

## **Workshop: Intercultural Competence – Taking over responsibility in international work groups or teams**

**Date:** Wed–Thu, 27–28 November 2019

**Time:** 10:00–17:30 h each day

**Place:** Ruhr-Universität Bochum, RUB Research School, room to be announced,  
Universitätsstr. 150, 44801 Bochum

**Target group:** Postdocs of all research fields

**Trainer:** Annette Sickert Karam

**Register by 13 November 2019:** <http://www.research-school.rub.de/index.php?id=3040>

### **Course description**

This workshop is designed for Postdocs who want to advance their intercultural communication skills for taking over responsibility in teams and work groups with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Working together with people from different cultural backgrounds in research has an enormous innovative and creative potential. However, communication behaviour, knowledge concepts, mindsets, time constraints and different working styles can be a source of miscommunication that in the end can be challenging for all actors involved. Team members from different cultures often have a different understanding of work processes, leadership responsibilities and task commitment or personal engagement. To successfully deal with these differences will also avoid misunderstanding or ambiguity that would draw additional energy from all team members.

As Postdocs you might take over responsibility for researchers and students from different cultures: supervising doctoral and master candidates, collaborating with peers, reporting to your boss, and at the same time working on your own project. While communication with researchers from different cultures and countries at conferences and in your peer network is mostly easy communicating with people who are working with you as well as with your boss might look different in case of different cultural backgrounds. Working together in multicultural teams demands intercultural sensitivity, specific intercultural communication skills and the ability to build up relationships and to establishing commitment. The development of adequate intercultural communication skills is crucial for having an impact on establishing a team or working group culture that values all team members.

In this workshop you can learn how intercultural communication competence will support you in taking over responsibility in multi-cultural teams and how to successfully work together with researchers from different cultures. You will acquire strategies that help you to deal with possible challenges that arise when being responsible in international work groups. With reference to practical exercises by sharing personal experiences and looking at case studies you will improve your skills in handling work place situations in a culturally sensitive way. We will use a variety of methods and the workshop setting will follow an interactive approach.

## During the workshop we will find answers to the following questions:

- How does culture influence communication and behaviour in the workplace? What skills do you need to successfully take over first responsibilities in international settings?
- In which way do different cultural values influence the decision making process of you taking over responsibilities for you and others, your work group members and your students?
- What are the dimensions that describe similarities and differences among cultures (e.g. German cultural expectations towards organisational leadership)? How are people motivated across cultures? What drives people to be committed? What is our personal cultural preference defining responsibility in an intercultural perspective?
- How can we assure successful multicultural team work? What can you do to create a positive climate for a multicultural team? What can you do to make international team members feel welcome?
- What are the sources of potential conflicts in multicultural teams? How are conflict styles influenced by culture? What aspects in intercultural conflicts do you have to solve when being responsible? What are the communication strategies that help you to solve conflicts?
- What personal strategies help you to cope with the cultural challenges and uncertainties? How can you apply effective communication strategies and thus build trustworthy relationships with other team members?

## Trainer

Annette Sickert Karam is a trainer and coach for Intercultural Competence and team development. She is an expert in Cultural Awareness Trainings, Multicultural Team Building Workshops and trainings in Intercultural Communication. After she studied in Germany and UK Literature and Languages she holds a Master of Arts in Literature of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brasilia.