Universität Potsdam

Job Announcement

Young, modern, and research oriented... the University of Potsdam has firmly established itself within the scientific landscape since its founding in 1991. Nationally and internationally renowned scientists teach and perform research here at Brandenburg’s largest university. The University of Potsdam is successful in acquiring third-party funds, delivers outstanding performance in technology and knowledge transfer, and has a very service-oriented administration. With about 21,000 students studying at three campuses – Am Neuen Palais, Griebnitzsee and Golm – the University of Potsdam is a prominent economic factor and engine of development for the region. The University of Potsdam has a total of over 3,000 faculty and staff members and is located in one of Germany’s most scenic areas.

The University of Potsdam, Faculty of Human Sciences, Cognitive Sciences Unit, Department of Psychology, Cognitive Neurosciences Lab (PI Milena Rabovsky) is seeking to fill the following position preferably by October 1, 2019 (but starting date is flexible)

Academic Staff Member
Requisition No.: 273/2019

The salary is determined by the collective bargaining agreement for public employees in Germany (TV-L 13 Ost). The position is for 26 hours per week (65 % of a full-time contract). This is a temporary position limited to a term of 36 months in accordance with Section 2 subsection 1 of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Law (WissZeitVG).

The position is funded by an Emmy Noether grant from the German Research Foundation focused on investigating the processing of language and meaning in the brain using EEG and deep neural network models (see e.g., Rabovsky, Hansen, & McClelland, 2018, Nature Human Behaviour).

The University of Potsdam hosts leading groups in cognitive sciences and linguistics, providing a vibrant interdisciplinary scientific environment (http://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/cognitive-sciences/index.html). The lab will be associated with two Collaborative Research Centers relevant to its research focus, namely SFB 1287 „Limits of variability in language“ (https://www.uni-potsdam.de/sfb1287/index.html) and SFB 1294 „Data assimilation: The seamless integration of models and data“ (https://www.sfb1294.de/).

Potsdam is an attractive historical city and its palaces are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Furthermore, Potsdam is at close commuting distance to Berlin, a culturally vibrant and progressive city. Both cities have a high quality of life at modest living costs.
Project and responsibilities
The goal of this project is to investigate the relation between prediction errors and adaptation/learning during language comprehension, as reflected in event-related brain potentials (ERPs). Specific tasks include designing and programming the experiments, collecting and analyzing the data (behavioral and EEG), interpretation of the results as well as presentation of the results at international conferences and publication of the results in international peer-reviewed journals.

We offer
- an interesting collaborative scientific environment at the University
- international cooperation and travel support
- excellent EEG laboratory facilities and computational resources
- Research support by student assistants
- a friendly and open-minded lab research environment

Requirements
- very good Master in relevant field (e.g., Cognitive Sciences, Cognitive Neurosciences, Psychology, …)
- Experience with and interest in neuroscientific methods (preferably EEG)
- solid statistical skills
- good programming skills (e.g., MATLAB, Python, R,…)
- excellent writing, communication, and presentation skills (in English)
- strong interest in several aspects of the lab’s research focus, i.e., cognitive neurosciences, prediction, adaptation, language, meaning, event-related brain potentials
- high motivation and commitment

In addition, the ideal candidate has
- excellent skills in advanced statistical analyses
- Experience in research on language, prediction and/or implicit memory

Under the laws of the federal state of Brandenburg, employees under this contract are permitted to dedicate at least 33 % of their contract time for their scientific qualification. The University of Potsdam strives to maintain gender balance among its staff. Severely disabled applicants shall receive preference in case of equal qualifications. We expressly invite applications from people with migration backgrounds.

Please send your application (including letter of motivation, CV, at least 1 name of a potential referee, copies of academic certificates) as a single pdf file to Milena Rabovsky at bewerbung@uni-potsdam.de until August 24th for full consideration. Please direct informal inquiries to milena.rabovsky@gmail.com.

Potsdam, 16.07.2019
Young, modern, and research oriented... the University of Potsdam has firmly established itself within the scientific landscape since its founding in 1991. Nationally and internationally renowned scientists teach and perform research here at Brandenburg’s largest university. The University of Potsdam is successful in acquiring third-party funds, delivers outstanding performance in technology and knowledge transfer, and has a very service-oriented administration. With about 21,000 students studying at three campuses – Am Neuen Palais, Griebnitzsee and Golm – the University of Potsdam is a prominent economic factor and engine of development for the region. The University of Potsdam has a total of over 3,000 faculty and staff members and is located in one of Germany’s most scenic areas.

The University of Potsdam, Faculty of Human Sciences, Cognitive Sciences Unit, Department of Psychology, Cognitive Neurosciences Lab (PI Milena Rabovsky) is seeking to fill the following position preferably by October 1, 2019 (but starting date is flexible)

**Academic Staff Member**
(Postdoc position)
Requisition No.: 271/2019

The salary is determined by the collective bargaining agreement for public employees in Germany (TV-L 13 Ost). The position is for 40 hours per week (100% of a full-time contract). This is a temporary position limited to a term of 24 months in accordance with Section 2 subsection 1 of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Law (WissZeitVG).

