

# JUNIOR RESEARCHER

HERDER INSTITUTE for Historical Research on East Central Europe

The development of junior researchers (PhD students and postdocs) has been an important aspect of the work of the Herder Institute ever since it was founded. Unlike academic institutions, the Institute has the infrastructure to provide comprehensive support for junior researchers, and this has expanded continuously in recent years. The Institute offers multiple, complementary and integrated training opportunities for junior researchers pursuing a doctoral or habilitation project. In addition, promotes the formation of networks of junior researchers, both among themselves and with well-established international researchers working at the Institute.

This integrated programme focuses on the Institute's own holdings, to the mutual benefit of both the junior researchers and the collections. The objective is to establish a comprehensive and sustainable programme for young researchers which is closely linked to the collections.

## 1 DOCTORAL TRAINING

Starting in 2009, the Herder Institute has restructured the traditional doctoral training programme, which had consisted mainly of PhD student positions. It is now organized in close cooperation with the Justus Liebig University Giessen, which provides the necessary facilities and procedures. The Herder Institute supports students working on their PhD in binational co-operations (cotutelle). Doctoral students are primarily trained through the Leibniz Graduate School (see below) and positions in third-party funded research projects. Candidate selection is based on the principle of equal opportunities.

The Herder Institute provides the required resources: a research library (local and interlibrary loans, reading room, computer with internet access, carrels), scientific collections and the Science Forum. Junior researchers have the opportunity to present their projects at Institute conferences, historians' conventions and other events associated with the Institute's work. Our doctoral students can also apply to participate in exchange programmes.

The aim is to involve junior researchers in professional networks as early as possible, mainly through our own Leibniz Graduate School colloquiums. These are a forum for solving problems in co-operation with mentors and for discussing ongoing projects with the members of the Institute and interested persons from the Universities of Giessen and Marburg.

Each junior researcher also gains valuable additional experience besides simply completing their dissertation. These include the opportunity to publish in our *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* (ZfO, Journal for East Central European Research) and relevant anthologies. Publication, participation in our events and networking with other researchers all add significant value to the Herder Institute programme.

### 1.1 LEIBNIZ GRADUATE SCHOOL (LGSch)

The key element of the Herder Institute's training programme for junior researchers is the Leibniz Graduate School "History, Knowledge, Media" (until 2013: Leibniz Graduate School for Cultures of Knowledge in East Central European Contexts). This is characterized by close cooperation with the

Justus Liebig University Giessen, the Giessen Centre for Eastern European Studies (GiZo) and the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) (for details see LGSch guidelines). These networking and support opportunities support the members' research: members present their results in workshops and conferences, and can take advantage of national and international networks through the Fellowship Programme and Associate Membership.

## 1.2 PhD POSITIONS on third-party funded projects

Junior researchers also take up positions at the Herder Institute on the basis of externally or third-party funded projects and major joint projects. These projects are usually related to current research approaches, trends and issues. Due to its integration into larger networks, a thematic reference to the Institute's holdings is not always possible. These vacancies are advertised thematically. The post holders must carry out the research specified in the approved funding application and are supported by student assistants. Like the members of the LGSch, these researchers also participate in GCSC and GiZo events.

## 2 Special programme for JUNIOR RESEARCHERS

The Institute's conferences and summer schools further support junior researchers. At these events, participants can present and discuss their projects and thus gain initial experience of academic meetings. The participants are usually PhD and postdoc students, but occasionally include master's students whose work is in the final stages. These events are always interdisciplinary, comparative and/or transnational. The main focus is on close thematic links to our junior researchers' projects, but other fields of research, other periods and/or spaces may be included in order to address broad themes and current research trends (in terms of both methods and content).

The group of participants is always international and selected by application following a call for papers (based on the principle of equality of opportunity). Special consideration is given to students employed at the Institute, and additional places are provided for them if necessary.

The general languages of the meetings are German and English. As required, other languages may be used. The best papers may be published in a special or regular issue of the ZfO, or, after very successful events, in an Institute anthology.

### 2.1 Conferences of YOUNG SCHOLARS

Since the early 1950s, the Herder Institute has been holding 2-3 day conferences for young scholars. Since the 1990s these have usually been held at a partner institution in East Central Europe. Up to 15 students (in exceptional cases, graduates) are invited, with one or two keynote speakers giving input on broader research themes. The conferences are organized on an annual exchange basis with the North-east Institute of Lüneburg and the Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, while thematic German-Polish meetings are held in cooperation with a Polish partner institution.

In order to give every young scholar the opportunity to participate in these events and offer a wide variety of topics and methods, the Herder Institute is continually extending the geographical range of these conferences (for example, German-Polish-Czech). Most importantly, the Institute strives to encourage a regular exchange on different historical periods and the methodological questions related to them. Themes are chosen to support the projects of the Institute's own junior researchers first and foremost, alternating between collaborative projects and anticipating further research trends.

### 2.2 SUMMER SCHOOLS

The Herder Institute's summer schools address a specific research topic in even more depth. These have been held annually since 2003, last for one week, and focus on a particular methodology or theme in collaboration with a - usually international - partner. Depending on the number of applicants and the subject, about 15 participants are invited (usually doctoral students, or in exceptional cases, postdocs and postgraduates who have reached the final stage of their master's programme). The programme includes project presentation and discussion, methodological reflection and discussion (coursework), and independent library work to familiarize participants with the Institute's resources. The highlights of this event are 5-6 keynote lectures by well-known researchers. To ensure that all junior researchers on East Central Europe, including its own, have the op-

portunity to participate, the Institute strives to offer a broad range of topics and methods. Therefore themes are selected alternately from the LGSch and collaborative projects. Additional themes are chosen to anticipate emerging research trends and changes in the demarcation of historical periods. If possible, these are related to the Institute's collections, or opportunities to use them are provided.

### 3 Other TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Since October 2013, the Herder Institute has also offered regular in-house training for specialists in media and information services specializing in librarianship (Fachangestellten für Medien- und Informationsdienste/FaMi – Fachrichtung Bibliothek). The Institute has allocated special funding from its budget for this training course and one of its library staff is now qualified as a trainer.

As student assistants or academic assistants, students gain an insight into various fields of research and auxiliary work, to help them determine possible

future career options. These include work on the preliminary stages of research projects, handling small inquiries, database maintenance and copy-editing, as well services related to our library and collection holdings. An thorough induction is always provided. To ease the transition to other appointments after completing their studies, students may continue performing these tasks for up to six months as academic assistants.

The Herder Institute offers interested students the opportunity to complete external projects as required in the course of their studies, according to their area of interest and the period and content required by their programme guidelines. Students work on a small project with the guidance of a responsible staff member. On completion of the project students receive a certificate indicating the nature of the activities and the amount of time spent.

Moreover, the Herder Institute offers traineeships to provide school and university students with vocational skills and experience in specific areas of work.

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