

## Call for applications

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

**Postdoctoral researcher (wissenschaftliche\*r Mitarbeiter\*in, TVL-E14, 100%).**

The preferred starting date is 1 September 2022.

## Project description

The main goal of the Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS) is to compare the interpretation, rationalisation and legitimation strategies of 'esoteric practices' (broadly defined) 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 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 a postdoctoral researcher for the scientific coordination of this research group. The salary is based on the German collective agreement for public servants (TVL), level E14 (100 %). The duration of the position is bound to the approved funding period (currently until March 31, 2026).

## Requirements

- Applicants should have a degree and a PhD in **Cultural and Social Anthropology, Religious Studies, Theology, Sociology of Religion, (Cross-)Regional/Cultural Studies**, or in a related interdisciplinary field

- **Research experience in contemporary ‘esoteric practices’** (broadly defined) or a related subject area, or the willingness to engage with this domain of research within the framework of the Centre for Advanced Studies
- **Ideally experiences in organising and/or conducting collaborative research projects** (research groups, centres, clusters, etc.)

### Position details

The position is dedicated to individual research in line with the topic and research agenda of the Centre. The position also focuses on the scientific coordination of the research group, in cooperation with the directors and further coordinators. Excellent communication, team and organisational skills are required, as well as empathy, flexibility and resilience. The working language of the Centre is English, therefore excellent spoken and written English is required, as well as a very good command of spoken and written German. Knowledge of further languages is desirable. Furthermore, regular presence at the Centre is required.

### We offer

- 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
- Access to advanced education and training
- Corporate pension schemes (Versorgungsanstalt des Bundes und der Länder: VBL)
- Travel costs for trips and conferences that are related to the research within the Centre

### Applications

Applications should include: a cover letter describing the applicant’s career path and interests; CV including list of publications; a short outline of planned research projects and how they relate to the research topic and agenda of the Centre (max. 3 pages); the names and contact details of two potential referees.

The latest submission date for applications is May 31, 2022. The preferred starting date is 1 September 2022. The duration of the position is bound to the approved funding period (currently until March 31, 2026).

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.) can unfortunately not 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)