

GRADE

GOETHE RESEARCH ACADEMY  
FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

# Financing your doctorate



Information brochure for prospective and current  
doctoral candidates of the Goethe University Frankfurt

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# Introduction

Before you decide to pursue a doctorate, you have to find answers to a number of questions. These concern personal aptitude, the specific requirements of the respective subject area, but above all the funding of your long-term research project. As in many European countries, there are two options available to you in Germany: an academic position (research or teaching assistantship), or a scholarship that provides doctoral candidates with a means to earn a living during their doctoral project.

Before you begin your dissertation, you will already have to overcome the difficult task of financial planning. The existing range of options for funding a doctorate is neither straightforward nor easy to understand.

For the first option alone - a position in research - you have the choice between a variety of different jobs, sponsors and employment conditions. Whether you approach your dissertation as a research assistant in your supervisor's faculty, as an assistant at a non-academic research institute or on the basis of employment in research management, for example, can make a substantial difference to the individual progress of your doctorate. Your decision for a certain type of employment can have a considerable impact on the duration and quality of your doctorate, but especially on your positioning as a postdoctoral researcher.

Applying for scholarships is even more complicated. Here, too, you will face a rather complex situation. In Germany, many public and private foundations, as well as business-related donors, are prepared to support young researchers. However, the requirements vary considerably from case to case. Not only the formal and content-related requirements vary, but also the models of funding in terms of their duration, amount and objectives.

In addition to choosing the right source of doctoral funding via employment or a scholarship, another question has become increasingly important in recent years: do you want to write your dissertation in the classical way by pursuing an individual doctorate at a chair or faculty, or in one of the structured doctoral programs, the number of which has recently been steadily increasing? In order to make a sustainable decision for you personally, you need not only a clear understanding of your own project and your personal requirements, but also a lot of perseverance and, in particular, a solid source of information.

With this brochure, we, the Goethe Research Academy for Early Career Researchers (GRADE), as the central training, service and advisory institution for doctoral candidates and postdocs at Goethe University, would like to ensure that you are informed as thoroughly as possible about the various possibilities of doctoral funding in order to come up with your own sound answers to questions related to funding.

In the following sections, you will therefore find an overview of the most important funding options for pursuing a doctorate. In particular, the respective advantages and disadvantages, as well as special conditions or technical prerequisites, are addressed. In the second and third parts of the brochure, you will find the most relevant points of contact for scholarships or financial support. The last chapter contains basic information on how to apply for scholarships, relevant internet links and legal aspects regarding insurance, all of which are important for pursuing a doctorate.

The following selection of funding opportunities does not claim to entail all available funding opportunities. Many scholarships are advertised on a one-off or irregular basis, and the large number of partial scholarships or grants, some of which are aimed at very specific target groups, cannot be fully specified in this context. In addition to our own research, we recommend that you take a look at current calls for proposals on the GRADE homepage and on our Facebook page.

We hope that this brochure will provide you with a meaningful and structured insight into how you can establish a financial foundation for your research project and wish you an informative read!



## Funding for a doctorate at a glance

When funding a doctoral project in Germany, you can basically choose between two different models:

1. [employment at a university](#) or [research institute](#), which is subject to social security contributions, or
2. [financial support through a scholarship](#).

The following sections deal with the respective framework conditions and the advantages and disadvantages of each of the two funding options. A case study will then illustrate that a doctorate is by no means limited to a single model of funding. Instead, mixed funding often emerges from which the financial resources for the dissertation are obtained from various sources, depending on which doctoral phase the project is in.

## 1. Funding option 1: employment

A common model of doctoral funding is employment in an academic doctoral position. This generally involves employment as a research assistant, usually part-time at a chair, an institute, or as part of a research project. Other doctoral candidates are employed by a company either because the company is interested in their research project or because they simply need to earn a living.

Each variant of an employment relationship accompanying the doctorate entails special framework conditions and has its own specific advantages and disadvantages. General recommendations are therefore hard to make. Whether or not a certain funding option is suitable for you depends on your personal career goals, as well as on the structure and content of the employment positions available to you.

