



Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
German Academic Exchange Service

Information Centre Hong Kong & Macau ■

How to apply for a PhD in Germany?

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There are two ways of applying :

(A) Independent Research under Supervision or

(B) Structured PhD-Programme

A) Independent Research under Supervision

Germany does not traditionally have a system of Graduate Schools , Graduate Centres or Graduate Colleges that support and guide students to their doctorate in a structured programme; nor is there a binding curriculum that needs to be completed during the doctoral phase. The production of a doctoral thesis or dissertation is the core element of the doctorate. Students agree their topic with a supervising professor and then produce a thesis or dissertation as a piece of independent research work.

See Step-By-Step Guide : Independent Research under Supervision.

Step One: Finding a supervisor

It is important to know that there is no central admissions or selection office for doctoral students. The decision is made solely by the accepting university, with the academic supervisor playing the key role.

- You may already know the professor's name from a publication relevant to your field. You can then look up his/her contact details in an external search engine or on the website of the tertiary education institution in Baden-Württemberg. Go onto the homepage of the relevant institution, look up your field of interest and contact the head of department listed.
- In some cases the Dean's office (Dekanat) can help as can the office of international affairs or even the counselling office.

Step Two: Contact your future supervisor

Contact your future supervisor by E-Mail or formal letter and provide him/her with the following information:

- A brief description of your field and topic of interest;
- A short review of the relevant experience you have in this field;
- Your curriculum vitae (résumé or profile);

- Letters of recommendation better your chances.

Important notes for PhD-candidates

- You can write your thesis **in English** , provided your Supervisor agrees. If you decide to write in German you will need to have passed the DSH (German language test) or [TestDaF](#) (German language test; in Hong Kong TestDaF is offered 4 times a year at HK Baptist University).
- Your university degree has to be recognised as being equivalent to a German degree. You can do this by simply sending a copy of your degree certificate to the dean of the relevant faculty. He/she will then send you a written assessment of its equivalent in Germany.
- Before admittance you will be asked to prepare a piece of scientific research which could vary between 20 – 50 pages (depending on the subject),as sometimes you may also be required to take a written or oral test.
- You will need a student visa (not a tourist visa)

At present, practically all doctoral programmes in Germany are tuition-free.

B) Structured PhD Programmes

Structured PhD-programmes are a fairly recent development in German higher education. In total, Germany 's universities currently offer around 600 programmes, half of them with an international focus. For more information about structured PhD programmes please go to:

[Structured PhD Programmes](#)

How to write a Research Proposal?

When applying for a PhD position or a research grant in Germany you will usually be asked to submit a research proposal, at least in part, since individually led research is still the norm in most subject areas. Even if you are applying to an established research project, you will probably be expected, as a part of the university application procedure, to explain how your particular research would develop the basic propositions of the overall project.

Our DAAD colleague from DAAD IC Kuala Lumpur compiled the following outline for research proposals.

[Click here](#)

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PhD and Research Scholarships

If you are looking for DAAD PhD and research grants, our DAAD website will give you an useful overview:

[DAAD Scholarships Hong Kong](#)

Please note that **application deadline** for DAAD PhD and longterm research scholarships are mostly by **mid october**. For more detailed information please contact us.

For Programms offered by other funding organisations please go to:

[EURACESS Germany](#), the Researchers Mobility Portal Germany.

If you have any questions on DAAD funded programms or general questions on PhD in Germany please contact us at our Hong Kong office.

If you have any special questions on **non** DAAD funded programms, please directly contact the person/contact given in the programme description.

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