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# Career Perspectives

## with a PhD in Natural & Life Sciences



Lam-Ha Ly

**Doctorate:**

Bioinformatics, FU Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, 2022

**Current Position:**

Forensic Scientist in DNA analysis, Berlin Police, Forensic Science Institute

### What plans did you have during your doctorate?

During my PhD, I had a general interest in pursuing science communication and initially considered freelancing in that field. However, as I started a family during my doctorate and having a financially stable job became a key factor in my career perspectives. While I knew I wanted to leave academia due to the short-term contracts, I was also hesitant to enter the corporate world due to the high-pressure environment. Hence, I only had vague plans regarding my post PhD life.

### What does your professional life look like?

Currently, I am training to become a forensic expert, authorized to sign DNA reports and present results in court. I work in a very collaborative and supportive team of scientists and technical assistants, which creates a synergistic work environment. My work is split into two main areas: on one hand, I analyze and characterize DNA profiles and provide biostatistical advice to my colleagues; on the other, I develop tools designed to optimize and simplify the daily tasks in the lab.

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

Two weeks before my second child was due (and two weeks after my defense), I came across the job advertisement of my current position in the Compbio-Social newsletter. At the time, I hadn't considered such a role, nor did I know anyone working in that field. However, I was excited by the job description and the thrilling work environment, especially since it also involved skills in science communication as well as expertise in bioinformatics. I applied, was invited for an interview a few months later and received the job offer shortly thereafter.

### What motivates you most about your current job?

What motivates me most is knowing that my work has a meaningful impact on society. I receive a lot of appreciation from my supervisor and colleagues for what I do, which keeps my motivation high. Additionally, the variety of tasks I encounter has a good balance between routine analysis and programming tasks.

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