



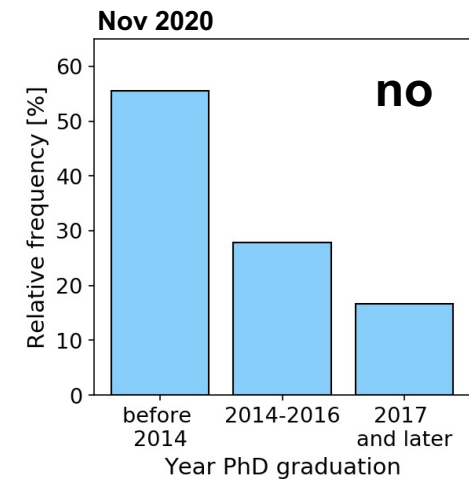
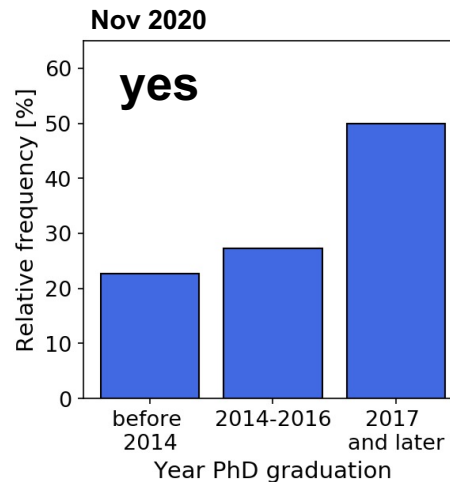
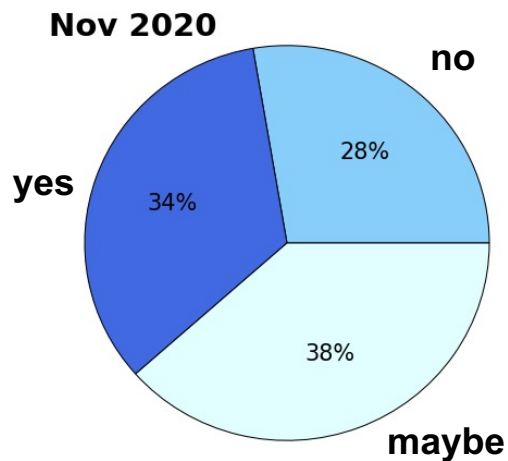
Report of the Postdoc Team Meeting with the Extended Directorate

Cara Nissen & Desislava Bögner
on behalf of the whole Postdoc Team

Effects of the Corona pandemic on AWI's postdocs



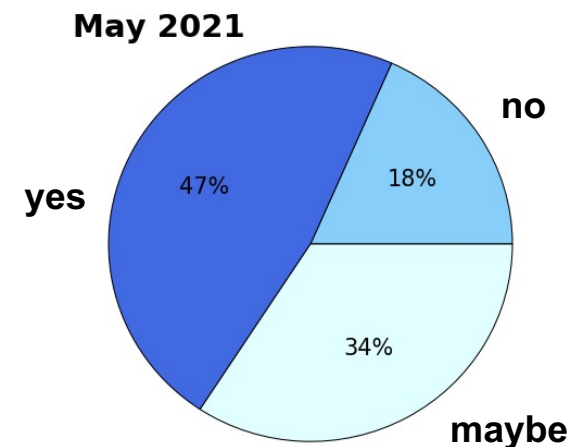
Q: Do you think the Corona virus pandemic has negatively affected your career prospects?



73% think that the pandemic might have negative impacts on their careers; discrepancy between recent graduates and more experienced postdocs:

87% of all “young” postdocs and **52%** of all “old” postdocs fear negative career impacts

