

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:02	Speaker 1	Welcome to Jobs AC UK Google Plus Hangout on the topic of Postdoctoral and Research opportunities in Germany. It's quite an interesting topic we are going to talk about today, as Germany has a really diverse research landscape with over 1,000 publically funded institutions but career paths which could sometimes be a little bit difficult but create a lot of opportunities for you in Germany. Recently, the research expenditure of Germany is nearly 80 billion Euros
00:00:30		and Germany is one of the few European countries matching the 3% of the GDP in research and investment in research. We have currently working over 600,000 people in research and development and you already see there are a lot of good opportunities to go to Germany and to do a Postdoc especially. One last figure I would like to mention is that currently in the ERC Starting Grants which is the European funding scheme for postdoctoral researchers, Germany comes after the
00:01:00		UK in second place. A lot of international Researchers come to Germany at the moment, Postdoctoral especially and we have a lot of funding opportunities available which are going to talk today about, but we are also going to cover areas like living and funding as I said already, but also how to apply for a Postdoc position. But first of all I would like to introduce our Panel. My name is Katja Lasch, I am working for the German Academic Exchange based in Bonn and I am Head of the section of International Research
00:01:30		Marketing. I will now ask Belinda to introduce herself.
00:01:36	Speaker 2	Hi there, my name is Belinda Platt, I am Postdoctoral Researcher in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the LMU in Munich. I come from the UK and have been living here for three years.
00:01:49	Speaker 1	Yes, Simon is here on this Google Hangout with

		us too, so Simon maybe you could say just a few words about you.
00:01:57	Speaker 3	Hi, hello everyone. So I am Simon. I'm doing a Postdoc, it's my second post experience here in Fraunhofer in Germany, we are the Data Institute so we are doing data science mostly. I have a background also in English-speaking countries. I am from Malta and I also did my PhD in Ireland and my first post was done there so I also transitioned from English-speaking to German. Thank you.
00:02:24	Speaker 1	And our last panellist is Anna. She is from Germany, living in Germany. Anna maybe you could say just a few words, what you are doing and why you take part in this Hangout today.
00:02:34	Speaker 4	Yeah hi, I'm Anna. I work in the DFG Head Office. The DFT is the German Research Foundation and it is also based in Bonn and one of my tasks at this job is to actually inform the career researchers about the DFG's funding opportunities.
00:02:54	Speaker 1	So you see we have tried to cover different topics in our Panellists already. Regarding our audience, if you are watching live today and want to ask us questions then use the panel on the side of the screen to ask a question. You will only be able to ask questions this way if you are signed in to Google Plus. If you see someone has asked a similar question, you are invited to vote on that question by clicking on the right-hand side and then we will see which questions are the most popular. If you are not on Google Plus, you can
00:03:24		Tweet @jobacuk but you must also use the hashtag JobsQ and then we can introduce the questions also to this Hangout. We are already getting questions in so let's go with the questions and I would start with a like more soft question about language issues because that's always an issue, and then I would like to ask Belinda what is your experience, can you survive without German.
00:03:54		No sound. Technical issues with equipment.

00:03:55	Speaker 2	Right, let's try again with the microphone on.
00:03:58	Speaker 2	I definitely know colleagues, British colleagues who have moved to Germany for Postdocs here who don't speak any German, have never spoken any German and they have managed to progress in their Postdoc careers here, but for me in my field, it wouldn't be possible to work here without speaking German because I'm working not only with children and adolescents but also with patient groups, so my German is definitely not perfect at all, but I'd say a level of B2,
00:04:28		somewhere between intermediate and advanced level of German and yeah, that's definitely essential for my work with the patients.
00:04:38	Speaker 1	As you do clinical research?
00:04:39	Speaker 2	Yeah.
00:04:41	Speaker 1	Simon what about you and your research group, are you talking German within your research group and the Fraunhofer Institute so what is the language you are confronted with?
00:04:51	Speaker 3	Yeah, so I'm really one of the examples where in my case, I don't really strictly speaking need German the language to progress and do my work here. However, from a social point of view it always helps to speak German because you're not just here to work right? But from a work point of view, it of course also helps if, especially if you are going to work within a local industry or local companies, it's a big plus yeah? However you can also turn it into an opportunity
00:05:21		so like, in my group, we also target international industries for example, and so there are people who have fluent German, who works with the locals and German-speaking industries it's not just that, like it's an open [inaudible] today, yeah, that's my experience I think.
00:05:42	Speaker 1	Okay, thanks for that. In Germany we have a lot of possibilities to do Postdoc, we have

