

GA Future Career Program – Fit für außeruniversitäre Karrierewege

A doctorate opens a wide variety of career options, not only in the academic but also in the non-academic field. For PhD candidates close to completing their degrees and for postdocs who are interested in professions in the private or the public sector, the Graduate Academy has developed a new qualification format: The GA Future Career Program – Fit for non-university career paths.



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From 2016 onwards, our members will for the first time have the opportunity to prepare intensively in a small interdisciplinary group for starting work in non-university professions. The courses will be taught in German. The curriculum of the modular program includes

- Developing management competences,
- Knowledge in leadership and team development,
- Basic knowledge of Business Administration Studies and
- Providing a personal appraisal and developing your own profile.

doctorate and also postdocs are therefore requested to apply at the Graduate Academy and to explain their motivation and career plans. The closing date for applications is 27 November, 2015. You can find more detailed information on the program and on the application modalities on our homepage. *BK*

Contact

Dr. Barbara Könczöl
Tel.: +49 351 463 42683
E-mail:
barbara.koenczoel@tu-dresden.de

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Contributors: Bettina Beer, Corina Bejan, Barbara Könczöl, Katharina Ulbrich
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(Almost) last but not least

- International Office at TUD: Information session on funding opportunities for stays abroad for academic staff on 26 October 2015, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. in the Festsaal (Banquet Hall) of the Rectorate (Mommstr. 11) (https://tu-dresden.de/international/erasmus_plus/erasmus_sta/informationsveranstaltung/index.html)
- Next application deadline for internal GA funding programs: 31 October 2015 (www.tu-dresden.de/graduieretenakademie)
- DAAD call: Get your own research assistant! PhD candidates from the Natural Sciences and Engineering as well as from the Life Sciences can apply to the DAAD for an international research assistant as part of their doctoral degree (deadline: 15 November 2015): www.daad.de/rise

All of us from the Graduate Academy team are also deeply saddened by the news of the untimely death of Prof. Wolfgang Donsbach. We got to know and respect Prof. Donsbach not only as a considerate supervisor of early-career researchers but also as an extremely competent lecturer on our qualification program.

With his passing, TU Dresden has lost a highly regarded scientist who shaped generations of students over a period of many decades. We will not forget his extraordinary social commitment, which will be all the more sorely missed in view of the current political developments.

Introducing our Members

Pavel Sarkisov is doing a binational doctorate, which means he will be awarded a joint doctorate by two universities in different countries. He first studied mechanical engineering in Moscow and, since November 2012, has been working at the Chair of Automotive Engineering at the Institute of Automotive Technology at TU Dresden. We are particularly interested in the advantages and challenges of this special form of PhD program.

Why did you choose TU Dresden and this type of PhD?

After completing my degree, my consideration was: If I am going to spend the next three to four years doing my doctorate, I would like to use this time as efficiently as possible. In order to do well, I would, on the one hand, need access to the latest technologies and equipment available in Germany in my specialist field, automotive technology. On the other hand, though, I wanted to deepen my scientific knowledge and skills in higher mathematics, classical mechanics and mechanics of materials which are very well developed in Russia, my home country. That's why a double PhD program was the perfect opportunity for me to combine the advantages of both countries.

The facilities and the specialist group at TU Dresden correlated best with the research topic sug-

gested at my home university, Bauman Moscow State Technical University. The financial conditions also played a role, as within an international PhD program, it is often necessary to fly from one country to the other, and there is no time left for doing an extra part-time job. Thanks to the Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Multic Program, I can now pursue my PhD program at these two universities and concentrate fully on my research.

What are the greatest challenges for you in doing a binational PhD? In your view, what are the most significant differences between Russia and Germany when it comes to teaching and research?

The language barrier is the greatest challenge! You shouldn't underestimate that if you're planning intensive research and communication. The second big problem is the different requirements both countries have concerning the PhD thesis.

