FORS
Data and services
for the social sciences

Information on the protection of your personal data and confidentiality

Responsible institutions

The survey on the career paths of postdoctoral researchers in Switzerland is conducted jointly by the Graduate Campus of the University of Lausanne (UNIL), the University of Zurich (UZH), the University of Fribourg (UNIFR), the University of Bern (UNIBE), the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) and the ETH institutes (PSI, WSL/SLF, Empa, Eawag). It is carried out by FORS, the Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, on behalf of the partner institutions. The survey is funded through the swissuniversities programme for project-related contributions (PgB), "Promotion de la relève scientifique / Förderung des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses".

All persons and institutions involved in conducting the survey are bound by data protection obligations and act in accordance with the Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection (FADP), as well as with the applicable cantonal legislation (in particular the Fribourg Cantonal Act on Data Protection for UNIFR, and the Ticino Cantonal Act on Personal Data Protection – Legge cantonale sulla protezione dei dati personali – for USI).

Your participation in the survey

You have been invited to take part in this survey because one of the partner institutions has identified you as holding a position in research and/or teaching in their institution. Your professional email address was provided to us by your institution solely for this purpose (for the ETH-domain institutes, the invitation is sent by the institution itself, which manages its own mailing list). The questionnaire covers your professional trajectory over the past five years, your current situation, your job satisfaction and your career prospects. It also includes a few sociodemographic questions, which will allow responses to be compared according to certain characteristics (gender, discipline, etc.); the results will always be presented in aggregate form.

If you are affiliated with more than one partner institution, you may receive more than one invitation (one per institution). Please complete the survey only once; your response will be counted regardless of which link you use. To link your single response to the correct institutions and avoid counting you more than once, the questionnaire asks for the institutional email address(es) you use at the other institution(s). These addresses are used solely for this matching, are separated from your responses immediately afterwards, and are not used for any other purpose.

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer certain questions. You may also interrupt your participation at any time, without having to give a reason. Refusing to take part or interrupting the survey will have no consequences for you.

At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked whether you agree to be contacted again at a later stage for a possible follow-up survey. Your response to this question is also entirely voluntary and has no impact on your participation in the current survey.

What happens to the information you provide?

- We use your email address to send you the invitation to participate and, where applicable, the reminders, and to match your responses with the administrative information provided by your institution (for example, the institution and the type of position recorded in its files). Only members of the Data Collection and Analysis (DCA) group at FORS and the staff in charge of the survey secretariat have access to it. Your address is never shared with the other partner institutions and never appears in the analyses or in the reports.
- The responses you provide in the questionnaire are recorded electronically by the online survey software Qualtrics, where they are linked to your email address or to your personalised link (for institutions that manage their own mailings) for the duration of the data collection (to allow you to resume the questionnaire and to send reminders only to those who have not yet responded). As soon as the data are downloaded, your email address is separated from your responses, which are then processed in pseudonymised form (with an encrypted code).
- Your data are collected using the online survey software Qualtrics, developed by Qualtrics LLC, a company based in the United States. The data are stored on Qualtrics servers in Germany for the entire duration of the collection, and all data handling on Qualtrics complies with the GDPR ("General Data Protection Regulation" of the European Union, which is stricter than Swiss data protection law). The survey secretariat is managed using the Salesforce CRM tool, whose servers are hosted in Switzerland.
- The collection of metadata is limited to what is strictly necessary: only IP addresses, location data, browser type and response timing (for example, the time spent on the questionnaire) are recorded for technical reasons. Data are protected by appropriate technical and organisational measures (access control, secure servers, and encryption in transit).

- At the end of the survey, the data are processed in ways that limit the possibilities of identifying individuals (for example by removing, aggregating or replacing directly or indirectly identifying information). The grouping of sociodemographic variables prevents a person from being recognised through cross-referencing. Free-text fields (open-ended responses) are also anonymised: any information allowing a person or an overly specific context to be identified is removed before analysis.
- FORS then provides each partner institution only with the pseudonymised data concerning its own postdoctoral researchers. No institution receives the data of another institution, with the exception of the list of the institutions with which you reported an affiliation and your employment rate at each. Inter-institutional comparisons presented in the final report will be carried out by FORS and presented in aggregate form, in such a way that no individual can be identified.
- The pseudonymised survey data are stored on FORS servers in Switzerland (hosted by the University of Lausanne) and kept, without a fixed time limit, for research and follow-up purposes.
- Once the data have been downloaded, your contact details (name and email address[es]) are stored separately from your responses. They are deleted from the survey platform (Qualtrics) as soon as they are no longer needed for data collection (Qualtrics retains security backups for at most 90 days after deletion) and from FORS's contact-management system (Salesforce) within 30 days after the partner institutions have verified the delivered data, except where you have consented to being contacted for a follow-up survey (see below).
- If you have consented to a follow-up survey, the personal email address you provide is stored together with your personal identifier (login) in a key that is kept securely by FORS; this allows your email address to be separated from your responses as soon as the data are downloaded, while still allowing your answers to be linked across waves and allowing us to invite you to a follow-up survey, without leaving your email address attached to the data. If the follow-up survey is conducted by a participating institution, this key will be transferred securely to that institution. It is kept for a maximum of 15 years and is deleted if no follow-up survey takes place within five years.
- In all scientific publications or reports produced based on the results, these are presented only in aggregate form by groups (e.g. by discipline, by gender, by career stage). The measures put in place make the identification of individuals highly unlikely.

In all cases, the following applies:

At any time, you have the right to obtain information about the data concerning you. You may also have them corrected or deleted. In addition, you may refuse or restrict the processing of your personal data. However, once your contact details have been deleted, it is no longer possible for us, due to the pseudonymisation carried out, to identify you and therefore to retrieve your data to modify the information you have provided.

For any question regarding data protection or the survey in general, you can contact us at the email address dedicated to the project: postdocsurvey@forscenter.ch.

Any breach of data protection law may be reported to the Swiss Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner (FDPIC): https://www.edoeb.admin.ch/edoeb/en/home.html

	Contact
General information about the survey:	postdocsurvey@forscenter.ch
Person in charge:	Suzanne Badan
Federal Data Protection and Information Commissioner:	https://www.edoeb.admin.ch/en

Thank you for your participation and for the trust you place in our work!