

Exploring Difference:
Postdoctoral Careers in
Global Academia

Monday 11 October 2010
Ludwig Erhard Haus, Berlin



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The workshop series **International Dialogue on Education Berlin** is a joint initiative of the British Council Germany, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German-American Fulbright Commission, the Australian Group of Eight and the Canadian Bureau for International Education in Berlin.

Through the contributions of international participants the series aims to enrich the debate on science, research and higher education policy in Germany, to place German perspectives in a global context and to learn from positive examples from other countries.

Ongoing series

- 1 Exploring Difference –
Making University Teaching Count, 15 October 2007
- 2 Exploring Difference –
The Philosophy of Undergraduate Education, 10 April 2008
- 3 Exploring Difference –
The Challenge of (Post)Graduate Education, 9 October 2008
- 4 Exploring Difference –
The Challenge of International Branding and Marketing, 30 April 2009
- 5 Exploring Difference –
Integrating Lifelong Learning into Universities' Missions, 19 October 2009
- 6 Exploring Difference –
Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Doctoral Candidates, 26 April 2010
- 7 **Exploring Difference –
Postdoctoral Careers in Global Academia, 11 October 2010**

Information on all events is available at www.daad.de/id-e_berlin

**Exploring Difference:
Postdoctoral Careers in Global Academia**

For some time the discussions on reforming postdoctoral careers in Germany have focussed on the following issues: early independence, clear and well-structured career paths, increasing flexibility in and diversity of qualification requirements.

Despite the introduction of assistant/associate professorships (Juniorprofessur) and the removal of the obligatory second phase (Habilitation) the German system is still viewed critically by its young academics who continue to regard Anglo-American universities as a highly attractive alternative.

The seventh conference in the ID-E Berlin series will examine the challenges facing post-doctoral careers in global academia. A detailed understanding of the different systems and new developments will be elicited from participating speakers from Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Three central questions will guide the conference proceedings:

- What are the roles and functions of postdocs in the different university systems?
- Postdocs around the globe: What are their rights and obligations? How independent can they be? Which career paths are open to them? What qualifications are required of them?
- Between internationalization and global mobility: How will postdoctoral careers change in future?

Programme

<i>Time</i>	<i>Session</i>
13.00 – 13.30	Registration and Coffee
13.30 – 14.00	Welcome and Opening Remarks Damien Miller Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Embassy, Berlin Annette Julius Head of the Northern Hemisphere Department, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Bonn
14.00 – 17.00	Panel Discussion “Exploring Difference: Postdoctoral Careers in Global Academia” Speakers Karen Hussey ANU Vice Chancellor’s Representative in Europe, Australian National University, Australia Gary W. Slater Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada Frank Sargent Professor and Principal Investigator, Division of Molecular Microbiology, College of Life Sciences, University of Dundee, UK Crister S. Garrett Director, Institute for American Studies, Universität Leipzig, USA Carsten Dose FRIAS Freiburg, Germany Stefan Kowarik Lecturer, Institute of Physics, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Germany Chair Jan-Martin Wiarda Senior Editor, DIE ZEIT
17.00 – 17.15	Coffee
17.15 – 18.00	Final Plenary and Discussion Conclusion and future directions for the national debate
18.00 – 20.00	Reception & Buffet



Karen Hussey

Karen Hussey is the ANU Vice-Chancellor's Representative in Europe, and is based in Brussels with responsibility for developing the University's research relationships with European research teams and institutions, particularly those related to environmental sustainability. Karen is also a Research Fellow at the Crawford School of Economics and Government, Co-Chair of the ANU Water Initiative and an active researcher in the field of environmental policy integration, water resource management, and global environmental governance. She is Chair of the international Scientific Steering Committee for the COST funded project, "The Energy-Water Nexus: Managing the Links between Energy and Water for a Sustainable Future".

Abstract

The Australian approach to the immediate 'postdoctoral' experience can differ markedly according to the individual university, discipline and funding source. In fact, there is a significant amount of flexibility in the Australian system and the expression 'there is more than one way to skin a cat' would not be out of place here! Nevertheless, in the main, postdoctoral fellowships are for 2-3 years, and are open only to those individuals with a PhD, although there are exceptions to that rule if the individual has sufficient relevant experience to undertake the specifics of the fellowship. There are also varied sources for postdoctoral fellowships: the Australian Research Council (ARC), industry research and development organisations, the Commonwealth Science and Industry Research Organisation (CSIRO), independent endowments, specific government departments, the university itself, or private sector companies. In recent years, there has been a distinct shift by universities to encourage their doctoral students to seek a postdoctoral fellowship at an alternative university, and indeed internationally. Moreover, more and more fellowships are advertised internationally – a policy designed as much to reflect the international character of the student population as to attract the world's best scholars. This presentation will explore the overall postdoctoral 'system' in Australia; the funding and structural arrangements for postdoctoral fellowships; the pros and cons of each approach; and the varied career paths that are open to postdoctoral fellows.