		Fellowships, Postdoctoral positions, there are junior Professorships and there is Habilitation. I think quite interest, is that in Germany you can find good positions and apply to end in basic research and then quite an interdisciplinary approach but we have also some interesting things like junior Group Leaders, so Anna maybe could you explain a little bit about this special programme we have which are you mainly
00:06:12		funded... which is funded also by the DFG. Anna? Okay, I guess Anna dropped out... As I already mentioned, different career paths in Germany so Simon, as far as I know you did also a Postdoc in Ireland so how was it a different experience between Ireland and Germany? Is there a difference or is it quite the same thing?
00:06:42	Speaker 3	There are a couple of differences here so another thing is like, in the Group I was in in Ireland, it was also very international so... and there was actually a lot of German people working there. Also I worked a lot with European projects with German partners, and so it was not like, I was very familiar with Germany and German culture, you know the way of working and everything so of course there is differences but I could say really that
00:07:12		at the end it's all the same, I just love doing research as a Postdoc, so it's very similar in that sense but of course there is the language differences and some cultural differences, things like at work maybe people here are much more keen to separate between the work and the private life, so things like that. But otherwise from a work and research point of view, it's practically the same.
00:07:39	Speaker 1	I believe that you have something to add on that?
00:07:43	Speaker 2	Yeah, I guess just to echo what Simon said really that I didn't have a Postdoc position in Oxford where I did my PhD, this was my first Postdoc position, but I have the impression that the general structures are fairly similar, the Postdoc structure is fairly similar to what I know from the UK, it's more like cultural

		differences like in the ways that people work or the focuses that people have on their work that are slightly different here. Yeah.
00:08:13	Speaker 1	I think, I mean regarding the PhD and Postdoc, we are talking normally on position and contracts we are dealing with. Maybe you could explain a little bit of your situation. Do you have a contract or do you receive a Scholarship at the moment? Belinda?
00:08:29	Speaker 2	Yeah, so I have a contract and my initial contract was for two years to work on one specific project and then this year, this project has been extended basically so I am on an extension of that and have another three years now and I guess I am in a bit of a lucky position that I am working within the Medical Faculty, working within
00:08:59		a Clinic where there is maybe a bit more money going around than there would be in some research groups in the UK and so that my boss can help me to bridge the gap between different grants.
00:09:11	Speaker 1	Okay.
00:09:11	Speaker 2	And I wasn't really familiar with that as much from Oxford at least, or from the UK, but once you're funding runs out for one position that's definitely over, there is no, yeah, there's no bridging, there's no chances for that, so a bit of internal money I guess has helped me there. I don't think that's necessarily typical of German, that could just be my specific case here at the LMU.
00:09:33	Speaker 1	Simon is working in a Public Institution, the Fraunhofer Institute which is known for applied research and contracts with industry, so Simon what is your situation, how did you come to Germany, was it a Scholarship at first or what about the contract you received coming to Germany?
00:09:49	Speaker 3	So yeah, actually I first applied for Eriksson European Fellowships, yeah, and I selected Fraunhofer Institute where I am now and that gave me a year because these Fellowships run

		for one year, and came here to meet the people here, see they work and get a bit of a feel about the projects and the objectives and the interests of the people here, and after that, I applied and I got a full contract so I have like a proper
00:10:19		full contract now for the next, well it was for two years with of course a chance to extend it if you do well, so there should be no problem about that and yes, it is a German public service scale, also when it comes to benefits, which is very easy to find online, you can see the BAT/TV salary scales for remuneration and yeah, it's pretty standard very much here.
00:10:46	Speaker 1	That's maybe something that we should add. We have a public pay system in Germany so there is not much place for negotiations, which means for the basic salary you can negotiate in your group for staff and so on but the payment is really on a regular level in Germany, it's [inaudible - sentence], and you can see online what you are going to earn as a Postdoc Researcher and it's mainly the same all over Germany in public institutions. In industry
00:11:16		there might be something different to ask, maybe the audience know. In Germany nearly two thirds of research is done in industry and just on third is done in publically-funded research institutions but nevertheless we are talking over more than 1,000 institutions publically funded so a lot of positions are available. It's always a matter of money in funding because you cannot survive without some money and we have some questions here regarding this topic,
00:11:46		regarding the source and application for funding and I personally would like to ask and answer a question regarding the funding bodies, so regarding for Postdoc positions, you have to have made a distinction between research performing organisation such as Fraunhofer or like a University Hospital Belinda is in which are offering positions which offer funding on their own but they also have to make funding mechanisms financed by the Ministry of Education and Research and the

		main three
00:12:16		Institutions who will have to know is the DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Institution I am working for we have a Postdoctorate programme, a European scheme called P.R.I.M.E. You could come to Germany for a year and then you have another half year spent in another country and a third party country and the main funding institutions on Postdoctoral level are the The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and there was the question also regarding the foundation especially that foundation, so these
00:12:46		are the most prestigious Scholarships we have to offer in Germany and we have the German Research Council who is fostering research and is investing nearly two billion Euros each year until basic research and 0:13:00.7 group leaders but they also have programmes for Postdoctoral positions available and as I said, normally these funding schemes are open to researchers from all over the world. We have no restrictions to European countries in Germany and
00:13:16		we are quite international and I would like to ask maybe Belinda, do you work with colleagues from other nationalities or is it just German's around you? What's multi-international like in your research group in your Hospital you are working in?
00:13:32	Speaker 2	So the environment I am in is very German and I guess I kind of expected moving to Germany being the spoilt British person that I am, that things would happen kind of in English, the meetings would be in English and obviously speak to patients in German but that everything else would happen in English. But actually there is only me, and maybe one other colleague who are not German and the rest are German so everything in daily life happens
00:14:02		In German, all my emails I write in German, my telephone conversations are in German, administration is all done in German. But I think that's really something that is quite specific to not only, yeah just because it's child

