



The Integrated Marine Postdoc Network: Support for postdoctoral researchers in marine sciences in Kiel, Germany

Gesche Braker (1) and Christiane K. Schelten (2)

(1) Integrated Marine Postdoc Network, Cluster of Excellence 'The Future Ocean', Kiel University, Kiel, Germany (gbraker@uv.uni-kiel.de), (2) SFB 754, GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, Kiel, Germany (cschelten@geomar.de)

Despite the important role postdoctoral researchers play in the German academic system their status is largely undefined: Being challenged by a multitude of tasks, their employment situation is often characterized by short term contracts and a well-defined and articulated academic career path is lacking. Moreover, their employment situation becomes increasingly insecure as the time post Ph.D. increases unless they manage to shift into a tenured professorship or into similar opportunities in the non-academic employment sector. All this results in insecurity in terms of career perspectives.

The support of postdoctoral researchers through the 'Integrated Marine Postdoc Network (IMAP)' has been identified as one of the strategic goals of the Cluster of Excellence 'The Future Ocean' in Kiel, Germany, a large collaborative research project funded through the German Excellence Initiative. To improve the situation of researchers post Ph.D., IMAP has identified three main actions: Building a vibrant community of postdoctoral researchers, engaging in a strategic dialogue on structural changes within the academic system in Germany with special emphasis on more predictable career paths below the professorship level and enhancing the competitiveness of postdoctoral researchers in marine sciences in Kiel through tailored schemes for career support.

Since 2012 IMAP has developed into a vibrant network of researchers post Ph.D. who engage in the diverse disciplines of marine sciences in Kiel – in natural, social and medical sciences, computing, economics, and law. With currently more than 90 members working at one of the partner institutions of the Cluster in Kiel – Kiel University, GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research, and the Institute for the World Economy the network hosts broad scientific expertise in integrated ocean research. It is professionally coordinated and operates at the interface between the partner institutions and large scale collaborative research projects, e.g. the SFB 754 'Climate-biogeochemical interactions in the tropical ocean' in Kiel, to provide a structure for complementary support of researchers post Ph.D.

(This contribution is linked to the presentation by Dr. Christiane K. Schelten.)