In my experience, in Germany, research that results in profit is preferred. German teaching contains more practical activities and is more strongly linked with industry. In Germany, I have gained the impression that research is driven by industry, which is interested in practical innovations. And since the equipment is very sophisticated, local questions tend to be investigated in an experimental, solution-oriented way.

In Russia, the focus is placed more strongly on solving the fundamental questions of science, and the teaching is aimed at preparing engineers to apply their skills in a variety of specialist areas after their studies. Russian scientists

are used to investigating and illustrating as many aspects as possible either theoretically or oriented towards understanding or through simulation.

If you could choose again, would you again decide to carry out a binational doctorate?

Yes, but I would organize my work differently. In Germany there is a greater focus on measuring, testing and observing. I should have applied this strategy already in the first phase of my doctorate to ensure more efficiency in my work.

What are your plans for the future after the successful completion of your doctorate?

I am trying to keep my options open. After taking my degree I would like to return home to Russia. However, the number of jobs in my field is unfortunately limited and the field is very competitive. I would therefore like to work first for some time on a fixed term contract in the German Automotive Industry to further strengthen my competences. I want to gain this practical experience, so that I will be better adapted and suitable for one of the few posts as an engineer in the Russian Automotive Industry.

When working for a company in Russia I would like to continue supporting my university, for example by teaching a course in my free time to share my international experience with other junior engineers. As a student I myself have profited very much from the practical experience of course instructors who themselves were primarily employed in commercial enterprises.



Pavel Sarkisov © private photo



Dear readers and members,

PEGIDA demonstrations and racist incidents have done lasting damage to Dresden's reputation as an open-minded and cosmopolitan city. Dresden has also suffered enormously as a location of science and study. At conferences or lectures both within Germany and abroad, our researchers are constantly being asked what the problem in Dresden is.

For that reason, in Dresden especially, it is important to position oneself against a xenophobic and intolerant way of thinking and to promote internationality and practice it in everyday life. And who could be better suited to do that than our junior researchers? Internationality is essential and a matter of course in scientific work, and we should practice this, whether as ambassadors of TU Dresden when abroad or as hosts to our international visiting researchers.

Yours,
H. Beer



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Graduate Academy: Building Bridges

"Science is international" – that is TU Dresden's statement promoting an open-minded and intercultural co-existence of international and German students and scientists.

At the Graduate Academy, this internationality and open-mindedness is practiced daily. We experience the contact with our more than 300 international members from 74 different countries as extremely enriching. In keeping with this sentiment, the Graduate Academy sees its task in building bridges, between junior researchers from all over the world as well as between TU Dresden and abroad, by promoting international mobility of PhD candidates and postdocs. More than 40 short research stays at international research institutes and 120 visits abroad to conferences and meetings have already been funded by the Graduate Academy since October 2013.

Science today takes place within a global network of research collaborations and through exchange with an international scientific community. Scientific and academic career paths are correspondingly mobile. The doctoral degree as the first step on the academic career path already offers a variety of opportunities to gather experience abroad, starting with trips to meetings and conferences, continuing with short research stays, right through to spending several years at research institutes in a foreign country.

This is why we would like to dedicate this edition of our newsletter to the topic of international mobility during the doctoral degree process. First, we will be offering tips and information on the optimal way of initiating and preparing a stay abroad as well as on the relevant funding opportunities. Then, Dr. Holger Finken from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) will answer our questions, and Pavel Sarkisov, a Russian doctoral candidate in the field of automotive engineering and a GA member, will report on his experiences with a binational (double) doctoral degree project.

As always, we would be very happy to receive your feedback and comments concerning our newsletter. Please send these to graduieretenakademie@tu-dresden.de.

KU

How an idea can be turned into a successful stay abroad

Are you thinking about undertaking a short research stay abroad and are still in the orientation phase, or have you perhaps already made the first contacts? We have put together everything you need to know about a stay abroad, together with the relevant funding opportunities offered by the Graduate Academy.

