

**EMBL Conference:
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MEETING ABSTRACT

A3.1

**Preparing predocs and postdocs for career opportunities
beyond academia**

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Opportunities and choices for well-trained predocs and postdocs have never been as varied as they are today. While this wealth of opportunities is a great benefit it is still challenging for today's fellows to develop an overview of and take an informed decision about their career options. From a candidates' perspective the biggest obstacle to entering the non-academic job market is the perceived lack of tailor-made training to prepare them for the non-academic environment. Pre- and postdoctoral research is intense and demanding and as such rarely a period in life where additional formal studies are pursued with ease. Furthermore, as they reach the highest academic qualifications, fellows increasingly individualize meaning that training in cohorts is not necessarily the best option for them anymore. They are more likely to benefit from trainings that refine their skills and knowledge in relation to individual talents and professional preferences. A fellow's scientific training is defined by the competing requirements of the actual research versus the need to acquire a standard set of basic vocational skills and to additionally identify their future personal career profile. As such, institutional training programmes for pre- and postdoctoral researchers need to provide a sound mix of small, well defined mandatory training items and a broad choice of optional courses and workshops. Offering such a balanced curriculum in conjunction with a dedicated mentoring programme is likely to be most beneficial towards helping candidates to make suitable and informed career choices. The talk will discuss these concepts in light of the training curricula established for the EMBL pre- and post-doctoral communities.

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