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# Career Perspectives with a PhD in Natural & Life Sciences

**Doctorate:**

Neuropsychology, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2022

**Current Position:**

Postdoctoral researcher; HU as the main host, University College London (UCL) and Dartmouth College as research stays within the Fellowship (DAAD PRIME)

## **What plans and ideas did you have during your doctorate?**

I couldn't decide whether to stay in academia or transition to industry. I tried working with a developing startup and looked for industry roles that matched my profile. But in the end, I realised that my true passion lies in academic research. So I decided to dive in and do a postdoc. Or two!

## **What does your current professional life look like?**

It's similar to a late-stage PhD but with significantly more independence. I am funded through a fellowship (the DAAD PRIME), which allows me to develop my own research ideas. I lead projects aimed at building a research framework, establish collaborations, and apply for funding. This fellowship provides the incredible opportunity to conduct research stays abroad, enabling me to network, learn from diverse environments and cultures, and receive varied feedback on my ideas. However, this comes at a cost: it requires uprooting from one place and can destabilize your personal life.

## **How did you find out about your current job?**

I particularly cared for independent funding to develop my own research and to have the freedom to choose the host(s) of my project. I explored both national (DFG, DAAD) and European (MSCA) grants/fellowship and ultimately applied and received the EUTOPIA-SIF (MSCA cofound) for my first postdoc, and DAAD PRIME for the second.

## **What do you enjoy most about your current job?**

What I enjoy most about my postdoc is the incredible freedom and variety it offers. I get to travel, work with different teams, and decide what research I want to pursue. This independence lets me build new collaborations and plan projects that could span years. My current focus is on communication between autistic and non-autistic adults, combining neuro- and behavioural perspectives. A significant part of my work involves actively listening to the community, which broadens my understanding and improves my research. And that's both personally and professionally fulfilling.