

The **University of Passau** enjoys high visibility and a strong reputation thanks to its excellent research, innovative teaching and extensive international network. Around 11,000 students from 100 countries and over 1,300 staff study and work near Passau's Old Town on a campus that combines state-of-the-art technical infrastructure with award-winning urban design. Internationally successful high-tech companies and a vibrant start-up scene, coupled with a rich cultural heritage and Lower Bavarian traditions, lend the city and region a special appeal and contribute to an outstanding quality of life and work.

A three-year EU project entitled "Inoculating and coaching policy-makers to resist disinformation" (POLINOCULATE, project leader Professor Florian Töpfl) will be carried out at University of Passau from 1 September 2026 to 30 August 2029. In this EU-funded project, a consortium of five European universities from Germany, Finland, the UK and Hungary will generate knowledge designed to help policy-makers and public officials effectively combat misinformation and disinformation and ensure functioning democratic public spheres. The **Chair of Political Communication with a Focus on Eastern Europe and the Post-Soviet Region** invites applications for a three-year fixed-term

**Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant / Research Associate and Doctoral Student**  
*(Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin / Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter)*

position within the POLINOCULATE project, commencing at the earliest opportunity – but no earlier than 1 September 2026 and subject to funding approval. The position is part-time (75% FTE) and will run for a period of three years. Salary will be paid in accordance with pay grade E13 of the German public-sector collective agreement, TV-L.

**Your responsibilities**

- Highly autonomous participation in the EU-funded project POLINOCULATE (title: Inoculating and coaching policy-makers to resist disinformation) involving seven European project partners
- Goal-oriented and self-directed doctoral research in the thematic area of the sub-project led by the chair: "Understanding opposition against policies that counter misinformation"
- Drafting of sole-authored and co-authored publications in the thematic area of the sub-project
- Preparation and partial conduct of 30 to 40 semi-structured interviews with European stakeholders engaged in combating misinformation
- Conducting LLM-supported, automated content analyses examining the communication of actors opposing efforts to combat misinformation (e.g. right-wing parties)
- Collaboration in and support for other sub-projects
- Willingness to assist with the chair's administration and to undertake teaching of up to two hours per week (during the semester teaching periods)
- Participation in the administration and organisation of the EU project, e.g. organising workshops and conferences
- Presentation of research findings at national and international conferences
- Preparation of academic publications

**Your profile**

- A university Master's degree in communication studies or a related discipline
- Expertise in computational methods, ideally with a focus on automated content analysis techniques
- Strong academic writing skills in the social sciences

- An open and communicative personality as well as a willingness to conduct semi-structured expert interviews with a wide range of stakeholders
- Excellent command of English
- Good knowledge of German and/or an Eastern European language is an advantage
- Experience working in research groups is an advantage
- Strong teamwork skills

### What we offer you

- An exciting and challenging research position with a wide range of opportunities to put your own ideas into practice
- Ideal conditions for pursuing a doctoral degree in the above-mentioned research area
- An inspiring environment within a research group striving to conduct internationally recognised research in the field of your doctoral project
- Generous financial support for conference travel and other professional development activities
- A high degree of freedom in organising your work processes
- A pleasant working atmosphere in a city with a high quality of life, on a modern university campus just a few minutes' walk from the historic city centre

As the University wishes to raise the proportion of women in research and teaching, female academics are expressly encouraged to apply. This position is suitable for candidates with disabilities. Those who are registered disabled 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.

Please send us your application via e-mail by **no later than 11 June 2026**, including relevant supporting documents (comprising a cover letter of approximately half a page, two writing samples in the form of seminar papers and/or your dissertation/thesis, and all relevant certificates and transcripts), combined into **a single PDF file** and quoting the subject line '**POLINOCULATE**' to the chair's administrative office for the attention of Ms Ines Aichner ([ines.aichner@uni-passau.de](mailto:ines.aichner@uni-passau.de)). Questions regarding this position should be addressed to Professor Florian Toepfl ([florian.toepfl@uni-passau.de](mailto:florian.toepfl@uni-passau.de)). Your electronically submitted application documents will be deleted no later than six months after the conclusion of the application process.

Further information about the chair can be found here:

<https://www.sobi.uni-passau.de/en/political-communication>

Please refer to our [privacy policy](#) at <https://www.uni-passau.de/en/university/current-vacancies>.