		and adolescent psychiatry so anyone who is involved in any way in our Clinic, needs to be able to speak good German and therefore by default, the language is like that, and I think it made my first week or so, or perhaps even month or so, pretty scary because yeah, I was used
00:14:32		To school German and actually speaking it every day was a completely different story but I definitely see it now as a major advantage with my Lab group that I have the chance to practice because no one expects me, people are expecting you to speak German so anything I could do was a bonus, and I think if I could speak English to them, if it was socially acceptable to speak English to them, I probably would. I think yeah, I think I can't
00:15:02		pretend that I would try maybe to be able to speaking German so that has really helped me to learn the language, it was a bit of a throw in at the deep end, but it means that my German has got much more fluent than it would have been otherwise which has helped me socially. So yeah, a bit scary but good.
00:15:19	Speaker 1	So Simon, what's the language situation within your Fraunhofer Institute? I mean this is just one Fraunhofer Institute out of 66 as far as I know Fraunhofer is quite international and is attracting a lot of interest all over the world.
00:15:33	Speaker 3	For sure, but I would also echo what Belinda was just saying because I was also quite surprised when I first moved here and I would guess around 60% of the people are actually German or fluent German-speakers which was a bit different. Of course in Ireland people were speaking English, which was no problem for me but most of the people were international, the majority, the vast majority I would say there are either German or like people who can speak German fluently.
00:16:03		So, of course as an English speaker with no knowledge of German, I struggled a bit at first. Now I am in a situation where I learnt a bit of basic German, I am not very confident and comfortable speaking German but at least

		<p>understand and as Belinda said, like administrative stuff and contracts and emails tend to be in German yeah, and I also we do some work with the University here and there it has been better because we also target graduate students, like Masters students who take the course at an international level so at University it is a bit more English-friendly but as for Fraunhofer, it is very German</p>
00:16:43		<p>I must say, and of course it's an opportunity for people to learn the language and as Belinda said as well, it really helps socially if you learn the language anyway, but it is not a requirement that you come here with very good German skills from my experience.</p>
00:17:02	Speaker 1	<p>Okay. So, to our audience, we are going to post the main relevant links after watching and we are going to send them to you also regarding the funding bodies I mentioned a little bit earlier. We have here a question regarding the application on Hamburg Foundation but this might be also a more general question so the question is how are the Research Fellowships judged and I would like to answer here that it's mainly on what you have done</p>
00:17:32		<p>and on your research experience so this is what we are judging on if you are applying for a Postdoc in Germany, so it's not on social criteria or it doesn't matter where you come from, so it's mainly your experience in research and what you are doing in your research and how concrete and how interesting are your research projects, so that would be one part of the application procedure and judging procedure. We have all these independent judges in the Foundation regarding the Hamburg Foundation but all the</p>
00:18:02		<p>other funding bodies mentioned and here is also a question regarding what is the best way to approach your host and how does the relationship work, so it's always hard to find a host institution or a supervisor, so Belinda, how do you think you managed to find your host, your host institution or the person you are working with?</p>

00:18:23	Speaker 2	Perseverance I would say. So I started looking a bit while I was still in the UK and I knew I would be moving to Germany and I started to look for people in Munich where I knew I was moving to who were doing similar research to me and found two or three research groups where I thought I could fit in quite nicely and started off by approaching the Professors there, I think initially in English and I didn't really get anywhere, and then I
00:18:53		Started approaching people in German so my Husband is German and started helping me to formulate emails and letter and I would definitely recommend doing that via a German friend or colleague or someone who can help you to just write these emails in German even if you know full well you can't speak German, you just need to get your foot in the door and get their attention. So yeah, so I contacted people who I thought might be relevant for me and applied for
00:19:23		Positions in their Group, again without success but eventually one of the Professors who I had approached got back in touch with me and said that they had a position coming up and in the end, yeah, that's the position I ended up taking. So I would definitely recommend not waiting till you see something advertised or not waiting till someone approaches you but maybe it's a bit of German cultural thing as well, but people expect you to be independent and expect you to go out and find your own things
00:19:53		And I think it's perfectly okay to write to Professors or PIs multiple times and just keep pestering them until they answer and to do that in German as much as you can.
00:20:05	Speaker 1	And how did you figure out the right Professors? I mean we have research landscapes so how did you figure out who to write to, I mean this is meant to be the first step so you have to have a contact or an area of starting point.
00:20:17	Speaker 2	Yeah I actually just Googled people. So I was actually just Googling like Munich, child and

