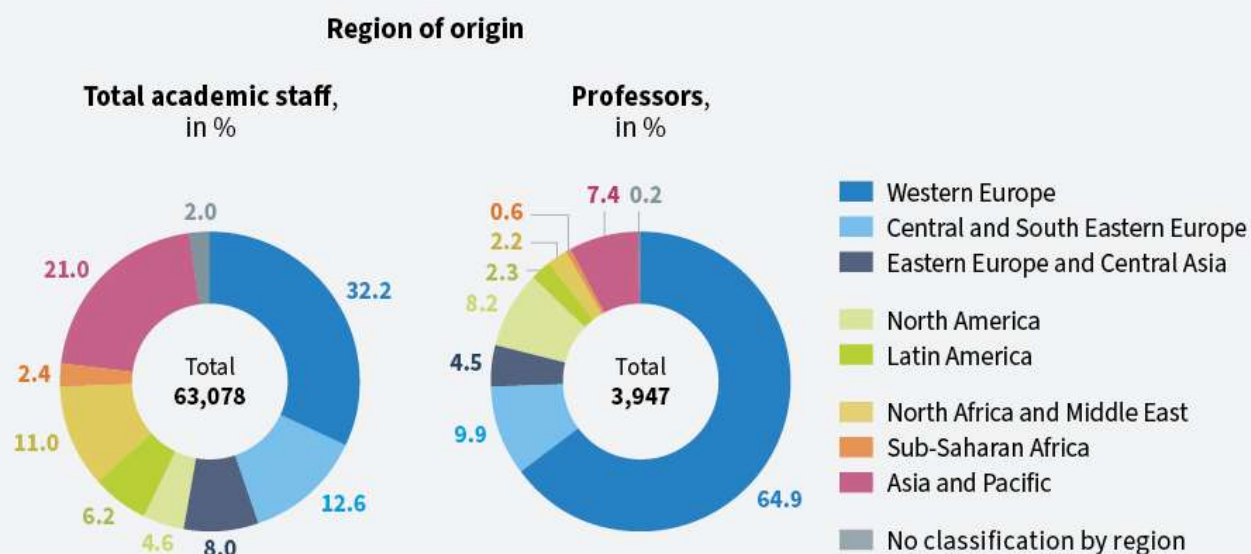


[www.buwik.de](http://www.buwik.de)





24 Total international academic staff and international professors at German universities, by region of origin and key countries of origin, 2022<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>



Country of origin	Total academic staff		Country of origin	Professors	
	Number	In %		Number	In %
India	5,018	8.0	Austria	754	19.1
Italy	4,439	7.0	Italy	340	8.6
China	4,258	6.8	Switzerland	335	8.5
Austria	3,156	5.0	US	274	6.9
Iran	2,708	4.3	Netherlands	254	6.4
Russia	2,649	4.2	France	194	4.9
US	2,419	3.8	United Kingdom	161	4.1
Spain	2,366	3.8	Spain	144	3.6
France	2,224	3.5	Russia	112	2.8
Turkey	2,046	3.2	Greece	98	2.5
United Kingdom	1,558	2.5	China	93	2.4
Greece	1,455	2.3	Belgium	82	2.1
Netherlands	1,361	2.2	Poland	81	2.1
Poland	1,272	2.0	Turkey	56	1.4
Ukraine	1,245	2.0	Canada	51	1.3

