

## Call for applications

The newly established DFG-funded Centre for Advanced Studies (Kollegforschungsgruppe) 'Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective' at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) is seeking to appoint several

### Junior and Senior Fellowships.

The preferred starting date is 1 October 2022.

### Project description

The main goal of the Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS) is to compare the interpretation, rationalisation and legitimisation strategies of esoteric practices and their practitioners from a global perspective, and to carve out why and in which ways they are successful, resilient and creative in different cultural and regional contexts. A mid-term goal is the development of a cultural theory of esoteric practices, which seeks to explain their resilience, their typological family resemblances across a large number of cases, and their different culture-bound and politically shaped evaluations. The Centre has a decidedly global and contemporary research focus and adopts a broad heuristic working definition of 'esoteric practices' which includes a variety of aspects such as contingency management, specialisation and the formation of expert systems, secrecy, the reliance on opaque efficacy as well as social dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Simultaneously, the Centre also comparatively investigates creative reinventions of traditional 'esoteric practices' that acquire new hybridising forms in fields of tension with competing cultural registers (e.g. science, new technologies/media, political regimes, religious orthodoxies) which may contribute to their (re-)legitimation.

DFG-funded Centres for Advanced Studies are interdisciplinary research groups with exceptional funding conditions and an outstanding international reputation. They have an initial funding period of four years, with the possibility of prolongation for a second funding period, and combine an international fellowship programme with local high-profile research, whereby a large number of leading experts have the possibility to convene and explore an innovative research topic over a long period of time.

FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg is seeking to appoint its first cohort of several Junior and Senior Research Fellows for the academic year 2022-2023, i.e., for the period from October 2022 to September 2023. Fellowships are awarded for 6-12 months, depending on the scope and duration of the proposed research project (in exceptional cases, shorter stays of at least 2 months are possible). We offer a competitive monthly stipend ranging from €3.000 to €6.000, depending on the scholar's status and experience level, as well as travel costs to and from Erlangen at the beginning and end of the fellowship. Fellows are expected to engage in their individual research on 'alternative rationalities and esoteric practices from a global perspective,' and to actively participate in the centre's weekly activities (lectures series, colloquia, workshops, etc.). Fellows are required to engage with the centre's research agenda, to probe its methodological tools (e.g., a question matrix), and to be amenable to interdisciplinary and transcultural comparisons, in preparation for joint publications

(e.g., collective papers).

### Requirements

- Applicants should have a degree and a PhD in **Cultural or Social Anthropology, Religious Studies, Theology, Sociology of Religion, (cross-)regional /-cultural Studies** or in a related interdisciplinary field
- The Centre has a decidedly contemporary research focus, hence applicants are required to pursue a project on **present-day esoteric practices**, based on appropriate research methodologies (e.g., fieldwork, interviews, participant observation)
- The Centre also invites **historically oriented projects that touch upon contemporary esoteric practices** (e.g., by focusing on transfer or entangled history), yet going back to no more than the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- The Centre has a decidedly global research focus, hence fellowship proposals may focus on **esoteric practices from all world regions and cultural or religious contexts**

The working language of the Centre is English, therefore excellent spoken and written English is required. Furthermore, regular presence at the Centre is required.

### The Centre promotes and offers

- Participation in an interdisciplinary, innovative und prestigious DFG-funded joint research project
- Access to extensive international networks of high-profile researchers in the social sciences and humanities
- An open-minded, cooperative team
- Flexible working hours and family-friendly working time schemes
- Professional support with travel, visa, and accommodation arrangements

### Applications

Applications should include:

- Cover letter describing the applicant's career path and current research interests
- CV including list of publications
- Outline of the planned research project and how it relates to the agenda of the Centre (max. 5 pages)
- Work sample
- Names and contact details of two potential referees

The latest submission date for applications is **June 30, 2022**. The preferred starting date is 1 October 2022.

In its pursuit of academic excellence, FAU is committed to equality of opportunity and to a proactive and inclusive approach, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture and values diversity. FAU is a family-friendly employer and is also responsive to the needs of dual career couples.

Please note that costs arising in connection with your application (travel expenses, etc.) cannot be reimbursed.

For further details about the position, please contact Dr. Bernd-Christian Otto:

[bernd.otto1@gmail.com](mailto:bernd.otto1@gmail.com)

**Applications must be sent in one PDF file to Sandra Losch (administrative manager):**

[sandra.losch@fau.de](mailto:sandra.losch@fau.de)