		adolescent psychiatry, depression, MRI and different key words until I found what the main Universities were here, until I found what the main departments were, until I found out where the most departments where the group leaders were. But it can be quite a challenge because a lot of institutions in Germany still have
00:20:47		Their websites in German so it can be hard to navigate those to find things and there I think I was definitely lucky that I had someone at home that could help me to navigate these institutional websites a bit. But yeah, I guess the way you would do it if you were like looking for a research position in any country, I think
00:21:07		using the internet and just through contacts, talk to people, do you know anyone in Munich who might be doing things similar to me, that sort of thing, and just ask around and get a feel for it and then approach a certain number of people and don't expect to hear from about 80% of them. Expect to hear from about 10 or 20% and then for one of those leads to kind of follow-up, so I think you really need to be quite perseverant but yeah, it worked out for me in the end.
00:21:32	Speaker 1	Okay, maybe what would be useful for you I would recommend for you a really, really nice website, it's called Research Explorer. It's entirely English online and it's actually a main index of all research institutions and their departments, over 22,000 departments when you can search for your field of research, you can also search for location and then you go deeper than that, so that might be interesting for people who are coming to Germany to have an overview of which departments are in and which fields of research are in and they
00:22:02		have also there the addresses and email addresses so that is something really useful. It has established in Germany for taking the first step to look in to what is in for you and which [inaudible] fields you are dealing with and to find a match within the German system. But how did you manage to find your Institute, your

		position?
00:22:23	Speaker 3	Yeah, my experience is a bit different so it's actually very particular and I don't think it's easy to recreate it but I will talk about it anyway. So I first of all, I was working as I said with European projects beforehand so that gave me a good chance to network and I think as a PhD student, where I was in a junior post and attended a lot of conferences so it's always good to network and get to know people, because then you network and if you meet someone who you think
00:22:53		you could work with, and have someone in common then they could refer you yeah? In my case it was special because I was actually supervising graduate students in Ireland before moving here, and then they came to finish their PhD here in Germany and through them, I was in touch with the Professor who, I found out there were lots of positions available, so it was then a good way to introduce me better even though I kind of knew
00:23:23		the Professor and that's how I ended up here actually so in short, network, network as much as you can and if you are targeting Germany you should target people with connections here because you really need someone to refer you, especially as a person from abroad yeah, to get the best connections to the people here.
00:23:50	Speaker 1	Thanks for that quite important point so I would also say it's a lot upon networking, visiting conferences, maybe using networks of your colleagues, ask your colleagues if you are staying abroad if they have some contacts to Germany so the first person will contact you, even by a third or fourth person it is always a big helping hand and one suggestion from my side also be address to people as concrete as you can so I am not just writing general mails which we see a lot within research in Germany. I want to do
00:24:20		Postdoc in Germany, please help. I mean that's not helping and you will not get an answer so try to figure out what is the research group doing you want to enter and you need to

		address the issue you are interested in and also you could contribute to that research Group so be as concrete as possible if you write to somebody but always face to face contact if you stay in Europe and outside of Germany use conferences, using networking events in order to get in touch with people, in order to leave a first impression and that it might help that would be a suggestion from our side.
00:24:50		We are dealing with more general applications in research in Germany. I have here a question I was wondering if you could possibly direct me to a relevant academic website for career counselling in Germany. I would like here to mention the website Research in Germany which is the main entrance portal for doing research in Germany. You find a lot of instruments and institutions over there and you find information for PhD students but also of course for Postdoc
00:25:20		Students, information on living conditions but also on research fields and if you go to the social media channels, we have like Facebook, we have everyday also Postdoc positions are available by our Facebook account, these are actually positions Universities and institutions are sending in for us, so this is a good channel and good entrance point to find more information on doing a Postdoc in Germany
00:25:50		and financing of some positions. Regarding the application, maybe Simon you said you were also providing advice to PhD students. What would you say, what is a good application or how to write a good application?
00:26:06		Yeah, I don't think it's much different targeting Germany than it is anywhere else of course. If you speak some German, indicating this in your application could help. Belinda said she was applying actually in German and that would even help more, however if you don't speak German, then you should also say in the application that you are willing to speak German or to learn how to speak German. Because frequently it could be the factor which places you

00:26:36		Lower as a candidate than other people, so like if you are familiar with German you should definitely flaunt it. Otherwise, to make a good application really is just like focusing on your background and listing your skills and experiences, the more international experiences, I think the stronger it becomes, your application. So even if you didn't do anything in Germany or German-based institutions, international
00:27:06		Experience always helps a lot so I think that and yeah, I mean you would need some publications because publications at an international level, so adding conferences which are known internationally with a good rating, and that is kind of like a certificate there for you so if people understand that you have been accepted by the scientific community in your domain, then you have very good chances of being taken more seriously than others, so I think here publications,
00:27:36		as a researcher you really need publications yeah?
00:27:40	Speaker 1	Okay thanks for that. Belinda do you have something to add on this and I see here also some questions regarding fresh PhD graduates, you said you moved immediately after your PhD in Oxford to Germany? Maybe some suggestions about the PhDs that might not have the papers Simon mentioned a minute earlier, so what about PhD students and what about writing a good application and to write a good application also if you are a PhD student and want to do a Postdoc afterwards?
00:28:09	Speaker 2	Yeah, I think so I was a PhD student when I was looking for jobs here, or I had just submitted my thesis I think, but I was quite lucky that I did have some publications from my masters and I had one publication from my PhD already, so I guess maybe that was slightly different. It's hard to say how much of me getting my job was due to that, but I think I have the impression that also what people really respect a lot here
00:28:39		and what people look for is the ability to work

