



## FAQ

Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 | 4 pm (CET) 50 min.

### General information about the webinar

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| Who hosted the webinar? | <p>In-Sook Choi   Laura Busch<br/>         BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG INTERNATIONAL Agency for International Economic and Scientific Cooperation<br/>         Contact: <a href="mailto:in-sook.choi@bw-i.de">in-sook.choi@bw-i.de</a>   <a href="mailto:laura.busch@bw-i.de">laura.busch@bw-i.de</a><br/> <a href="http://www.bw-i.de">www.bw-i.de</a>   <a href="http://www.bw-career.de">www.bw-career.de</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Who were the speakers?  | <p>In-Sook Choi<br/>         BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG INTERNATIONAL Agency for International Economic and Scientific Cooperation<br/>         Contact: <a href="mailto:in-sook.choi@bw-i.de">in-sook.choi@bw-i.de</a><br/> <a href="http://www.bw-i.de">www.bw-i.de</a>   <a href="http://www.bw-career.de">www.bw-career.de</a></p> <p>Dr. Daniela Kromrey<br/>         Programme Director for Internationalization, University of Konstanz - Zukunftskolleg<br/>         Contact: <a href="mailto:daniela.kromrey@uni-konstanz.de">daniela.kromrey@uni-konstanz.de</a><br/> <a href="http://www.uni-konstanz.de">www.uni-konstanz.de</a></p> <p>Dr. Ritwick Sawarkar<br/>         Group Leader – Lab Ritwick Sawarkar<br/>         Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology and Epigenetics, Freiburg<br/>         Contact: <a href="mailto:sawarkar@ie-freiburg.mpg.de">sawarkar@ie-freiburg.mpg.de</a></p> |

## Our Q&A

**General questions and practical matters how to start your academic career in Baden-Württemberg: how to find job openings, fellowships, how to apply, and how to connect with researchers!**

### **General questions: where do I begin (in Baden-Württemberg), how do I start?**

**"How do I start, where do I begin?"- Question 1** How can I apply for a postdoc position? Is there any common platform for opening positions in (Baden-Württemberg, Germany)? Which are the first steps to find suiting postdoc positions, such as search tools and starting points?

First, have a look at the universities or non-university research institutions with matching lab profiles directly, and reflect whether their research areas match your research expertise.

For open positions in Baden-Württemberg, also have a look at [www.bw-career.de](http://www.bw-career.de). Furthermore, you can find open positions at [www.gerit.org](http://www.gerit.org) which is run by GERiT – German Research Institutions to post openings.

Contact the lab-head with a personalized email (see question related to approaching a lab or PI below), stating your research interest and how it's relevant for the lab, requesting for information about potential jobs.

In the case of the Zukunftskolleg/University of Konstanz: The Zukunftskolleg publishes annual calls in early summer. In mid June our 2020 call will open. For more information please see our website: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/fellowships/> .

You can find general information for postdoc career tracks also on the DAAD webpage <https://www.research-in-germany.org/>

**"How do I start, where do I begin?"- Question 2:** How do I approach a PI or contact a lab? I am an international PhD student and I have little knowledge about postdoc in Germany. What is the typical process of applying for a postdoc in Germany? Do we contact a PI directly to express our interests in joining his/her group?

Contact the PI by briefly stating your research interest and the potential match of your research with that of the PI. At the same time, please look into the institutional requirements of the organization the PI is located at such as open positions and fellowship calls.

### **General questions: about applications**

**How to apply - Question 1:** Is it possible to apply with our own project proposal to German universities or institutes for funding?

In general, your research proposal is welcome, and you should make clear how it matches the institute's or university lab's research area, in terms of insights contributed to your proposal idea.

Regarding the fellowship programme of the Zukunftskolleg specifically: Yes, of course – the Zukunftskolleg fellowships – as normally many other fellowships at other institutions – are awarded