### Employment positions for doctoral candidates: types and general conditions

The majority of doctoral researchers in Germany finance their doctorate through an employment in the scientific sector. Thus, in spring 2019, well over two-thirds of all doctoral candidates were employed.\* 80% of those surveyed were employed at the university of their doctorate. If you are looking to fill an academic staff position, you should be aware that the contract period may fall short of your individual doctoral duration. However, positions that can be extended to up to six years offer a relatively high degree of planning security for the doctoral phase.

The majority of these positions are advertised as part-time positions. In the winter semester 2014/2015, about one third of the academic employees worked full-time, while the majority were employed part-time. In the case of employment relationships beyond the university, half of the respondents worked full time and half part time.

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\* These and the following figures are taken from the [NACAPS study](#) by the German Center for Higher Education and Science Research (DZHW). The data basis is formed by the responses of more than 20,000 doctoral candidates at 53 German universities, who participated in the panel study in spring 2019.

The ratio of the contractually fixed number of hours to the actual working time varies from subject to subject. In the social sciences and the humanities, for example, job holders are often expected to pursue their doctoral research projects on the side, i.e. in their free time. In their everyday professional life, however, activities in research and teaching, as well as organizational and administrative tasks, have to be taken over.

In natural and life sciences, on the other hand, the distinction between work tasks and doctoral research is often less obvious, since doctoral candidates are explicitly employed for their research work at an institute or as associates at a graduate school. In this context, the time they are expected to spend in the laboratory might seem more significant. In both cases, as an applicant, you should inform yourself in advance about the anticipated field of work and the time requirements.

Contrary to popular belief, an academic position is by no means a guarantee for a direct career path to a professorship. According to a calculation by the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat), only one unlimited contract for a professorship or staff position corresponded to one of the annual doctoral graduates in 2012. Taking into account the average 25-year period of service, this means that the chance for doctoral graduates to take up a permanent full-time academic position is just 4%.<sup>\*</sup> The federal government's tenure-track program, launched in 2016, is intended to give more postdocs the chance to become tenured professors. For most doctoral researchers, however, career planning elsewhere remains the more realistic path.

An overlapping of the doctoral topic and the content of the position is generally welcome, but by no means obligatory. However, there are quite a number of **doctoral positions in research projects** in which the content of doctoral studies and everyday professional life are closely intertwined in both theory and practice. These positions can be located in interdisciplinary research groups at a university, as well as at non-academic research institutions. These are often externally funded positions (Drittmittelstellen), and their number has grown steadily since the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>\*\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> Wissenschaftsrat, Empfehlungen zu Karrierezielen und –wegen an Universitäten, Dresden: 2014, p. 25; [online] <https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/4009-14.pdf>. [in German]

<sup>\*\*</sup> Würmann, C., Finanzierung der Promotion, in: Koepernick, C.; Moes, J.; Tiefel, S. (Hrsg.), GEW-Handbuch Promovieren mit Perspektive, Bielefeld 2012 [in German]



In the 2014/15 winter semester, just over half of all doctoral positions were financed by external funding. In contrast, 47% of the positions were funded by basic budgetary resources of the respective universities. Most of the external funding was provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the federal government. Around 10% of the external funded jobs relied on federal state funding.\*

**University and scientific management positions** are also often financed by external funding. While jobs in research projects or staff positions in a faculty have an overlap with the doctoral research project, academic management positions require that research on a dissertation is done beside the job. These positions are typically responsible for organizing events and conferences as well as for editorial or administrative tasks. Just as other academic jobs, they are rarely advertised on a permanent, full-time basis. For some years now, there is an interest in filling these positions with graduates who are interested in pursuing a doctorate.

Academic research is not only carried out at universities and public research institutes, but also in privately run companies. And, similar to universities, those companies also offer doctoral positions. Such **positions in the business world** offer you the opportunity to finance your own doctoral research at the beginning of your career and at the same time benefiting from the research infrastructure of a company. This concerns above all the so-called applied research fields in the natural sciences. But humanities research on corporate history or social science studies can also be relevant for companies in the business and service sectors. Vacancies in these fields can usually be found on the websites of large corporations and in the job section of the weekly newspaper Die Zeit.