		independently, the ability to generate your own ideas and to know what you want and where you want to go with it and I think if you can, if instead of just approaching anyone who might be interested in working with you, you really think about concretely how you could contribute to their research group and you can say specifically some techniques you've learnt, research techniques that will help you or it would help them there or some people you've worked with where you
00:29:09		are currently who they might be interested in collaborating with, or anything that you can give them specific example of, what you can bring to their lab, I think that is really appealing. Really trying to sell yourself to them rather than just telling them what you're interests are, sending your CV and hoping they might find that interesting, so be quite targeted. Also, for anyone who speaks either, so firstly people who are native British, I really wouldn't underestimate how much it is appealing to German institutions to have
00:29:39		Someone with a Postdoc who is native English. Speak up, because when it comes to correcting papers and preparing things like that it's really sought after but even if you're not native, if your English is quite good, to mention that, I think really helps and I think in general, that Germany have the impression that they are really looking to get more people in from outside of Germany into research institutions so the very fact that you are not applying from within Germany, that you are applying from somewhere else, is really in itself
00:30:09		attractive.
00:30:12	Speaker 1	Yeah, I could add on this that we have a big campaign running about research in Germany and we are travelling abroad attracting people so the international strategy of Germany to attract people. We are quite aware, or Germany is quite aware that they have to get people from outside in order to maintain the innovative approach we have in applied research but also the basic research in order to

		be creative and we regards internationalisation as a plus and an add on what we are doing and
00:30:42		It's definitely a goal of the Institutions in Germany but it is also a strategic political goal to attract students and to help them and to see that in our policies regarding work permits for instance so actually if you come as a Researcher to Germany and you have your contract or your fellowship, it's normally no problem to enter Germany even if you are
00:31:02		outside the European Union, I mean from a third country like India or Pakistan or from the United States, it's no problem to get a work permit and to enter Germany if you have [inaudible] and letter of acceptance and the contract signed, so we are quite open in that regard and also to maintain you here in Germany that is a big issue for Germany at the moment and we are investing a lot in that and what Belinda said could confirm that, that Institutions are quite eager to attract people from outside and to get
00:31:32		new people, and especially of course English-speaking people, so this is what Germany wants and what all the Institutions are broaching and there is a lot of support from the Federal State and from the Government also to attract students into the Funding Schemes. At the moment we have more than 50,000 researchers from abroad
00:31:52		which are receiving some funding from Institutions which is quite a large number and you will see that is quite an international environment that we have here in Germany which we want to improve. So, maybe returning a little bit also to the question, moving to Germany, cultural experience in Germany
00:32:12		I mean, what's your experience with the Germans, is it hard to get in contact with people, how is the social life, just explain, ex-pat communities, so what's going on in that regard? Simon, maybe you could tell us something about your life and your contact and how is that

		important?
00:32:32	Speaker 3	Hi, so yeah I think it also depends a bit on the region yeah? I think I am very happy to be in this region. I don't have any experience in other regions, I don't think it's to be very different to be honest, but I would like to say that like I found people here to be very friendly and there is you know, some ideas and stereotypes sometimes but I have no problem whatsoever, I've been able to make many friends here. Of course, there are things like, as I said people
00:33:02		here are really intent on separating between separating between private life and work life, yes, so it's kind of like, if you're in Ireland it was not like that all yeah? People had good friends in the workplace and outside and the two kind of things mingled, a bit too much sometimes. But here is a bit different to it doesn't mean that people are not friendly, it's just they like to keep the separation and from a social point of view, I've had no problems whatsoever and actually my impression is that a lot of German or German-speaking
00:33:32		people like to meet non-German and English-speaking people because it gives them the opportunity to practice English and like people here are very well aware of the fact that in today's world, English is required from an international point of view, so socially I had no problems, actually some advantage because some people maybe even the more interesting people who would like to get to know you or talk to you just because they can practice English, so I can always
00:34:02		say it's a been a positive experience for me.
00:34:07	Speaker 1	Thanks for that. What about life in Bavaria? I understand you have a German husband so that might make things a little bit easier but what is life in Bavaria, how is contact to German people, what about the Oktoberfest for instance, so what's going on there?
00:34:25	Speaker 2	Yeah. I have to be a little bit careful what I'm saying because I'm aware that probably some of

		my colleagues from Bavaria are watching right now. Bavaria is wonderful. I think yeah, I think the difference is, it's true that in Germany the different regions, there seems to be some sort of, some bigger competition between the regions in Germany than I'm used to in the UK I think. And I think the differences between the different regions in Germany are more apparent to German people
00:34:55		than they probably are to people who come from abroad, so like Simon said, I have been to other parts of Germany but I've only ever lived in Munich and Bavaria so I can't really compare to what it's like elsewhere and for me, everything that happens here that's different to what I'm used to is just German, not necessarily Bavaria-specific. Yeah, I also think that I found people very friendly here, that's
00:35:25		definitely true and people were really keen to meet people from different countries, from different backgrounds. I just think at first I found it a little bit hard, I'd met a lot of Australians and North Americans in the UK, who were very, they were sometimes a bit too open but very open and very forthcoming with their information and want to go for drinks with you every day after work straight away as soon as you meet them, and I definitely didn't have that experience here and again, I don't want to generalise anything
00:35:55		To Germany in general, but I did find that it took me a while, for the first six months I felt like I was having to make all the effort to try and yeah, get involved in social events and to try and meet people and stuff. But then once people warmed to you I think they are just as friendly as they are anywhere else, I think maybe German people are just a little bit more shy, especially with their English and the shyness comes across sometimes as not being as interested but yeah, I don't think otherwise
00:36:25		there are major differences socially like that.
00:36:32	Speaker 1	I have add that we have quite a good support system recently installed in Germany so we have a lot of Welcome Centres as we call them,