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>by an international, open and competitive call that launches every year in summer. As for the question to whom to send it, please look at our answers regarding the question how to approach PIs.</p> <p>As for fellowship questions in general, please take a look at the fellowship-related question section below – and our next webinar on June 10th about Financing Your Research!</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>How to apply - Question 2: What is a good application? How can I prepare a strong application -</b> for example, is there a rule regarding the size of the CV (more than 2 pages) ?</p>      | <p>While the formal requirements might differ between a postdoc position in the industry, at an university or non-university research institution, please do remember that the quality of the application package is more important than the sheer length of your documents. For example, it would be advantageous to keep a short CV – not more than 2 pages – where you summarize the most relevant factors (institutions, responsibilities) in a way that makes it relevant for that specific position, plus a list of relevant publications if it's in an academic context.</p> <p>In addition, a short research statement/summary (2 - 5 pages) or even only a short abstract (200 - 300 words) on your ongoing research – or in case of early post doc stage your PhD project.</p> <p>Most importantly, be clear about personalizing the CV and the research statements to suit what the lab is looking for, and how you can contribute specifically with your background during PhD.</p> |
| <p><b>General questions: how to build a career – what matters most?</b></p>                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>How to build your career - Question 1: What would you say it is the most important thing</b> that one should achieve during their postdoc in order to get a permanent post in Germany?</p>   | <p>A variety of achievements are attainable during the postdoc:</p> <p>The main focus should be on your research and the respective publications/output. If you can obtain an external grant, develop your teaching skills and build an international network with other researchers, this will be beneficial for your career after the postdoc. Interdisciplinary, intersectoral and public outreach activities will give your CV a very nice additional profile.</p> <p>The answer is complex, but one of the key attributes is also to show that you contributed substantially to an innovative research with a publication/ patent/ book with you as the most important author in the paper besides your postdoc mentor.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>How to build your career - Question 2: What key attributes or qualities</b> do you look out for in a potential postdoctoral candidate?</p>                                                   | <p>Be clear and confident about your research interests, what you are striving to achieve with your scientific input and what is driving you to be a good researcher – it's a lot about the zest!</p> <p>Moreover, it would be advisable if you ascertain your new independence as a researcher – independent research strength is a key attribute for postdoctoral researchers in Germany – but also know and show how you can integrate your research into the overall research axis of the lab or the institution.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>How to build your career - Question 3:</b> Hi, thanks for the nice presentation. I wonder <b>how to better be integrated into the research group during the postdoctoral fellowship?</b></p> | <p>At the University of Konstanz – and most other German unis or research institutes – there is an open door policy. You can always approach PIs/ profs via email and ask for a lunch/ coffee date or short appointment. We would like to complement with Ritwick's advice for the Max Planck Institute – contribute to other people's projects by talking with them, asking them constructive questions and giving them ideas, contribute to teaching, help with the management of the lab etc.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

| <b>General questions: application requirements</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| <b>Application requirements - Question 1: Can one start with a postdoc position, when my PhD is not officially finished?</b>                                                                                                         | <p>Yes, but as discussed in our webinar, the formal contract conditions may vary from institute to institute.</p> <p>In the case of the Zukunftskolleg at University of Konstanz: If you have already submitted your PhD thesis and are waiting for the defense to take place, your eligibility will depend on the date of your public defense.</p> <p>Applicants for a 2-year Postdoctoral Fellowship must have completed (i.e. submitted and defended) their PhD by the end of the year the call launches. The candidates for a 5-year Research Fellowship must be in possession of a doctoral degree at the application deadline for the current call. See FAQs: <a href="https://www.uni-konstanz.de/typo3temp/secure_downloads/68923/0/8b48cca2d1722cfbc9d619e4c8923dd410c6cf83/Application_Process_and_FAQ.pdf">https://www.uni-konstanz.de/typo3temp/secure_downloads/68923/0/8b48cca2d1722cfbc9d619e4c8923dd410c6cf83/Application_Process_and_FAQ.pdf</a></p> |
| <b>Application requirements - Question 2: Is it possible to apply with our own project proposal to your universities or institutes for funding? I am from a non-European country. Are the fellowships available for me, as well?</b> | <p>In general, your research proposal is welcome, and you should make clear how it matches the institute's or university lab's research area, in terms of insights contributed to your proposal idea.</p> <p>Regarding the fellowship: Yes, of course – the Zukunftskolleg fellowships – as normally many other fellowships at other institutions – are awarded by an international, open and competitive call that launches every year in summer.</p> <p>As for the question to whom to send it, please look at our answers regarding the question how to approach PIs.</p> <p>As for fellowship questions in general, please look at the questions related to fellowships - and our next webinar on June 10th about Financing Your Research!</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Application requirements - Question 3: Is there a limit for the academic age to apply as a postdoc?</b>                                                                                                                           | <p>It would be unusual to have formal age restriction – your research experience will be the important criteria. However, the formal criteria might vary according to the specific institution.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Application requirements - Question 4: Is it possible to apply for a shared position taking advantage of both German and one's home university facilities to carry out complex interdisciplinary project?</b>                     | <p>This will depend on your host institute and PI in Germany. Such framework programs exist, but require formal application and writing a grant.</p> <p>For Zukunftskolleg fellowship this is unfortunately not possible. For more details see our website: <a href="https://www.uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/fellowships/">https://www.uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/fellowships/</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>General questions: fellowships and language</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Fellowships - Question 1: What's usually the amount of a fellowship?</b>                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Employed research associates at a German higher education institution are paid in accordance with the collective agreement for state public employees. The gross monthly salary for a full-time position depends on experience and amounts to roughly 4,400 to 4,500 euros.</p> <p>As a rule, the salaries of employees in third-party-funded projects are also based on this scale. See for more details <a href="https://www.research-in-germany.org/en/jobs-and-careers/info-for-postdocs-and-junior-researchers/funding-and-fellowships.html">https://www.research-in-germany.org/en/jobs-and-careers/info-for-postdocs-and-junior-researchers/funding-and-fellowships.html</a></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                                                                                                                                                      | In addition, if you want to know about funding your research, please join our next webinar on June 10th !                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Fellowships - Question 2:</b><br>Which are the postdoctoral fellowships available for the PhD graduates from Germany, who are in the final stage? | The scholarship funding <u>base of the DAAD</u> is an excellent source to find suitable funding.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Fellowships - Questions 3:</b><br><b>Is it possible to apply</b> for a funding project as a last year PhD student or it demands PhD certificate?  | It depends on the specific requirements of the application processes of the projects. Some might require a proof of submission or defense, others a PhD certificate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Practical matters - language, Question 1:</b> Is it necessary to speak German to complete a successful postdoc in Germany?                        | In most disciplines, institutes and universities, English is the lingua franca and you can complete your postdoc in English.<br>However, much of the committee work is in English, which might be of relevance at the advanced postdoc phase - transition to professorship.<br>Also, it will be valuable to establish larger networks in Germany.                                              |
| <b>Practical matters - language, Question 2:</b> How important is to know German for postdoc positions in the industry?                              | This depends on the scale of the company. Globalized, large corporations are more international regarding their recruiting process and in their R&D labs or in the way how they are handling projects in general. SME (small-and-medium-sized enterprises) may vary - while some are very international, for others, it might be an advantage to know German to interact with your colleagues. |
| <b>Specific questions: questions related to your research area or specifically addressed to our speakers...</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Any postdoc opportunities in Baden-Württemberg for...                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| ... agriculture and agronomy?                                                                                                                        | It's covered at several universities in Baden-Württemberg, for example University of Hohenheim or University of Freiburg.<br>Please approach their lab PIs to find out about postdoc possibilities.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| ... astronomy and astrophysics?                                                                                                                      | It's covered at several universities in Baden-Württemberg, for example University of Heidelberg, KIT (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology), University of Stuttgart, and University of Tübingen.<br>Please approach their lab PIs to find out about postdoc possibilities.                                                                                                                       |
| ... nanotechnology?                                                                                                                                  | It's covered at several universities in Baden-Württemberg, for example the University of Freiburg, University of Heidelberg, KIT (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology), University of Stuttgart, University of Tübingen, and University of Ulm.<br>Please approach their lab PIs to find out about postdoc possibilities.                                                                        |
| ...thin film science and technology?                                                                                                                 | It's covered at several universities in Baden-Württemberg, for example, IMTEK Dept. of Microsystems Engineering at University of Freiburg, LISA at University of Tübingen, and several institutes of the University of Stuttgart.<br>Please approach their lab POs to find out about postdoc possibilities.                                                                                    |