But even at career fairs and recruiting events, HR departments look specifically for interested doctoral candidates whose academic background and personal profile match the research needs of their company. In addition to their integration into business-related research practice, it is an advantage of these positions that they are more likely to be permanent or at least of longer duration than research positions at the university.

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\* Figures taken from the report "[Promovierende in Deutschland](#)" by the Federal Department of Statistics in Germany, Wiesbaden 2017 [in German]

## Employment options at a glance

The following overview of the tasks and the advantages and disadvantages of the above-mentioned job models is intended only to provide you with a preliminary guideline. The profiles of the positions overlap in many areas. Only the job advertisement and the employment contract can provide precise information about the type of employment you're looking at as a doctoral candidate. With regard to your own academic background, it is important to keep in mind that positions in scientific management are more frequently advertised for social scientists and humanities scholars, whereas companies are often looking for natural and life scientists to fill doctoral positions.

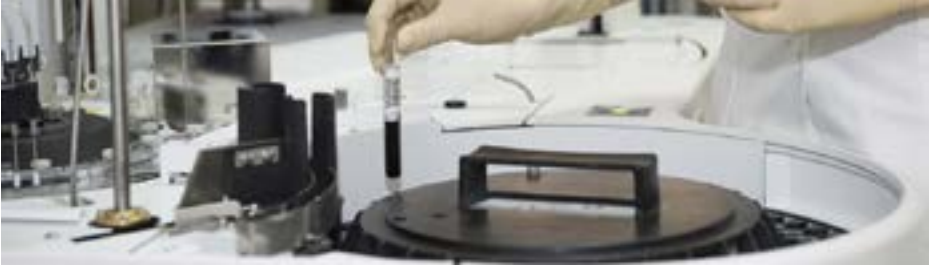
<b>Research assistance</b>	<b>Position at a chair or institute</b>
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research activities</li> <li>● Teaching</li> <li>● Conferences</li> <li>● Research and external funding proposals</li> <li>● Publications</li> <li>● Student mentoring</li> <li>● Committee work as part of the non-professorial faculty</li> </ul>
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Close ties to joint research projects</li> <li>● Teaching experience</li> <li>● Close contact to the supervisor</li> <li>● Establishment of an academic network</li> <li>● Payment according to the tariff system (for employment at the federal or state levels)</li> <li>● Employment subject to social security contributions</li> <li>● Relatively high planning security due to longer contract term</li> </ul>
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Depending on position and academic discipline, there may not be much time to work on your own doctorate</li> <li>● No structured qualification, but rather “learning by doing“</li> </ul>



<b>Research assistance</b>	<b>Project or external funded position</b>
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive research</li> <li>• Presentation of research results</li> <li>• Research and external funding proposals</li> <li>• Supervision of exams</li> <li>• Committee work as part of the non-professional faculty (less intensive than for chair positions)</li> <li>• Publications</li> </ul>
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close ties to joint research projects</li> <li>• Establishment of an academic network and your own research connections</li> <li>• Potential overlap and synergies between dissertation and employment between doctoral projects and projects funded by third parties</li> <li>• Employment subject to social security contributions</li> <li>• Payment according to the tariff system (for employment at the federal or state levels)</li> </ul>
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively short term</li> <li>• Often no extension of employment after completion of the project</li> <li>• Potential conflicts between own research work and the client's expectations</li> </ul>



<b>Management</b>	<b>University or research management position</b>
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project management</li> <li>● Administration</li> <li>● Conceptual work</li> <li>● Event management</li> <li>● Press and Public Relations</li> <li>● Editing (print and online)</li> <li>● Social Media</li> </ul>
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clear distinction between research and funding</li> <li>● Employment subject to social security contributions</li> <li>● Payment according to the tariff system (for employment at the federal or state levels)</li> </ul>
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mostly limited contracts</li> <li>● Not a position for scientific career development</li> <li>● Depending on the type of position, little time for your own research work</li> </ul>