		<p>specially designed for Researchers. The Welcome Centres especially at Universities, it's not just a case as to non-University Research Institutions which offer help regarding relocation issues, help regarding finding a house, which might be difficult. Did you use one of these services offered by your Institutions or how was the help provided</p>
00:37:02		<p>by your Institution, was there any help by colleagues or was there any structured help by the Institution when you moved to Germany, Simon?</p>
00:37:11	Speaker 3	<p>Yeah, again since I also work within the University, there are even specialised talks such as recently. Unfortunately I missed it but recently there was one in English, how the pension system works in Germany, what you should do, what are the different options if you don't plan to stay here when you retire, if you plan to stay here until you retire and so on, so like even had these kind of specific topics discussed and presented to Researchers like me</p>
00:37:41		<p>Who have just moved here and just want to get a bit of an understanding of how the whole thing works. So there are a lot of these talks and meetings, and also there is like a Reception Centre for new academics joining the University. For Fraunhofer it's a bit of a different story, but like there is still a lot of help from the individual people here so I didn't find any trouble. Of course, my personal experience coming from Ireland is more bureaucratic, there</p>
00:38:11		<p>are more letters to fill in, letters to sign, everything you have to agree and sign to it, so it's a bit of a headache initially for the first few months to get around. There are still some things which I signed which I don't exactly remember what they were because there were so many that I had to do, but like I guess this is normal process when you move to a new country, you need to get registered, you need to enrol to everything to be known, by the</p>
00:38:41		<p>Social Security and so on, so yeah.</p>

00:38:47	Speaker 1	Okay. Belinda, some help from LMU or from the Hospital you are working with, yeah, did you have some offers or how was it integrating in the workspace and the work environment?
00:39:02	Speaker 2	My colleagues were super-helpful so on a formal level, my colleagues would help me with everything and explain how the different bureau procedures work and where I need to go and what forms I need to fill out and how and why and every time I needed emails sending in German, they can help me formulate things and so, my colleagues have been really great and I know that LMU in itself also has a Programme to welcome international Researchers here. I think I somehow didn't end up on them, I just
00:39:32		wasn't on their main list so I never got any of that information but I know like a friend of mine who moved here from Edinburgh, he was put straight away on this mailing list and they helped, LMU helped his wife to integrate as well, to help her to find work and things like that, so there are definitely support mechanisms out there, but if for some reason you end up not being on the right mailing lists or not initially, I would definitely recommend just
00:40:02		Pursuing a bit and just persevering and just trying to find out where yourself because I find generally in Germany there are so many opportunities, so many more structures and systems for support that I was used to in the UK, it's just that they're not always, the communication about the these resources is not always done right till the end so you don't always find out about them, but there is so much support so, so yeah, pester your University until you find the right person basically is what I would say.
00:40:32	Speaker 1	Okay. We have here a question. Will this be recorded for later, yes of course the Hangout will be recorded and yeah, see all the information and get all the information later on on the website, Jobs AC UK. We have here some questions regarding humanities and creating

		your own Postdoc position with a solo proposal in hand. Yes, this is possible I would say, especially if you are in your second Postdoc,
00:41:02		I mean for the first Postdoc it's what I post on positions but already if you are doing a second Postdoc, there are a lot of opportunities to create even your own junior research group as we call it, for instance the The Emmy Noether Programme which is offered by the German Research Council where you can apply for your own position to be financed by also for young researchers, PhD students who will work with you and you can establish your own Research Group and this is open to all disciplines, not just in the field of STEM
0:41:32		or Natural Sciences disciplines, for instance this is open to the fields of Humanities which would be research done in the field of basic research as I said. Positions are available in industry of course, but as I said, also a lot of opportunities if you have a good idea to create your own project. Of course, you could also apply to the European Funding Schemes like the Marie Curie Skłodowska Career Action or like the European Research
00:42:02		Council Grants, and I would like to give a hint to use for that site here, it's the website of the so-called KoWi where you also find some host Institutions and the list over there is really long at the moment, more than 60 Institutions offering themselves as a host for international Postdocs covering all fields so you can also see on that site that there is quite an openness in all research fields, following humanities and a lot of cases for sure we have admit if you are dealing
00:42:32		like this [inaudible] or you are dealing with history or for instance German for which of course you should have a good command of German language. And I see Anna is back with us! I was just talking a little bit about The Emmy Noether programme and maybe you could explain a little bit about that programme, more I was talking about the possibility we are dealing with the question if you can, with your

