Career in Academia (in Germany)

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Overview

- the German system: then, now and soon...
- necessary steps to get a job
  - how to know about jobs?
  - how to apply for jobs?
  - how to survive an interview?
  - how to accept a job - the art of negotiations
- alternatives to academia - backup plans
German system

classical university career:

- Student
- Doktorand
- Assistent wiss. Mitarbeiter
- Professur
- Promotion
- Diplom / Magister
- Habilitation - Privatdozent
German system

classical university career:

- Student
- Doktorand
- Assistent wiss. Mitarbeiter
- Professur

Immatrikulation / inscription

Anstellung / employment (if at all)

Anstellung / employment

Ruf / appointment
German system

classical university career:

- Professur
- Assistent wiss. Mitarbeiter
- Doktorand
- Student

- Immatrikulation / inscription
- Ruf / appointment
- Anstellung / employment
- Anstellung / employment (if at all)

VERY DIFFERENT PROCEDURE
German system

classical university career:

- **Professur**
- **Assistent wiss. Mitarbeiter**
- **Doktorand**
- **Student**

- **Beamter**
  - state officer
  - permanent (unbefristet)

- **Beamter / Angestellter**
  - state officer / employee
  - (un-)tenured (unbefristet)

- **Angestellter**
  - employee
  - always time limited (immer befristet)

- **no employment**

Klessen: Career Counselling - March 16, 2007
German system

classical university career:

- **Student**
- **Doktorand**
- **Assistent wiss. Mitarbeiter**
- **Professur**

W3 / W2 [C3 / C4]

W1 [C1 / C2]
A13 / A14 / A15 / A16
TV-L 13 / 14 / 15 / 15Ü

TV-L 13 x (0.0 ... 1.0)

no employment
German system

classical university career:

- **Professur**
- **Assistent**
- **wiss. Mitarbeiter**
- **Doktorand**
- **Student**

Problems:

- system is very rigid
  no transitions possible
  (say C2 → C3, C3 → C4)
- to get promotion, you have to change university
- no tenure track
- „Ordinarien-Prinzip“: academic mid-level personnel strongly depends on „Lehrstuhlinhaber“ (has very little own responsibility)
- usually you stay at the same place / with the same professor
German system

classical university career:

- Professur
- Assistent wiss. Mitarbeiter
- Doktorand
- Student

Problems:

- System still quite rigid but in principle transitions possible (W1 → W2 → W3)
- In most cases to get promotion, you have to change university
- Tenure track still rare (Juniorprof.)
- "Ordinarien-Prinzip": academic mid-level personnel strongly depends on "Lehrstuhlinhaber" (has very little own responsibility)
German system

BIG PROBLEM TODAY: no more mid-level positions!!!!
German system

Example: ITA -- 3 professorships & only 3 mid-level academic staff
German system

classical:

- Professur
- Assistent
- Doktorand
- Student

now:

- professorship
- postdoc
- postdoc (3.Mittel)
- postdoc
- university
- student

... in Germany ...

EU/USA/...
How to get a job?

BE ACTIVE!!!!!!

It‘s YOUR life, YOU have to do something!
Don‘t wait for others to approach you, do
approach other people / possible employers /
colleagues yourself.

Let other people know you are looking for a job.

LOOK, LOOK, LOOK !!!
ASK, ASK, ASK !!!

&

NEVER GIVE
UP !!!
How to know about jobs?

- personal networks are important!
- scan the job pages / websites
- know about 3rd party funding schemes
How to apply for jobs?

- PhD position
- postdoc level
- (tenure-track) position at non-university institute
- professorial level

VERY SIMILAR PROCEDURE

VERY DIFFERENT SCHEME
How to apply for jobs?

- PhD / postdoc position
  - someone offers a position, you apply for it

- preparation! preparation! preparation!
  - learn about the person: who offers the job? what is his/her reputation? what does he/she want?
  - learn about the position: what is wanted? what skills & specifications?
  - learn about the institute: where is it? what science is done there? how do I fit in?
  - contact the person, ask questions, don‘t be shy
How to apply for jobs?

- application
  - description of past / current research
  - description of future research plans
    - think what you want to do in 5 years, where you want to be then, and what you want to have reached by then
  - curriculum vitae
  - publication list
  - 2 - 3 reference letter (maybe asked for later)
  - (maybe reprints)
How to apply for jobs?

- professorship at university
- procedure
  - position at W2/W3 level must EXIST
  - position must be freed & appointment committee built
  - position must be advertised
    --> you apply
  - applications are scanned and ranked
    --> list of 4 - 8 candidates for talks and interviews
  - talks and interviews
  - external evaluation of candidates
  - final list (approved by appointment com. -> faculty counsel -> university senat)
  - „Ruf“ from university / ministery
  - negotiations
  - appointment
How to apply for jobs?

- professorship

- again: preparation! preparation! preparation!
  - learn about the position: what is wanted? what skills & specifications? where do they want to go?
  - learn about the department: what are the plans for the future? where else is there? what science is done there? how do I fit in?
  - contact people in the appointment committee, ask about the position, the institute, the faculty, future plans
  - ask friends / colleagues who may know about the position
  - maybe: visit
How to apply for jobs?

application

- cover letter (*short summary of everything*)
- description of past / current research
- description of teaching experience / external funding / managerial experience / committees & commissions

IMPORTANT: future research plans -- visions!

*what do you want to do at the institute / how do you want to lead the institute in the next 10-15 years / what are the goals you want to reach in this time / how do you fit within the faculty / university*

- plans / concepts for teaching
- curriculum vitae (*CV / talks / teaching / funding*)
- publication list
- (maybe copies of diploma / documents / etc)
How to survive an interview?

- postdoc:
  - often talk + interview / sometimes telephone interview / sometimes nothing

- professorship
  - talk & interview („Vorsingen“)
How to survive an interview?

talk:

- usually not for specialists --> be understandable / extended introduction
- be motivated, show your topic is fascinating and great
- show your interests are broad
- demonstrate depth in one or two topics
- mention your research (and possible) teaching plans for the near future
- stay in time
How to survive an interview?

- interview (postdoc):
  - introduce again your research plans; why do they fit in
  - what do you need / wish?
  - don’t be shy, ask questions
  - starting time
How to survive an interview?

- interview (professorship):
  - introduce again your research concepts
  - introduce (again) your teaching plans
  - what do you need (equipment / personnel)
  - when can you start
  - miscellanea
    - visions
    - possible referees
    - are you willing to move...

- ask questions
Victory: now negotiate!

- negotiations (postdoc):
  - none

- negotiations (professorship):
  - talk with colleagues (what is needed, what is realistic, what is usual, ...)
  - submit written „wish list“ to chancellor
  - then appointment with rector / chancellor (and dean)
  - with W: talk about your personal salary
Alternatives

- DFG - own position (Emmy Noether, Heisenberg)
  - there is lots going on at the moment!!!!!
- EU / BMBF / Stiftungen
  - Alexander von Humboldt / Volkswagenstiftung / DAAD
- Industry
- Science lobby
  - (DFG Referent, Stifterverband, Wissenschaftsrat, etc.)
- Adminstration
  - Ministerien, Bundes-, Landtag