Research	Positions in the business world
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research</li> <li>● Project management</li> <li>● Administration</li> <li>● Press and Public Relations</li> <li>● Operational tasks</li> <li>● Preparation of a commissioned doctorate</li> </ul>
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Depending on industry: high starting salary</li> <li>● Networking in the industry</li> <li>● Often unlimited or long-term contracts</li> <li>● Client contacts</li> <li>● Practical application of research content</li> </ul>
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Very high workload depending on the industry</li> <li>● Potential conflicts between client and own research interests</li> <li>● High dependence on employer (usually no continuation of the doctoral project possible in the event of a career change)</li> <li>● Potential conflicts between universities and companies regarding patents and confidentiality clause</li> </ul>



## 2. Funding option 2: scholarships

Another important funding opportunity for your doctorate is a scholarship. This financial support is not subject to any directives and is tax-free. It is paid out regularly over a pre-defined period of time to cover the scholarship holders' living expenses (accommodation, living expenses, social security and health insurance). In addition, many scholarship providers provide grants for stays abroad, publications as well as for laboratory, research or printing costs. In most cases, a child and family allowance can also be granted upon request. Since some scholarships only cover short periods or one-off grants, a fundamental distinction must be made between full and partial funding.

While the BMBF-funded (Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research) [Foundations for the support of gifted students \("Begabtenförderwerke"\)](#) provide full scholarships on which the scholarship recipients can live, there are also a large number of private and company-related foundations that often only offer smaller grants in the form of research awards or offer to cover material, laboratory or printing costs upon request. An overview of the most important foundations and the conditions to be fulfilled before applying can be found in the next section. We start by explaining the factors you should consider when deciding whether or not to apply for a scholarship.

## Scholarships: types and general conditions

The greatest advantage of a scholarship is undoubtedly that it allows you to fully concentrate on your doctoral project. Since applicants for a scholarship have to go through an extensive selection process, the granting of a scholarship is also considered a kind of distinction. To apply, you will generally need an exposé, a time schedule and work plan, several references, a CV, copies of certificates as well as proof of acceptance as a doctoral candidate at a university. Depending on the funding institution, in addition to financial support, non-material support is also offered, e.g. through training programs or conferences. In this way, scholarship recipients can advance their doctoral projects through appropriate training and professional exchanges.

A notable disadvantage of doctoral scholarships is that they do not count as employment; statutory contributions, e.g. to health insurance companies, must be covered by the scholarship recipient. Scholarship recipients also do not pay into unemployment and retirement funds, which means that they are not entitled to unemployment benefits once the scholarship expires. Detailed information on this topic can be found in the last part of this brochure. Scholarships normally allow you to earn up to a certain amount of additional income. However, if the specified additional income limit is exceeded, the scholarship rate will be reduced accordingly or must be taxed. Several scholarship recipients work as research assistants on an hourly basis. This means that they are more closely linked to the university and have social insurance via their occupational group status.

Firstly, there are scholarships that are thematically linked to specific subject areas or focal points; secondly, there are scholarships that are awarded within the framework of a structured program (e.g. Research Training Group, graduate school, research school); and thirdly, there are scholarships for which doctoral students from all fields can apply.

Most federal states maintain scholarship programs and allocate a certain number of doctoral scholarships to universities, which they then advertise themselves. This is currently not the case in Hesse. Furthermore, universities also offer their own funding programs for doctoral candidates. However, these usually provide funding for specific phases of the doctorate, such as completion or start-up scholarships.

As a rule, if you are doing your doctorate with the help of a grant, you should make every effort to plan your dissertation project well and complete it in a timely manner. This is because most funding opportunities only cover a period that is limited to a maximum of three years. You must be prepared to start the usually lengthy compilation of the necessary application documents at an early stage of the application process so that you can meet all formal requirements. For more on this topic, see [the last part of this brochure](#).