		own Postdoc position under [inaudible] proposal you can establish your own group or you
00:43:02		can go with a solo proposal and not just apply for open positions and maybe you could explain a little bit on The Emmy Noether Programme which you administrate within the German research council.
00:43:12	Speaker 4	Okay yeah sure. I don't know what you talked about before that, sorry I will just start explaining. So The Emmy Noether Programme is for Postdocs with a really outstanding record for high quality Postdocs and what you can do there is you can apply for funding for five years for a junior research group, so you would be the Junior research group leader, and so you would be the PI
00:43:42		Of the Group and yeah, have a host of PhD students to supervise and this of course gives you a very high level of independence and yeah, once you finish here usually it would be applicable to apply also for a Professorship so it's a very good way to build an independent research profile at an early stage of your career, so two to four years after your PhD. Yeah, and what you would need to do
00:44:12		to have this Emmy Noether Programme would be first to see, first to find a host Institution in Germany so this is mainly the point here.
00:44:29	Speaker 1	And could you tell us something about, a little bit, we had a little talk earlier on how are applications judged within Foundations and within the Funding bodies, so what is the criteria on which you are judging these applications, I mean is there a proportion of 20% basic sciences and humanities, 40% STEM, what is the criteria for the Judge Panel for these programmes?
00:44:56	Speaker 4	So it's open for all disciplines, so for the Humanities and the Sciences, you can always apply for this, there are no deadlines and there is not a strict quota but it's just important to know that 20% of the proposals actually get

		funding.
00:45:23	Speaker 1	Okay, thanks for that. So we have here a question from a person asking about the age restrictions. So Belinda, have you ever asked about your age restrictions or do you feel you have age restrictions regarding Postdoc in Germany? I mean, you came immediately you have the PhD but maybe what you have also heard in your work environment.
00:45:50	Speaker 2	Yeah, so I think in general because the German education system is a bit longer than the UK one in general, people seem to think I was pretty young for my stage in career when I came here, because I must have been 27-28, I finished my PhD and spent half a year learning a language and was ready to start my first Postdoc and most of my colleagues don't finish
00:46:20		Their PhDs until they are 30/31 maybe a bit older if they go through the normal German system, so in that respect I felt quite young but in general I think, I mean yeah, I think in general as an employer, have so many more rights, or as a member of society in general, you have so many more rights when you do in my experience, than you do in the UK, that I could imagine Germany is maybe less likely to discriminate in
00:46:50		Terms of age. I don't know, it's kind of just an intuition I have. As someone in their early 30s, I don't know if I can really talk about age discrimination that much, but I certainly have never felt that.
00:47:02	Speaker 1	Okay, Simon do you have some comments on that?
00:47:06	Speaker 3	Yeah, I kind of have the same impression. I didn't see so far anything like that, so I think if you are good at what you do and if you can convince the Group or people or department or institute that you can contribute and offer something to them, I think you can just join here as a senior researcher and that's no problem at all so I don't think it's, and as Belinda said, like here people have their PhD in their early 30s, most of the time, so it is also

		quite
00:47:36		Unusual here that you are like 30 and you've done already a Postdoc, so that could also be an opportunity but I think if there are people who are, who have done two or moving onto the third Postdoc, I think that probably just enriches their expertise and their experience so they might be able to apply for even higher positions, and I don't think there is a limitation, I didn't see any evidence of that so far.
00:48:05	Speaker 1	Anna, maybe you could comment a little bit on that regarding the German point [inaudible], or are people doing a third or fourth Postdoc positions or what is the system in Germany or when you should progress within your career or leaving the Postdoc "cloud" as we call it.
00:48:26	Speaker 4	Okay, so once you're finished your Postdoc, or done one or two Postdocs, you are actually regarded as a senior Postdoc but for the DFG Programmes, there are no age restrictions at all, so the only restriction for The Emmy Noether Programme for example is that it should be, you should hand in your proposal 2-4 years after completing your PhD so the only, yeah, the only criteria
00:48:56		is when you finish your PhD and not how old you actually are.
00:49:01	Speaker 1	Okay, thanks for this. We always have this in DAAD discussion, when does the Postdoc end and the senior side start, so there is not an age restriction on that, it's just depending on the path in your career. Talking on career paths, we have some questions coming in on how to get a permanent position and what about after your Postdoc life, after Postdoc, and yeah, to get a permanent position within the German system, what are the opportunities like? So, Belinda, do you
00:49:31		Intend staying in Germany and then to stay in Germany, what's going on after your contract will finish?
00:49:42	Speaker 2	Yeah, whether I'm staying in Germany is a question my boss asks me regularly as well.