A stay abroad is seen as a career boost and is anything but an “unpleasant chore.” For many junior researchers, the time spent abroad is among the most intensive and exciting experiences of their lives.

When abroad, you encounter new situations, have to find your way and structure your daily life; you meet interesting people, strengthen your intercultural competence, make new contacts and expand your professional and private network. Last but not least, you will also as a rule improve your language skills. However, before you climb aboard the plane heading for “adventure”, there are a number of things you have to pay attention to and put into action.

Do's & Don'ts

If you are still in the orientation phase for a stay abroad or if you have not yet made up your mind whether this would be the

right thing for you, then it would probably be best to first talk with your supervisor and perhaps with postdocs from your field and find out in advance if there are any existing contacts on the level of working groups that you can use or if there are any relevant recommendations or experiences.

In addition, it is advisable to ask yourself who in your field is doing interesting research projects and where this is happening, and to inquire if a short research stay would be possible at their institute. The first contact can be made via email or in a personal conversation, e.g. at a conference. Explain your research topic and how this could fit into the repertoire of your prospective host.

Frequently, it will be possible at your host institution for you to be given access to the infrastructure and to be integrated into the research team. But it is rather rare that your host will have funds to

support you financially, e.g. for the duration of your visit. Therefore, make it known up front that you are making efforts to organize your own funding, for example by acquiring scholarships. When planning your research stay at a prospective host institute, take into consideration the language skills you will need primarily for your work, but also the cultural differences you will encounter. Be aware that these could have a considerable influence on your stay. Remain flexible and open to new experiences, but don't shy away from questioning things openly.

Once you have decided to go ahead with a stay abroad, it is time to start planning content and administrative aspects. From experience, the preparation time takes between six months and a year, depending on whether there already is a contact with the prospective host institute in place



or whether this still has to be set up, and which application deadlines have to be met, e.g. with providers of funding.

If you have family ties, then the question also arises whether your family can accompany you during your stay abroad or whether your partner will remain back home (with the children). If you are in university employment, you will need the approval of your supervisor for the research stay.

Depending on the nature of your work, you need to clarify whether you can do some of it either before or after your stay, whether a replacement has to be found for your position during your absence or whether you need to apply for holiday or unpaid leave. There are a wide variety of possible constellations and these should be considered carefully and agreed with your workplace. It is equally important to make a rough calculation of prospective costs during the preparation phase of your stay abroad. How high is the cost of living in your host country, how expensive are the rents, what travel costs will you have, and if applicable, what additional insurance costs will you be faced with? And don't forget to budget for leisure activities – weekend trips to get to know people and country are extremely popular during stays abroad.

We can promise you: A stay abroad will not only give a boost to your research project, but will change your perspective on other cultures and, in turn, on the way you see your own!

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Checklist:

Content-related preparation

- Does my institute already have any contacts with universities/working groups abroad?
- Can supervisors and/or postdocs make any recommendations?
- Who is doing research in my field? What is the best way to get in touch?
- How will a research stay benefit me professionally and personally?
- What is the language used at the host institute?
- Will I have a place to work at the host institute? Will I have access to laboratories, libraries, archives etc.?
- What period of time would be best for the research stay? Will my potential work and time schedule fit in with that of the host institution?

Administrative preparation

- How high are the costs for the journey to and from my destination? What additional excursions and trips do I want to plan?
- What immigration and residence regulations (VISA) do I have to take into account? Do I need a passport?
- How high is the cost of living and how much will I have to pay for accommodation?
- What accommodation options are there? Will I have to pay a deposit? How do I pay the rent (cash payments, bank transfers, etc.)?
- What dates do I have to keep in mind (e.g. application deadlines for scholarships)?
- If I have to enrol: Do I need to apply to take a semester off at my home university?
- If I am in university employment: Has my research stay been agreed with my superior? Can I complete certain tasks before or after my stay? Will someone have to be employed to replace me?
- What insurance policies do I need?
- What medical precautions (vaccinations) do I need to take? Do I have to take my international vaccination pass with me?
- How can I organize my financial affairs (opening my own bank account abroad, international money transfer, credit card use)?
- Do I need an international driver's license?
- Which matters do I have to clarify at home before setting off (giving notice/subletting my apartment, having my mail forwarded etc.)?
- Can I take my family with me when I go abroad? Will my partner be staying at home (with the children)?
- Do I have copies of all important documents (e.g. passport)?