### Case study: mixed funding with a scholarship

If you would like to pursue your doctorate with a scholarship, you should also have a certain degree of flexibility. Although many foundations promise to extend the funding period to cover certain life circumstances - such as pregnancy - it is not uncommon that doctoral candidates have to finance their projects on a mixed-term basis. This also includes the times that do not yield a fixed financial income. Also, many people overlook the fact that the process of applying for scholarships during or after their studies must be financed in some way.

An example from the humanities is intended to illustrate what such mixed funding can look like: Employment as a research assistant can help you through the scholarship application process. The ensuing scholarship from a foundation for the support of gifted students will certainly cover the following two years. However, on the grounds of insufficient proof of work progress, the funding institution might not grant an extension of the funding period. For this reason, a completion scholarship might be obtained at a university for the third year before a printing allowance from a private foundation makes it possible to publish the dissertation.





## Funding in Germany

In this part of the information brochure, we present individual scholarship providers in more detail. These include foundations for the support of gifted students, as well as smaller, private and public foundations for specific target groups or special disciplines. However, more detailed research into your own eligibility and the specific application requirements of each foundation will always be necessary for a successful application.

As there are many foundations that are aimed at very specific target groups and that only offer grants or scholarships on an irregular basis, we strongly recommend that you also find out more about them online on your own. The [database of the Deutscher Stifterverband](#), for example, offers an extensive survey of private foundations. The most important thing is to consider which funding institution would best suit you in professional, personal, and possibly also in political and/or religious terms.

# 1. Individual funding through scholarships

## Foundations for the support of gifted students

The thirteen foundations for the support of gifted students in Germany support doctoral candidates with full scholarships that offer both material and non-material support. The scholarship foundations under the umbrella of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF) award most of the scholarships in Germany. In recent years, approximately 4,000 doctoral candidates have benefited from this funding each year.

Each of the funding institutions, usually established as foundations, follows a specific political, religious, economic or social orientation that is intended to reflect the social diversity of the Federal Republic. Many foundations also have offices abroad for the purpose of international cooperation and organize regular academic conferences. The foundations are formally independent, but are usually affiliated to a political party, a religious denomination or workers' / employers' associations.

If talent is mentioned in this context, then this does not only refer to good academic achievements as a criterion for eligibility. Foundations also attach great importance to civil society, charitable, trade union or political engagement on the part of applicants. Often, people who have already received a scholarship for their studies will also receive further support. However, this is not a sufficient prerequisite for an application.

Applications can be submitted to several foundations at the same time. However, simultaneous funding by a scholarship foundation for the support of gifted students and another funding institution is not permitted and will be deducted from the funding period accordingly. The support offered by the 13 foundations for the support of gifted talented students comprises non-material and material financial assistance measures:



### **Elements of non-material support:**

- Subject-related seminars lasting several days
- Conferences, academies, summer schools
- Language courses
- Advisory services
- Coaching and mentoring
- Support for research stays abroad
- Networking opportunities (local and regional groups)
- Organization of own events and working groups

### **Elements of material support:**

- Monthly grant: approx. €1,350
- Monthly flat-rate research allowance: approx. €100
- Monthly family allowance of €155 for the first child and €50 for each additional child
- Monthly allowance for health insurance of up to €100
- Depending on the foundation: grants for research stays, conference visits, printing or book costs, work meetings or conferences, other travel expenses within the scope of the doctoral work (application required)

## Avicenna Studienwerk e.V.

The Avicenna-Studienwerk is the youngest of the foundations for the support of gifted students and awards scholarships to Muslim doctoral candidates. The prerequisites include outstanding academic achievement, social commitment and a compelling rationale for the research project. In addition to the monthly grant, support is provided for study and research stays, internships and language courses abroad. The non-material support for the regional groups includes seminars on religious topics, summer schools and language courses.

<b>Target group:</b>	Muslim doctoral candidates in the initial phase of doctoral studies
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend max. 4 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, 155€ allowance for childcare costs and up to 84 € for health insurance
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Those adhering to the Islamic faith; in justified exceptional cases, also those with other religious beliefs
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in April and October

### Contact details and further information:

Avicenna-Studienwerk e.V.

