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 careers in the private or public sector, the Graduate Academy has developed a new qualification format: The GA Future Career Program – Fit for non-university career paths.

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 studied mechanical engineering in Moscow and, since November 2012, has been working as a research assistant at the Automotive Engineering at the Institute of Automotive Technology at TU Dresden. He is 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 doctoral studies, 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 special field, automotive technology. On the other hand, though, I wanted to deepen my scientific knowledge considerably, in higher mathematics, mechanical engineering and materials science, which are very well developed in Russia, my country. From this perspective, double PhD program was the perfect solution for me, as it allowed me to take advantage of the strengths of both countries. The featuring of the special program at TU Dresden combined best with the research topics suggested at my home university, Bauman Moscow State Technical University. In addition, I also played a role, as within an international environment it is often necessary to try from one country to the other. From the very start, I did not want to limit myself to one part-time job. The Mundus Action 2 Multi Program, Plan of Study in practical, the necessary introductory courses. We will be glad to provide a more detailed information about all these universities and and cost efficiently. What are the greatest challenges for you in doing a binational PhD?

In Russia, the focus is placed more strongly on solving the fundamental problems, the impression that research is driven primarily by solution-oriented ways. And since the practical experience of course research? What are your plans for the future after the successful completion of your PhD?

In Russia, 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. I want to gain this experience first, I will be better adapted and suitable for one of the few positions as an engineer in the Russian Automotive Industry. When working for a company in Russia, I would like to continue my PhD studies and to continue supporting my university, for example by teaching during my free time to share my international experience with junior engineers. As a student I myself very much enjoyed the practical experience of course instructors, who themselves were primarily employed in commercial enterprises.

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 practised in many ways: With our network, we will ensure that our researchers are constantly exposed to international contacts, between junior researchers and doctoral degree as the first step on intensive research and communication. I should therefore like to work first for some time on a fixed-term contract in the German Automotive Industry. I want to gain this experience first, I will be better adapted and suitable for one of the few positions as an engineer in the Russian Automotive Industry. When working for a company in Russia, I would like to continue my PhD studies and to continue supporting my university, for example by teaching during my free time to share my international experience with junior engineers. As a student I myself very much enjoyed the practical experience of course instructors, who themselves were primarily employed in commercial enterprises.

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A stay abroad is seen as a career boost and is anything but an "optional extra." For many junior researchers, the time spent abroad is therefore also the most intensive and exciting experiences of their lives. When abroad, you encounter new situations, have to structure your way, and structure your daily life. You meet interesting people, strengthen your intercultural competence, make new contacts, and expand your professional network. Last but not least, you work as a role model abroad: your language skills. However, before you apply for a grant or for "adventure," there are a number of things that you need to take into account to fit into the repertoire of your prospective host institution.

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 advisor and consult with your host from your field and find out whether you need to look for 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 whether your field is doing interesting research projects and whether you can even help to improve your skills. In some cases, you will be able to find a job on a short-term stay and fit into the repertoire of your prospective host institution. Frequently, it will be possible to place your institution for you have given access to the infrastructure and 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 sure that you are making efforts on your own to organize your research stay or that your host will have funds to support you financially, e.g. for the duration of your visit. Therefore, make sure that you are making efforts on your own to organize your research stay. If you have family ties, then the question also arises whether your stay abroad will differ from your previous research stay or whether your partner will remain behind at home with the children. If you are in unemployment employment, you will need to know how your stay abroad will be financed. Are you in unemployment employment, you will need to know how your stay abroad will be financed.

Depending on the nature of your project, you will need to clarify whether you can do some of it either before or after your stay abroad. Whether a replacement has to be found, e.g. at the university, if your absence or whether you need to apply for holiday or unpaid leave. There are a wide variety of possibilities for calculating your costs, 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 what additional insurance costs will you face? And don’t forget to budget for leisure activities – weekend trips or exploration of the host country and country are extremely popular among the local population.

We can promise you: A stay abroad will not only give you a broad perspective and new research contacts, but will change your perspective on your field and make you a more responsible person.

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.

1. Planning a stay abroad

a) What is the language used at the host institute?

b) What is the language you have to pay attention to and put into action.

c) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

d) How will a research stay benefit me professionally and personally?

e) What is the language used at the host institute?

2. Preparing for the stay abroad

a) How is the stay abroad funded?

b) What kind of support do you have from your host institution for your stay abroad or while you are doing research in your field?

c) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

d) What is the language used at the host institute?

3. Administrative preparation

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What are additional expenses and trips I want to avoid?

c) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

d) What is the language used at the host institute?

4. Cost calculation

a) What immigration and residence regulations (VISA) do I have to check?

b) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

c) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

d) What is the language used at the host institute?

5. Administrative support

a) What information can I get from my home university?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

6. Questions and answers

a) How high is the cost of living and how much will I have to pay?

b) What immigration and residence regulations (VISA) do I have to check?

c) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

d) What is the language used at the host institute?

7. Recommendation

a) Who are the contacts at the host institution that you can get in touch with?

b) What immigration and residence regulations (VISA) do I have to check?

c) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

d) What is the language used at the host institute?

8. General advice

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

9. Necessary documents

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

10. Additional advice

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

11. Insurance

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

12. Cost calculation

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

13. What to bring

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

14. Other information

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

15. Additional information

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

16. Legal advice

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

17. Academic advice

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

18. General advice

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

19. Necessary documents

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?

20. Additional advice

a) What are the costs for the journey to and from your destination?

b) What is happening in your field? What is the best way to get in touch?

c) What is the language used at the host institute?