Gary Slater

Gary Slater worked for six years at the Xerox Research Centre of Canada in Mississauga, Ontario after receiving a Ph.D. from the Université de Sherbrooke (Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada). In 1990, he joined the Department of Physics at the University of Ottawa, where he was named Professor in 1996. From July 1997 to December 2000, Gary Slater was Vice-dean (Research) for the Faculty of Science and was then appointed Vice-dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies (FGPS) from January 2002 through June 2004. He has been the Dean of the FGPS since January 2005.

Dr. Slater is a specialist in the physics of polymers and macromolecules, and is a world-known expert in electrophoresis, DNA sequencing, microfluidics and nanofluidics. He received the 2001 Researcher of the Year Award from the University of Ottawa. Dr. Slater has been awarded the University of Ottawa Research Chair in Biological Physics in 2004, and was elected Fellow of the American Physical Society in 2010.

Abstract: Postdoctoral Fellows in Canada

In Canada, a "Postdoctoral Fellow" (PDF) is generally defined as an individual who was recently (i.e., within the last 5-6 years) awarded a PhD degree, or equivalent, and who continues his/her training in a research environment for up to a maximum of 5 additional years. This training can take place in academic, governmental, hospital or industrial laboratories, and it is understood that the appointment is for a limited duration and that it involves research and scholarship. In other words, this is not a form of continuing employment, nor is it a technician-type position. Although the PDF is supervised by an experienced researcher, the Fellow should have the freedom to explore new ideas and to publish the results of his/her investigations. Since many Canadian institutions do not formally collect information on their PDFs, it is difficult to estimate the number of PDFs in Canada; 6000 is a number that is often quoted in national reports. In fact, the training of PDFs varies widely from institution to institution. Not graduate students, not faculty members, PDFs often slip between the cracks of the recognized workforce of the scientific community and represent a heterogeneous group of poorly defined 'apprentice' scientists. The Federal Government clarified the tax status of PDFs earlier this year: from now on, only scholarships leading to a diploma or degree will be non-taxable. Thus, compensation received by postdoctoral fellows is now fully taxable although most institutions still consider that they are trainees and not employees. However, the Canadian government continues to provide additional new funding in support of postdoctoral fellowships. For example, the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships were established in 2010 and are worth CAN\$ 70,000 per year for a period of two years. German citizens are eligible to apply for several PDF scholarship programs. Information about the programs is available on www.scholarships.gc.ca.



Frank Sargent

Frank Sargent embarked on a biochemistry degree at the University of Edinburgh in 1988 without any real expectations regarding making a career in scientific research. While in Edinburgh, however, Frank became alerted to the potential of bacteria as ideal model organisms for fundamental biochemical and cellular research. Frank's PhD was awarded in 1996 and he immediately took up a postdoctoral position in another country (England!) with Tracy Palmer at the John Innes Centre in Norwich. A second postdoc contract followed in 1998 with Ben Berks (then at the University of East Anglia, Norwich). Those postdoctoral years whetted Frank's appetite for bench work and scientific research so he made a conscious decision to attempt to become an independent researcher in his own right. Frank was awarded a University Research Fellowship from The Royal Society in 2000. The freedom and protection offered by the Royal Society Fellowship allowed

Frank's research to flourish and his work was awarded The Fleming Prize from the Society of General Microbiology in 2006 and The Colworth Medal from The Biochemical Society in 2007. Indeed, Frank remains the only scientist to hold both these awards simultaneously. This small amount of success attracted some attention in UK academia and Frank moved his research team to the College of Life Sciences, University of Dundee in July 2007. There, Frank completed the transition from Royal Society Research Fellow to University Professor and his undergraduate students nominated him for two Excellence in Teaching Prizes, which were duly awarded in 2010. Frank sits on a number of committees at the University of Dundee, the most important of which is as one of two Faculty Advisors to the College of Life Sciences Postdoc Association (CLSPA). The College of Life Sciences employs around 950 people, 300 of whom are postdoctoral researchers on temporary contracts. CLSPA was formed by, and is run by, the postdocs for the postdocs. They arrange a welcome pack for new staff, a social program, an academic program, career development workshops, and much more.

Abstract

Although the history of postdoctoral careers in the UK is relatively short – in Oxford and Cambridge, for example, PhDs only became popular about 40 years ago – today they are an important feature of the changing academic science research in the UK. Concrete career paths for postdocs vary at individual institutions and it is widely acknowledged that there is a need for creating clearer career path structures for postdocs. Generally speaking, there are two types of postdoctoral positions in the UK; firstly there are a multitude of postdoctoral positions in the universities themselves. These are almost always temporary positions (contracts of a 3-5 year duration) funded by grants awarded to established staff by government research councils or charities. With these, there is no clear aim of the postdoctoral researcher moving up to the position of Principal Investigator. Secondly, there are a small number of Fellowships funded by research councils and charities, for example by the Royal Society, Wellcome Trust, RCUK or Oxbridge Colleges (so-called Junior Research Fellowships). These are highly competitive and many are aimed at high-flying young researchers within 3-7 years of obtaining a PhD. Fellowships awarded by the Royal Society are portable and highly flexible and have the clear intention of leading the researcher into a new position as Principal Investigator. The UK attracts many international researchers among its postdocs, from both EU and non-EU countries. The latest estimates suggest 35-43% of postdocs come from outside the UK.

