

Intercultural Workshop online (1,5 days):

Understanding the science system and academic culture in Germany

International graduate schools and research projects involve novel opportunities of inspiring cooperation with researchers from many countries.

However, notwithstanding global standardizations collaboration may be complicated by cultural differences. On their arrival, young researchers in particular may be hardly familiar with the peculiarities of the science system and the academic culture in Germany. These include the institutional setting and major actors in the field of science from the national to the local levels, power relations and explicit and implicit rules and regulations – whether within their university, their faculty, their school or their project team. Cultures of communication, competition and cooperation, hierarchical and lateral relationships, the ways authority is enacted may vary considerably both internationally and within academic (sub-) organizations.

Misunderstandings, conflicts and insecurity can consume time and energy. They may arise from divergent preconceptions and expectations concerning, as the case may be, relations of supervision, leadership, responsibilities, personal interaction, gender roles, professional performance and research integrity in particular traditions.

Objectives of this workshop

International junior researchers are sensitized to the characteristics of the German science system and academic culture. Adaptation and acculturation to the system are supported. Understanding behavior and interactions helps to navigate academic “shark pools” and to be active in more appropriate ways. Uncertainty factors are reduced to the effect that personal and time-related resources can be utilized in better ways.

Content

- institutional settings, incentive structures and organizations from national to local
- hierarchical and lateral relationships, micropolitics
- rules and regulations
- inherent assumptions, implicit rules and expectations in German academia and in participants’ respective settings
- stakeholder analysis
- appropriate levels and ways of addressing misunderstandings and conflicts, of reporting and reaching agreements
- useful links for further orientation.

Please note: This workshop does not include advising on career paths.

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Methods

The workshop builds on the specific expectations and experiences of the participants. These are captured by a pre-inquiry form and integrated into the workshop design accordingly.

Trainer inputs take turns with group work, reflexive exercises and discussions in the plenary sessions. Various creative methods are applied and peer coaching is facilitated as the situation requires. The following methods are used:

- brief lectures (powerpoint-presentations)
- individual reflections and small group work (breakout rooms)
- working on typical cases.

Different video conference systems (ZOOM / Cisco Webex / BigBlueButton) can be used. GoogleDocs and a collaborative whiteboard (Miro) are used for group work and visualising exercises. In consultation with the client, the participants receive an introduction to the tools used in advance.

Timeframe: 1,5 days (7 plus 3,5 hours)

Available seats: 12

Course language: English

Requirement: good command of spoken English

About the trainer

Veronika Fuest is a certified consultant (systemic transactional analysis) and trainer with comprehensive international experience. Multi-disciplinary academic qualifications, engagements in collaborative research projects at various scientific institutions, academic teaching of political anthropology, and various assignments in science management (consultancy, management of ombudsman affairs, internal process moderation). Actor and institutional analyses in the field of science.