Mobility Programs

GA-great!^{ipid4at}: Grants of up to 7,500 euros (max.) for European collaborations and 10,000 euros (max.) for non-European collaborations (short research stays, workshops or internships at TU Dresden or at the partner working group abroad).

GA subsidies of up to 3,000 euros **for travel expenses for short research stays abroad**

Next application deadlines: 31/10/2015 and 30/04/2016; www.tu-dresden.de/graduertenakademie

Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility – Akademisches Auslandsamt (International Office) TUD; www.tu-dresden.de/internationales/erasmus_plus/erasmus_sta

DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Short-term and long-term research stays for PhD candidates and postdocs; www.daad.de

DFG Research Scholarships for postdocs intending to go on international research stays of up to two years; <http://www.dfg.de/foerderung/programme/einzelfoerderung/forschungssti-pendien/index.html>

AvH-Feodor Lynen Research Scholarship: Funding of research stays of up to two years for scientists, beginning at the postdoc level; <https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/lynen-stipendium.html>

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: Funding of research stays of up to two years (including a reintegration phase in the home country, if applicable); http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/about-msca/actions/if/index_en.htm

Three questions to:

Dr. Holger Finken

Head of the ST43 “Research Programs” division of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

In your experience, how important is a stay abroad for a scientific or academic career and what is the ideal time for such a stay?

Well, science has been international from its very beginnings, first in antiquity and later at the medieval universities, starting with Bologna and Paris in the 11th and 12th centuries.

This trend has definitely not weakened in the 21st century, in the age of globalisation. An extended stay abroad is indispensable for a successful career in the great majority of subjects; this is particularly true for the natural sciences, economics, engineering, mathematics and computer sciences, as well as for medicine, but also for many fields in the humanities and social sciences.

A stay abroad during the PhD phase is especially valuable, and even more so in the postdoc phase. A stay abroad at one of the world's leading institutes in the respective scientific field increases your visibility as a researcher, can improve your access as an author to the most renowned specialist journals and ensures acquiring the international network that is so crucial for a successful career.

How do you go about finding a suitable host institution for a stay abroad during the PhD or postdoc phase?

Young researchers with great potential already start networking very early on in their field of knowledge, be it as authors and/or readers of the latest specialist articles or by participating in conferences. Promising early-career scientists, therefore, often already have very clear ideas about the “internatio-

nal geography” of their field. Help from your supervisor or other older colleagues can certainly increase your chances of researching at one of the top international institutes. And finally, there are the various sources of information available on the internet which can supply you with addresses for making proactive inquiries.

How can the DAAD offer support with financing a research stay abroad?

The DAAD offers numerous funding programs for PhD candidates and postdocs. For example, annual scholarships for PhD candidates with a duration of seven to twelve months, and research scholarships lasting for three to 24 months for junior researchers with a doctorate (postdoc program). The “Post-doctoral Researchers International Mobility Experience” (P.R.I.M.E.) is a relatively new program that is breaking new ground. It is funded by the BMBF and the EU Program COFUND. Rather than providing scholarships, we fund temporary positions for highly-qualified junior researchers of all nationalities and from all subjects. P.R.I.M.E. includes a 12-month phase abroad and a six-month integration phase at a German university, where the researchers are employed for the entire duration of the funding period.

In addition to the basic sum, the financial assistance also consists of travel and insurance costs and, if applicable, family-related benefits. Moreover, the DAAD provides additional programs for PhD candidates and postdocs that are specific to subject and country.