The University of Dundee's College of Life Sciences has made a name for itself by developing a strictly research-oriented model for recruitment and career progression which has achieved unrivalled financial and publication/citation success and resulted in the College achieving international recognition.

Crister S. Garrett is Professor for American, Transatlantic, and International Studies and Director of the Institute for American Studies at the University of Leipzig. He earned his PhD at the University of California at Los Angeles in contemporary politics and history. Prior to coming to Leipzig, Professor Garrett taught for five years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and directed the European Studies Program. His teaching and research focuses on current political and economic transformations in the United States and Europe and their impact on transatlantic relations and global governance. Professor Garrett held the Fulbright-Leipzig Chair for American Studies during 2003-2005, has been a Robert Bosch Foundation Fellow, a Rotary Fellow, and a DAAD International Guest Scholar.



Crister S. Garrett

Abstract: The Possibilities, Problems, and Politics of Postdocs in American Higher Education

In the United States there is in fact a National Postdoc Appreciation Week (20-24 September). According to the National Postdoc Association (NPA), the recently held second annual Appreciation Week was a thorough success. That the NPA exists, and is supported by leading actors in American higher education such as the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), underscores how important postdocs are for the functioning of American higher education. That the NPA sees the need to organize a national appreciation week underlines the diverse and divisive issues surrounding the purpose and place of postdocs in American higher education. That one of America's few remaining major unions, the United Auto Workers, has recently been able to negotiate a union contract representing some 6,000 postdocs from the entire University of California system (Inside Higher Ed, 3 August 2010), further illustrates the powerful political issues at stake in American higher education regarding the place of postdocs in pursuing innovative research, teaching, and program management at America's major research universities. Often referred to as "invisible scholars", widely seen as "indispensable scholars", postdocs provide a fundamental indicator of the "state-of-health" of American higher education.



Carsten Dose

Carsten Dose has been the managing director (Geschäftsführer) of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) since its foundation in April 2008. The FRIAS is the central measure of the so-called Freiburg Future concept, with which the university was successful in the German excellence initiative. As a university-affiliated Institute for Advanced Studies, the FRIAS aims to provide temporary free space for researchers from within the University of Freiburg as well as from abroad. Support for junior researchers at an advanced postdoctoral level is a particular focus of the FRIAS.

Before joining the University of Freiburg, Dr. Dose worked for the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat). He was the personal assistant to the Chairman and worked on proposals for policy reform concerning the German HE system. His responsibilities included the recommendations concerning the quality of teaching and learning (2008), demographic change and the German HE system (2006) as well as the restructuring of doctoral training (2002). He was a member of the advisory committee to the "Bundesbericht wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs" (BuWin) and served on several other committees concerned with questions of demographic change as well as the employment conditions for researchers in the German Higher Education system.

Dr. Dose studied sociology at Frankfurt University. He received a PhD at the Technical University of Darmstadt, where he was a member of a DFG/GRC-research training group focussing on science and technology studies from a social sciences perspective.



Stefan Kowarik

Stefan Kowarik has just started a position as junior professor in physics at the Humboldt University Berlin after doing postdoctoral work at the University of California at Berkeley. He studied physics at the LMU Munich and earned his PhD in physical chemistry at Oxford University. His research focuses on X-ray structural investigations of molecular semiconductors which are useful for 'plastic' solar cells and display screens.

Opening Remarks

Damien Miller recently commenced as Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy in Berlin. He has worked for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for over ten years, including as Director of the Afghanistan Section and the Corporate Planning Section. He served in the office of the former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Stephen Smith. Prior to this, he worked primarily on South and South-East Asian political issues and was posted to Malaysia as Third Secretary from 2000 to 2003. He holds Bachelor of Arts and Laws degrees from the University of New South Wales.



Damien Miller

Annette Julius is the Head of the Northern Hemisphere Department of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Bonn as well as of DAAD's Berlin Office. She studied English and Russian Language and Literature at the University of Cologne, the University of Dundee in Scotland and the Pushkine Institute of Russian Language in Moscow. From 1992 to 1995 Annette Julius did a PhD in Slavonic Studies, with several research stays in Moscow. After completing her PhD, she worked six years for the Catholic German scholarship foundation Cusanuswerk.

In 2001, Annette Julius joined the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD in Bonn, where she was first the Head of Section for "Policy Planning and Coordination" and in 2005 became the Head of Division for "Strategy and Cross-Sectional Programmes". Since November 2006 she has been responsible for the DAAD Office in Berlin, and since September 2007 for the Northern Hemisphere Department in Bonn.



Annette Julius

Chair

Jan-Martin Wiarda is editor-reporter at DIE ZEIT, Germany's most influential weekly newspaper. He reports on higher education issues, school policy and research.

Wiarda is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA) and also attended both the University of Munich and the German School for Journalists (Deutsche Journalistenschule). He has won a number of prestigious awards, most recently the Goethe Award for his reporting in the field of higher education.



Jan-Martin Wiarda

