

Apprise Timeline of PAUL

Paul completed his PhD in 2005, aged 35, after studying a Master's degree. He moved to the UK, with his partner and children, to take up a two-year fixed-term contract as a post-doctoral researcher at a research-intensive university. Towards the end of this contract he joined the UK study and was considering a long-term academic career as a lecturer-researcher. He was a non-UK national and English was not his first language. What struck us about Paul's story was:

Relocation decisions and dealing with his partners health (personal)

Demonstrating his research capabilities and managing his institutional context (work experience)

Advancing his career prospects (career thinking)

Year	Personal	Work experience	Career Thinking
Post-PhD Year 2	<p>Returned to home country.</p> <p>Partner told him to complete his habilitation or secure a job elsewhere.</p>	<p>Worked last months of UK contract whilst starting new fixed-term contract back home as lecturer-researcher.</p> <p>Enjoyed the 'heterogeneity' of working in a multi-disciplinary unit within a department.</p> <p>Saw colleagues negotiating responsibilities and positioning themselves - 'a game' he had 'to learn'.</p> <p>Valued teamwork and collaboration; modelled his approach on that of his supervisor.</p> <p>Tried to stay focused on studying for habilitation(1) at same time as working.</p>	<p>Insights from different Higher Education cultures informed his teaching.</p> <p>Recognised specialist positions such as he wanted did not exist within institutions.</p> <p>Realised he needed a 'more strategic approach' and had a 'problem' saying 'no'.</p> <p>Wanted to be able to 'make people work together... to motivate them'.</p> <p>Habilitation needed to obtain professorship; completion therefore time-critical.</p>
Post-PhD Year 3	<p>Partner seriously ill, impacted his work.</p> <p>Hoped only one relocation needed in next 10-15 years because of impact on children.</p> <p>Saw children's schools as an aid to getting to know people in new locations.</p>	<p>Could not work normally when partner was ill; was 'constantly thinking about it' and looking after their children.</p> <p>Department relocated buildings; adversely affected his sense of community and collegiality.</p> <p>Continued teaching (alongside research), with freedom to choose some topics and approaches.</p> <p>Maintained broad disciplinary interest and read widely.</p> <p>Created time for his habilitation by minimising additional responsibilities; made progress.</p> <p>Hoped to finish habilitation in next 3 years and apply for a professorship.</p>	<p>Teaching improved and became student-centred; topics were strategically chosen.</p> <p>Important people needed to be 'open-minded' about what others were saying about his topic.</p> <p>Continued to desire an academic career.</p> <p>Professorship meant changing university; noted 'it takes time' to adjust to new location.</p>
Post-PhD Year 4	<p>Partner began recovery from serious illness.</p> <p>Not keen to move children; would seek professorship where he could commute from home.</p> <p>Recognised experience of relocating between countries showed he could work and live elsewhere.</p>	<p>Contract extended for 3 years; worked on habilitation outside term-time.</p> <p>Continued to teach, and research and publish alongside supervisor on international projects.</p> <p>Supervision of students showed he was an expert in his area.</p>	<p>Would need to leave academia if professorship not achieved within next 5-6 years.</p> <p>Supervision gave him confidence, even though he had no training.</p> <p>Able to handle international research projects where English not first language for collaborators/participants.</p>
Post-PhD Year 5	<p>Partner recovered from serious illness.</p> <p>He and partner discussed him working abroad with or without the family; done this before and knew what was involved in relocating.</p>	<p>Took sabbatical from teaching to allow time for habilitation; hoped to finish within a year.</p> <p>Participated in career development programme for aspiring professors; looked for professorships on recommendation of supervisor.</p> <p>Felt confident of his competencies, expertise, independence, focus, time-management and decision-making abilities, and writing.</p>	<p>Realised 'other things more important than your academic career'.</p> <p>Considered leaving home country where few non-professor posts existed.</p> <p>Selection process up to 18 months long; availability should coincide with finishing his habilitation.</p> <p>Sought to consolidate current position, publish more, finish habilitation, and review needs.</p>
Post-PhD Year 6	<p>Would commute to a new university until certain he liked the job; did not want to move the children again 'two years later'.</p>	<p>Had freedom to shape his profile and expand his research.</p> <p>Habilitation still not finished; hard to know when to stop writing when no formal criteria for expectations existed.</p> <p>Due to start position as substitute professor at another university for six months. More teaching and traveling, less time on habilitation.</p> <p>Continued to apply for permanent professorships on the basis his habilitation was 'nearly done' and he had several publications.</p> <p>Regulations meant he could not apply for professorship at his current university.</p>	<p>Felt 'more professional, self-confident', junior colleagues asked his advice.</p> <p>Considered habilitation by publication - would be quicker than a monograph.</p> <p>'First step to becoming a professor' and exposed him to those looking for future professors.</p> <p>Pressured to get professorship - would be difficult to work in academia without one; process very competitive.</p> <p>If not happy in new university then would not want to live there.</p>
Post-PhD Year 7	<p>This position would mean not moving house.</p>	<p>Habilitation handed in and accepted.</p> <p>Continued to act as substitute professor; shortlisted for this position.</p> <p>Shortlisted for another full professorship post.</p>	<p>---</p>
What struck us	<p>Relocation decisions. Partner's health.</p>	<p>Demonstrating his research capabilities. Managing his institutional context.</p>	<p>Advancing career prospects.</p>

(1) Post-doctoral thesis