

The **University of Passau** owes its strong visibility and good reputation to excellent research, innovative teaching and its tight-knit international academic networks. Some 12,000 students from 100 countries and more than 1,200 staff study and work on our University campus, which is located a stone's throw from the historical Old Town of Passau and combines state-of-the-art technical infrastructure with award-winning architecture. Internationally successful high-tech companies and a vibrant start-up scene, coupled with a rich culture and Lower Bavarian traditions, give Passau and the surrounding area a special appeal that makes it a great place to live and work.

The University of Passau is conducting a five-year ERC (European Research Council) Consolidator project (2019–2024) titled **The Consequences of the Internet for Russia's Informational Influence Abroad (RUSINFORM)**. Receiving approximately two million euros in funds from the European Research Council, RUSINFORM will involve six researchers and a series of visiting fellows. The project aims to investigate how, and with what consequences, new Internet-based technologies have contributed to the emergence of novel resources, techniques and processes by which political elites in Moscow can influence media audiences abroad. More information is available at www.rusinform.uni-passau.de/en.

For the RUSINFORM project, the **Chair of Political Communication with a Focus on Eastern Europe and the Post-Soviet Region (Professor Florian Toepfl)** invites applications for the position of

Doctoral student – Graduate Research Assistant (0.65 FTE)

for immediate start. This is a 65% full-time equivalent (FTE) position, based on a fixed three-year contract with the option of extension for an additional year. Remuneration is in accordance with pay grade E13 of the German public-sector collective agreement TV-L; the salary step is dependent on your qualifications and experience.

Job description

- Working largely independently, you will pursue research that makes important contributions to the success of two of the subprojects (work packages 1 and 2) of the RUSINFORM project. The work packages' titles are 'Foreign audiences as co-creators and disseminators of Russia's strategic narratives in Belarus, Germany and Estonia' and 'The audiences of Russia's domestic media abroad'. In pursuing the research efforts required to accomplish these work packages, you will co-operate closely with the other doctoral students and the principal investigator of the project.
- Simultaneously, you will develop, design and conduct independent research that will qualify you for the award of a doctoral degree. The topic of this independent doctoral research should be closely related to the central topic of the research group. It may – but need not necessarily – be grounded in data collected in the framework of the RUSINFORM project.
- You will have the chance to author, or contribute as a co-author to, publications of the RUSINFORM research group.
- You will also support other work packages of the RUSINFORM project, if this is required and your specific project-related skills are needed.
- You will contribute to efforts in the area of project administration and outreach. The ERC project will organise a series of public events and workshops, invite visiting scholars from across the globe, and maintain a website and several social media accounts. Although

routine tasks in these areas will be carried out by an administrative assistant and a student/research assistant, doctoral students are expected to take on management responsibilities and other leading roles in this work.

- You will present the results of your research at national and international conferences across the globe.

Person specification/selection criteria

- A master's degree or equivalent in communication science, a related social science discipline such as sociology or political science, or in a social-science-oriented, interdisciplinary course of study focusing on Russia or Eastern Europe as a geographical region. Highly motivated candidates with or without prior work experience are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Good knowledge of and/or experience with the application of traditional methods of social-science research, ideally with a focus on survey research and/or the conduct of semi-structured interviews.
- Good knowledge or willingness to acquire extensive skills in the application of new, so-called computational methods of social-science research, with a focus on the automated collection and analysis of web content.
- Excellent English-language skills (essential).
- Good knowledge of German (desirable)
- Very good knowledge of one or more of the following languages: Russian, Belarusian, or Estonian (desirable)
- Evidence of ability and willingness to work as part of a team of researchers (desirable).
- Evidence of strong self-management skills, as required to successfully complete a four-year doctoral project (essential).
- Evidence of intellectual flexibility, autonomy and creativity (essential).
- Evidence of strong communication skills (desirable).
- Evidence of strong analytical and critical skills and clear academic writing (desirable).
- Willingness to assist in organisational and support functions (essential).

We offer

- The doctoral position comes with an internationally competitive salary, which will be stipulated in accordance with the German collective agreement for the public sector (TV-L E13 at a 0.65 full time equivalent). Depending on the candidate's work experience, the initial annual gross salary will be at least 32,400 euros (i.e. approximately 2,600 euros per month). From this gross salary, contributions to the German pension scheme, health insurance and other social insurances will be automatically deducted. Depending on the family situation, the doctoral candidate's initial net salary will thus amount to at least 1,680 euros a month.
- The ERC group offers doctoral candidates a vibrant and international academic environment with flat hierarchies. In the course of the project, doctoral students will receive hands-on training in conducting world-class communication research. They will be closely supervised and supported by the principal investigator of the ERC research group, members of academic staff at the University of Passau, and international scholars affiliated with the project. Doctoral candidates will be encouraged to pursue their own ideas, make strong individual contributions to the success of the research project and develop an initial track record of independent academic publications that will qualify them for a career in academia.

- Generous support for participation in a wide range of project-related conferences, workshops and methods-training courses.
- A high level of freedom when it comes to establishing your work processes.
- A great work climate in a family-friendly city offering a high quality of life, on a modern, verdant university campus situated a few minutes' walk from the historic Old Town.

More information about the project is available at www.rusinform.uni-passau.de/en. As the University of Passau wishes to raise the proportion of women in research and teaching, female academics are expressly encouraged to apply. Furthermore, this post is suitable for those who are registered disabled. Registered disabled persons are given preference over non-disabled applicants who do not otherwise have statutory preferential status if their overall personal aptitudes, skills and qualifications are equal.

How to apply

Your full application (in English or German), sent **as a single e-mail attachment in PDF format, should include the following documents:**

- Your curriculum vitae.
- University entrance qualification (usually your secondary-school leaving certificate) and bachelor's or master's degree certificate.
- Letter of motivation (approximately one page) stating why you would like to pursue doctoral study within the research group, envisaged doctoral thesis topic (or type of research you could imagine pursuing) and how you think you could contribute to the success of the project. Please also provide evidence with regard to the selection criteria listed above.
- One or two pieces of academic writing (for instance, a seminar essay, your bachelor's dissertation or master's thesis).

Contact details and phone numbers of one to three referees (at least one academic, for instance, the supervisor of your master's thesis). Please send your application by e-mail to sarah.miedl@uni-passau.de, using the **subject line 'RUSINFORM-DOC'**, **by 1 November 2020** (whilst we may be able to consider applications received after this date, this is not guaranteed.)

We look forward to receiving your application! If you have any questions related to this vacancy, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator of the ERC project (florian.toepfl@uni-passau.de) or a doctoral student in the project.

Once the application process has been completed, we will retain your application on file for six months before deleting it from our computer systems. Please visit www.uni-passau.de/en/university/current-vacancies for our data privacy statement.