The position is funded by an Emmy Noether grant from the German Research Foundation focused on investigating the processing of language and meaning in the brain using EEG and deep neural network models (see e.g., Rabovsky, Hansen, & McClelland, 2018, *Nature Human Behaviour*).

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Project and responsibilities
The goal of this project is to train a neural network model of sentence comprehension that has been successfully used to simulate language related brain potentials (Rabovsky, Hansen, & McClelland, 2018, Nature Human Behaviour) on a large-scale semantically labeled training corpus. Prospectively, the trained model will allow for (in collaboration with others in the lab) the simulation of language related brain potentials using stimulus materials from empirical experiments, and the comparison of representations in the model with representations in the brain via representational similarity analysis.

We offer
- an interesting collaborative scientific environment at the University
- international cooperation and travel support
- excellent computational resources and EEG laboratory facilities
- Research support by student assistants
- a friendly and open-minded lab research environment

Requirements
- very good Master and PhD in relevant field (Cognitive Sciences, Computer Science, Computational Linguistics, Machine learning, Data Science, etc.)
- excellent computational skills (e.g., MATLAB, Python,…)
- deep learning/ deep neural network modeling skills
- Capacity to work independently
- excellent writing, communication, and presentation skills (in English)
- strong interest in several aspects of the lab’s research focus, i.e., neural network models, cognitive neurosciences, language, meaning
- high motivation and commitment

In addition, the ideal candidate has
- Experience with deep neural network language models
- excellent track record in a relevant field

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Potsdam, 16.07.2019
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The University of Potsdam, invites applications for the following position subject to funding commitment:

Junior Research Group Leader
“Machine Learning in the Cognitive Sciences”
Requisition No.: 272/2019

The position is starting on 1 January 2020 (or earlier / later). The salary is determined by the collective bargaining agreement for public employees in Germany (TV-L 13 Ost). The position is for 40 hours per week (100 % full-time contract). This is a temporary position limited to a term of 3 years in accordance with Section 2 subsection 1 of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Law (WissZeitVG), with the possibility of a one year extension (subject to the availability of funds).

Responsibilities & Qualifications

The successful candidate will lead a new independent research group on machine learning with an application to the cognitive sciences. We take the cognitive sciences to include, for example, computational linguistics, computer vision, cognitive modeling, human movement sciences, etc. The candidate must have a proven track record of high-quality research and international publications, ideally both in the field of machine learning and in at least one field of the cognitive sciences, and is expected to participate in related interdisciplinary research activities at the University of Potsdam. Some post-doctoral experience is desirable (~ 2 years), but in exceptional cases, we may consider candidates who have just completed their PhDs.

The junior research group is funded by the university’s Research Focus in Cognitive Sciences. The Research Focus in Cognitive Sciences is one of four interdisciplinary focus areas of the University of Potsdam. It brings together researchers from the fields of computational linguistics, computer science, linguistics, mathematics, psychology, and sports...
science who do empirical and theoretical research on the structure, the dynamics, and the development of complex cognitive abilities, such as language, vision, attention, action planning, and motor skills. More details can be found on the website: https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/cognitive-sciences/index.html.

The Research Focus Cognitive Sciences is also tightly integrated into ongoing research activities within the greater Berlin-Potsdam metropolitan region.

The position includes funding for a PhD student that the Junior Research Group Leader will select and supervise, and an annual budget for travel and other expenses. While this is primarily a research position, the group leader is encouraged to contribute to advanced-level teaching activities, e.g. in the English-language MSc programs in Cognitive Systems (computational linguistics, machine learning, knowledge representation and reasoning) and in Cognitive Science (embodied cognition).

Any questions can be directed to Prof. David Schlangen, david.schlangen@uni-potsdam.de.

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Applications should include a CV, a publication list, a brief research statement outlining the candidate's research plans for the next four years, and the names and email addresses of at least three references. Possible points of connection to the existing collaborative research centers in Potsdam (SFB 1287 - “The Limits of Variability in Language”, https://www.uni-potsdam.de/sfb1287/index.html; SFB 1294 - “Data Assimilation”, https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/sfb1294.html) would be appreciated.

Please send your application materials to Ms Ines Mauer (assistant to Prof. Schlangen) to the University of Potsdam, Research Focus Cognitive Sciences, Haus 14 Raum 4.35, Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 24-25, 14476 Potsdam, Germany - preferably electronically as one single PDF file by August, 27 at the latest to mau-er@uni-potsdam.de with the subject line, “Junior Research Group Leader – 272/2019.”

In order to return your application documents, we request that you include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Potsdam, 31.07.2019