Number and % of international academic staff and international professors

Source: Federal Statistical Office, university staff statistics

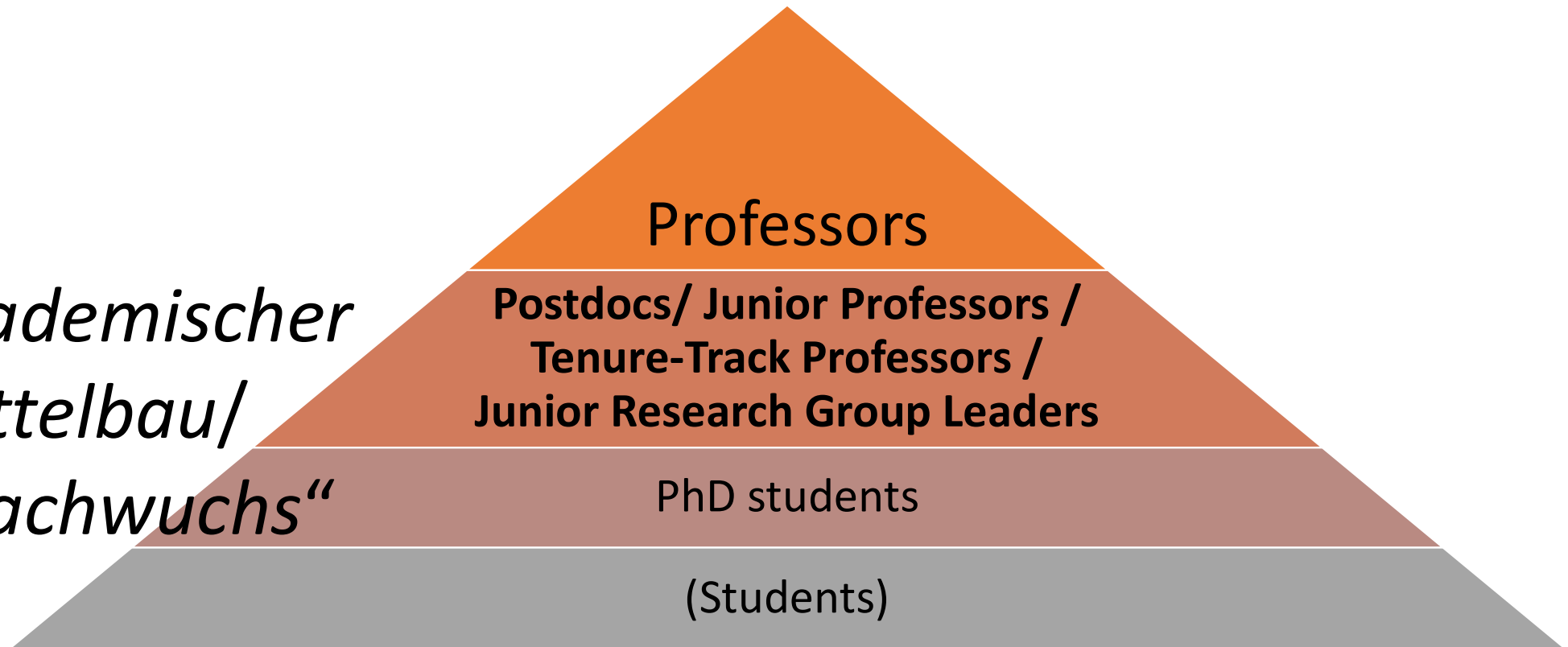


<https://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de/en/data/?w-year=17&w-topics=&w-additional-tables=1>

## 2. Postdoc positions in Germany

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*Akademischer  
Mittelbau/  
„Nachwuchs“*





# Positions

- Postdoc position in a group or lab
- Junior Professor
- Tenure-Track Professor
- Junior Research Group Leader



Example:

Career steps in the US and the UK after a PhD

- Postdoc
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Full Professor

- Postdoc
- Teaching or Research fellow
- Lecturer
- Senior Lecturer
- Reader
- Professor



# Postdoc phase: key goals

- Building independence
- Increasing visibility

And also

- Build your track record and develop your profile (cf. next section)
- Familiarize yourself with the selection process for professorships

# 3. Career planning and development

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# Build a track record

1. Research Experience and Publications
2. Third-Party Funds
3. Networks
4. Teaching Experience
5. Conference talks
6. International Research Experience
7. Leadership-related knowledge: guiding staff, dealing with money, dealing with administration and administrative rules

# Develop your scientific profile

## Criteria

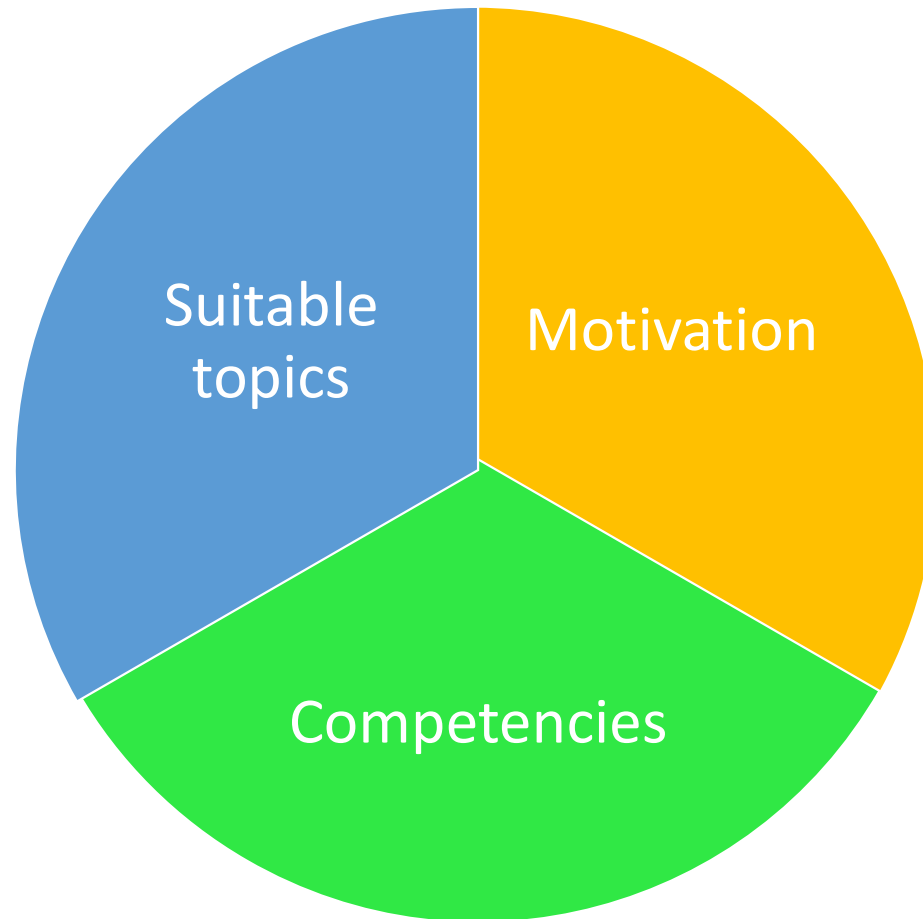
1. Broad or narrow?
2. Matching process
3. Mainstream and innovation
4. Visibility