		The answer is I don't know but yeah, I certainly plan, so I'm doing my own Habilitation at the moment which is kind of, a second degree in Germany that you need after your PhD if you want to apply for Professorships, well not essential but a recommendation,
00:50:02		and I certainly hope that I'll be able to get a permanent position at a University in Germany and I'm doing all the things now that I can to make that possible, so yeah, looking at getting as many first and last author publications as I can, trying to write research applications for external funding, and there I would say that is a lot easier to do in Germany, there are many more opportunities for external funding here than I was familiar
00:50:32		With in the UK so I think from that point of view, actually Germany is quite a good place to be for your Postdoc phase because you can get some more experience of applying for external funding that you might not be able to do elsewhere, and then yeah, doing the teaching and trying to get some yeah, experience of supervising and teaching lectures and things like that. So yeah, I certainly hope that I will be able to stay but I have heard that Germany has less, at the moment it still has less Professorships than a lot of other European and international
00:51:02		Countries, so I think the competition is just really high and you just have to yeah, hope that you get lucky and have a Plan B up your sleeve.
00:51:13	Speaker	Yeah, it's the famous bottleneck, like everywhere in Europe. But I mean, I have to add maybe that there is going on at the moment a little political, or large political discussion regarding permanent positions and giving prospective careers and a sustainable career to young people because we have this typical problem that after doing your PhD and until the Professorship, there are a lot of possibilities, the Postdoc "cloud" as we call it, but there are no
00:51:43		career paths which are really sure, which leads you to directly to a Professorship at the

		<p>moment, so this is one of the big issues discussed within the political system within Germany and recently there has been an initiative published, I mean we don't have to [inaudible] investment in tenure-track recently so we are working on that to give also some career paths in order to in short, keep people in the system and to give them some perspectives also in the longer</p>
00:52:13		<p>term because this is a big discussion and we have a lot of young people just having six month contracts or a year contract but as I said, Germany wants to invest in that. We have talks on that at the moment and we have made a lot of progress in offering tenure-tracks like the [inaudible] but also different Universities all over Germany are offering tenure track programmes at the moment. But maybe Simon, if you could give your impression on that, so what about your perspective, your future in Germany</p>
00:52:43		<p>Or do you maybe just intend to go maybe somewhere else?</p>
00:52:49	Speaker 3	<p>Okay, so I kind of see myself as a mobile researcher so I have short and medium terms plans but no long-term plans, well maybe in Germany, so I will be here for another while of course, I am making the most of it. Also, which may be, something maybe interesting in Fraunhofer, typically a Postdoc is limited to six years. People like to change and that's the Policy here, so like typical Postdoc's are up to six years,</p>
00:53:19		<p>And then unless you change or you become a leader, a department leader or something that's where it stops. So I would have like five years ahead of me right now, so after that, I am still weighing my options but I think it's a possibility to yeah, get permanent positions affiliated with the University because I am already connected. However, of course by that stage, I would be expected to be fluent in German, so that's just something I expect, yeah.</p>
00:53:49	Speaker 1	<p>Okay. Thanks for that. So I think our Google Hangout comes slowly to an end, so Belinda,</p>

		some tips, or your top tip for young researchers coming to Germany, yeah, so, what would be your final comment.
00:54:06	Speaker 2	So, I would say don't be afraid to try and learn the language and don't give up too easily. I think if you invest some time at the beginning and see learning the language as an extra qualification you need for being here, your opportunities just expand exponentially, so I would definitely recommend doing that. And, if you are still not even sure about coming to Germany, I can definitely recommend it. I think the quality of life is just so high here that outside of the academic world, the opportunities you have at work, the opportunities
00:54:36		In terms of healthcare, in terms of social life, in terms of travel, in terms of public transport and things like that, it's just such a good quality of life that I can definitely recommend it to anyone.
00:54:47	Speaker 1	Simon, what would be your final recommendation, or your final tip, your top tip?
00:54:52	Speaker 3	I think Belinda covered the language, so I won't repeat that. What I would say, just like network, network as much as possible. If you target Germany especially, it is good to have people who can refer you, that's a must. As a young researcher you could like at conference, or any events make the most of the possibility and that's the main thing. And of course, publications, yeah, you have to publish, because then
00:55:22		you'll be taken seriously and do not be demotivated by the language or by the fact that you are moving to a new country. At the end, it all works out and in my experience, I think many people's experiences, it was a good move. It's maybe tough at first, but it pays off.
00:55:38	Speaker 1	Okay. From my point of view, we are convinced, or I am convinced that Germany is a good place to do research and to have a good country experience and I would advise all our participants in the group to use all the websites

		<p>which are all there for information I just mentioned, like the Research Explorer, the Index of the German Research Institutions with all of the research websites in Germany. It's a very, very good start,</p>
00:56:08		<p>or first starting point for you to get first hand information which we worked on for international researchers, and the message to be taken home from my side, would be Germany wants you and we are looking and we are welcoming researchers because we need you and we are looking forward to having researchers from abroad to Germany. So to our audience, if you are looking for Postdoctoral and Research opportunities in Germany, you can find opportunities at the Jobs AC UK website.</p>
00:56:38		<p>www.jobs.ac.uk. The recording of this Hangout will be available shortly on the Jobs AC UK website and on the You Tube channel, so a lot of time to also re-gather information if you couldn't see all of the Google Hangout so if you want to recap something or share with some network, then please do and on behalf of Jobs AC UK, I would like to thank you and of course our panellists, Belinda and Simon for your valuable information. It's always good to have first hand</p>
00:57:08		<p>information and information for people who have the experience coming to Germany and thanks to our audience for watching, we hope we have answered some of your key issues on this topic and goodbye.</p>

END OF TRANSCRIPT

