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A positive postdoctoral experience is related to quality supervision and career mentoring, collaborations, networking and a nurturing research environment / Amelia K. Scaffidi ; Judith E. Berman

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Abstract

For postdocs to have the best chances of achieving their career goals they need to not only acquire discipline-specific research experience, but also additional generic skills vital for future employment inside or outside academia. They also require access to information and mentoring that will help them strategically plan and make informed decisions about their future. Few studies have examined the variables that impact the postdoctoral experience or research productivity. Thus, a comprehensive survey was conducted to determine whether quality supervision, career mentoring, collaboration, networking and a nurturing research environment makes a positive difference in the experiences and productivity of postdoctoral researchers. Unsurprisingly, the survey revealed that job insecurity and lack of a career structure are ongoing concerns for postdocs. However, a clear association was shown between quality supervision, for example, in conveying the importance of taking responsibility for

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their future academic career by strengthening their track record, and the number of peer-reviewed publications produced. The findings also suggest that mentoring in non-academic career paths can be greatly improved. The results of this study have guided a research-intensive Australian University to implement initiatives and programs which enhance the postdoctoral experience. Finally this work raises awareness of the crucial contributions postdocs make to the research output and environment of universities. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Scaffidi, E-Mail: amelia.scaffidi@uwa.edu.au