Assessment has deteriorated in May 2021: **81%** yes or maybe

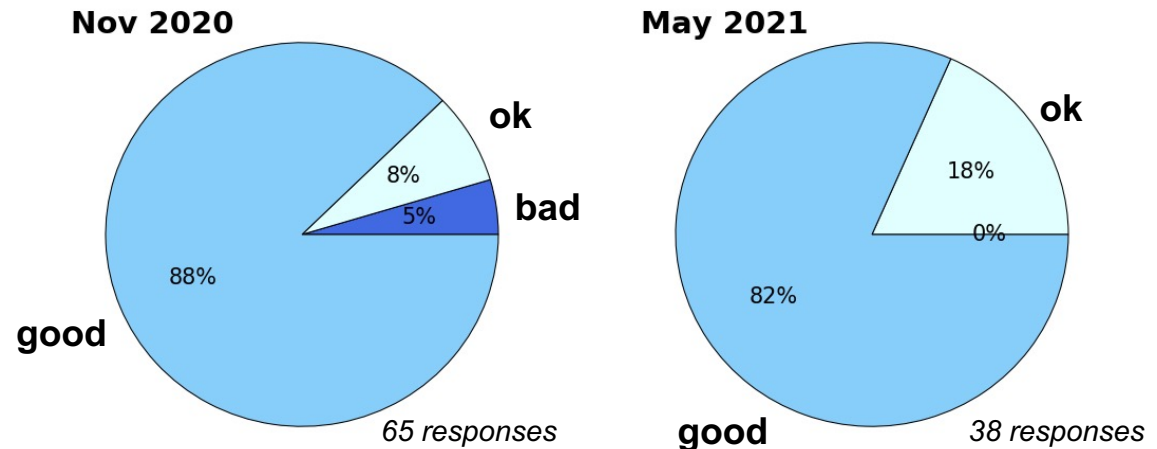


Do you think the Corona measures at AWI, especially for young scientists, are sufficient?



Q: How do you evaluate the communication of the Directorate/Corona AG concerning the Corona measures?

Overall, very good!



- It is appreciated that **AWI never fully closed**
- Keep possibility of **contract extensions**; time to decision sometimes too long
- **Clearer communication regarding available funding** beyond the sections
make a clear statement that most (all?) applications with a valid reason were successful to date
- **Problems with contact tracing at AWI Potsdam** (list to document who is in the office only accessible to seniors, i.e., postdoc and up) -> enforce more strictly
- **How might the global pandemic reshape how AWI operates** and what does this mean for its personnel? E.g. home office/remote office regulations; digitalization of administrative operations
- **How will the Corona pandemic be looked at in future applications?** How to compare applicants, which each were affected differently, in an already highly competitive environment?
Establish discussion tables between senior scientists and ECR?

#IchBinHanna debate

Some thoughts by the Postdocs at AWI



“Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz” [...] leads to systematic exploitation of postdocs

It does not seem fully transparent what the criteria are to reach a permanent position

High turnover of personnel necessarily leads to a loss of knowledge (hard to keep all skills “alive”)

It often more important to “survive” than to develop the best ideas/approaches and to write the best publications

Some senior scientists at AWI do not see the problems of today’s academic world and the change this world has been through in recent decades, discrediting any worries of postdocs with statements like „I have planned my career myself and did not need help of an office like PROCEED“

Many postdocs are not aware of the goals of the qualification phase. These should either be mentioned in the work contract or be handed out at the beginning of the employment to both the postdoc and the advisor.

How should AWI respond to the current #IchBinHanna debate?



Create more career pathways allowing the planning of an academic career.

Why is there no transparent pathway towards permanent positions as a scientist without staff responsibilities? Just because someone is not qualified to be a group leader, it does not mean that he/she cannot contribute to excellent science and education at AWI. Decision should be based on objective criteria, not purely based on vitamin B.

Clear(er) criteria are needed regarding how a career at AWI is possible.

What options is there for people who already are at AWI (in-house applications, both YIG and non-group-lead positions)? If 6 months experience abroad is enough for YIG, why do in-house applications seem to be less and less supported?

Make the employment pyramid wider on multiple levels, not only at the bottom.

If the plan is to create more PhD positions, also create more long-term perspectives. Create a larger "Mittelbau", which can support the day-to-day supervision of students to avoid a longer PhD duration.

Don't extend the time of competition, rather create perspectives earlier.

We oppose the idea of reducing the success rate of YIG by first creating more, but then only guaranteeing tenure for some. This is especially worrisome in the context of equal opportunities.

Make sure that all permanent tasks are performed by permanent employees (either scientists or technicians).

Maintain and strengthen the support for career development.

PROCEED is more needed than ever. "Vorgesetzten-Mitarbeiter-Gespräche" should be enforced more. Push for keeping or establishing mentoring programs on an institute or Helmholtz level.

What should be the ultimate goal?

- Conduct excellent science.
- Educate excellent scientists and make academic pathways attractive (provide long-term, family-friendly, plannable career pathways with clear criteria on how to get there)
- Prepare ECR for a career outside of academia, if a career within the academic system is out of reach (requires honest, transparent conversations early-on)
- Make the German academic system in general and AWI in particular more attractive to prevent “brain drain” and to attract excellence from elsewhere
- Push for change at Helmholtz level and beyond, AWI could and should take a leading role.