## Question

1. What is the situation in your discipline/field?
2. Which profiles for professorships are currently advertised in your discipline/field? (Any changes to be expected?)
3. Which future developments in my subject do I expect (topics/ methods)?
4. Does my scientific community know me?

Research and teaching; Research only

# Matching



## Follow what is happening in your field

- Regularly check for relevant job advertisements
  - E. g. [www.academics.de](http://www.academics.de) or <https://www.hochschulverband.de/dhv-ausschreibungsdienst>
- Follow who is newly appointed in your field
  - Cf. here: <https://www.forschung-und-lehre.de/karriere/habilitationen-und-berufungen>



# Work with, and extend, your networks

- Operational and personal networking
- Strategic networking
- Networks allow for the flow of resources – they work best when the flow is not just in one direction



# Continue to explore the system

Cf. bibliography slide

Again: use your networks

Also explore alternatives:

- Other countries you may (want to) continue your academic career in
- Positions and career paths outside of academia

# Key messages, Further Reading, Handout

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# Key messages

Aim for a professorship – the number of international professors in Germany is on the rise (albeit somewhat slowly)

Continue to learn more about positions, career trajectories and funding opportunities in the postdoc phase – a successful academic career is about being a great scientist, but also about understanding the system as well as possible

Spend more time and energy on networking – we need help and support to succeed, and we can support others in return

Learn the language – the investment you make in learning the language is also an investment in your career

Sound out alternatives – nationally and internationally, academic and non-academic

# Further Reading

Färber, Christine/ Riedler, Ute. *Black Box Berufung: Strategien auf dem Weg zur Professur*. FfM: Campus, <sup>2</sup>2016.

Hammerschmidt, Anette/ Enke, Neela (Hg.). *Forschen, Lehren, Führen: das ABC für die Hochschulkarriere*. München: UVK, 2020. (UTB).

Jaudzims, Susanne/ Oberschelp, Axel. „Internationale Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler an deutschen Hochschulen: von der Postdoc-Phase zur Professur (InWiDeHo): eine Analyse von Herausforderungen und Gelingensbedingungen.“ Bonn: DAAD, 2023. URL: [https://static.daad.de/media/daad\\_de/pdfs\\_nicht\\_barrierefrei/der-daad/analysen-studien/daad\\_2023\\_inwideho\\_ergebnisbericht.pdf](https://static.daad.de/media/daad_de/pdfs_nicht_barrierefrei/der-daad/analysen-studien/daad_2023_inwideho_ergebnisbericht.pdf)

Kelsky, Karen. *The Professor Is In: the Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph.D Into a Job*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2015.

Müller, Mirjam. *Promotion – Postdoc – Professur: Karriereplanung in der Wissenschaft*. FfM: Campus, <sup>2</sup>2017.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Bewerben auf Juniorprofessuren und Professuren: Strategien für die ersten Berufungsverfahren*. FfM: Campus, 2023.

Netz, Nicolai/ Hampel, Svenja/ Aman, Valeria. ‘What Effect Does International Mobility Have on Scientists’ Careers? : A Systematic Review.’ *Research Evaluation* 29.3 (July 2020), pp. 327-351.

<https://www.buwin.de/>

<https://www.hsi-monitor.de/>

<https://www.research-in-germany.org/en.html>

<https://www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de/en/>



# Handout

<https://www.kabeak.de/download/>

Password: Explore2025

(Online w/in the next three working days, for 2 months)

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