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| <p><b>Question to Zukunftskolleg I:</b> For the international fellowship, I am coming originally from Asia, but finishing my doctoral thesis in Germany. Can I apply from Germany with my own project?</p>                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Yes, of course, the Zukunftskolleg fellowships are awarded by an international, open and competitive call.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>Question to Zukunftskolleg II:</b> I wish to know more about the short-term postdoctoral fellowship.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>The Zukunftskolleg Konnect Fellowships support early career researchers from Africa, Asia and Latin America related to one of the thirteen departments of the University of Konstanz, or to one of the Clusters of Excellence at the University of Konstanz: "Politics of Inequality" and the "Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour". More information on the programme is online: <a href="https://www.uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/fellowships/zukonnect-fellowship/">https://www.uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/fellowships/zukonnect-fellowship/</a>. Next call will most likely launch in autumn.</p> |
| <p><b>Specific question regarding career paths - Question I:</b> - Is it advisable to change the research field to do a postdoc after the PhD? For example I am doing my PhD in neuroscience, but would like to change into immunology or so.</p>                                                                                                                 | <p>Very much advisable! Something like this is even preferred by funding bodies such as HFSP.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>Specific question regarding career paths - Question 2:</b> I'm a postdoc in Aeronautic Engineering with several years of international postdoc experience. I heard it is quite rare for someone in our field to pursue an academic career without first having acquired a considerable amount of experience in the industry. Would you agree with that?</p> | <p>Non-university research institutions such as the Fraunhofer institutes could be an optimal place for you in this case, as their research is always carried out with and for the industry. So it doesn't have to be neither nor, but you can find a way to capitalize on your postdoc experience with the industry and continue your academic expertise while being strongly involved in industry-related research. Furthermore, please stay tuned for a future webinar session which is going to address "Research in Industry in Baden-Württemberg"!</p>                                                                     |

**Useful Links:**

[www.bw-career.de](http://www.bw-career.de)

[www.daad.de](http://www.daad.de)

[www.research-in-germany.org](http://www.research-in-germany.org)

[www.make-it-in-germany.com](http://www.make-it-in-germany.com)

<https://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de> (Ministry of Science, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg)

<https://www.bwstiftung.de> (Baden-Württemberg Stiftung)

We thank DAAD for providing valuable information used in this FAQ document.



**Baden-Württemberg**

The German Southwest.