Große Hamkenstraße 19

49074 Osnabrück

Tel: 0541 - 50699 - 1414

E-Mail: [info@avicenna-studienwerk.de](mailto:info@avicenna-studienwerk.de)

Homepage: <http://www.avicenna-studienwerk.de/?lang=en>

## Cusanuswerk e.V.

The Cusanuswerk belongs to the Catholic Church in Germany and generally supports doctoral candidates of the Catholic faith who have completed their studies quickly and are actively engaged in community outreach work. Applications are submitted in a multi-stage selection process. Catholic doctoral candidates from abroad must first contact the [Catholic Academic Exchange Service \(KAAD\)](#). Scholarship recipients can take advantage of the educational program and numerous religious activities offered by the foundation.

<b>Target group:</b>	Catholic doctoral candidates in the initial phase who are actively engaged in volunteer work
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, allowance for childcare costs and up to €100 for health insurance
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Those adhering to the Catholic faith, no doctorates in medicine or dentistry, applicants under 32 years age will be given priority for funding
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in May and November

### Contact details and further information:

Cusanuswerk e.V.

Baumschulallee 5

53115 Bonn

Tel: 0228 - 98384 - 22

E-Mail: [info@cusanuswerk.de](mailto:info@cusanuswerk.de)

Homepage: [www.cusanuswerk.de](http://www.cusanuswerk.de)

## Ernst-Ludwig-Ehrlich-Studienwerk e.V.

The ELES-Studienwerk supports German doctoral candidates of the Jewish faith. Non-material support includes supervision by doctoral advisors, expert discussions at doctoral forums, seminars on the religious practice and theory of Judaism and financial and organizational support for the scholarship recipients' publications and public lectures.

<b>Zielgruppe:</b>	Jewish doctoral candidates in the initial phase who can demonstrate social commitment or involvement in university politics; non-Jewish doctoral candidates working on Jewish-related topics
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, allowance for childcare costs, allowance for health insurance under specific conditions
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Those adhering to the Jewish faith; those of other religious faiths depending on the topic of the doctorate; no doctorates in medicine or dentistry
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in April and October

### Contact details and further information:

Ernst-Ludwig-Ehrlich-Studienwerk e.V.

Postfach 210320

10503 Berlin

Tel: 030 - 3199 - 8170 - 0

E-Mail: [info@no-spam.eles-studienwerk.de](mailto:info@no-spam.eles-studienwerk.de)

Homepage: [www.eles-studienwerk.de](http://www.eles-studienwerk.de)

## Evangelisches Studienwerk Villigst e.V.

The Studienwerk Villigst supports Protestant doctoral candidates who have completed their studies quickly and are actively engaged in community outreach work. The application process is divided into two stages. Scholarship recipients are required to attend postgraduate meetings and regularly submit interim reports.

<b>Target group:</b>	Protestant doctoral candidates in the initial phase who can demonstrate a strong commitment to social affairs, the church or politics
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance and allowance for childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Protestant faith (in exceptional cases also other religious beliefs); special conditions for medical disciplines; processing fee; particular rationale if applicants are older than 35 years
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in June and December

### Contact details and further information:

Evangelisches Studienwerk e.V.

Iserlohner Straße 25

58239 Schwerte

Tel: 02304 - 755 - 196

E-Mail: [info@evstudienwerk.de](mailto:info@evstudienwerk.de)

Homepage: <https://www.evstudienwerk.de/english/doctoral.html>

## Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation is one of the oldest political foundations and adheres to a social democratic agenda. As a foundation close to the SPD, it particularly supports graduates from low-income families or with a migration background. The scholarship recipients take part in regular and mostly interdisciplinary colloquia to exchange ideas about their research. Commitment is expected at the university, in NGOs or in other associations.

<b>Target group:</b>	Graduates who make a relevant research contribution and are politically committed to the Foundation's cause
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, €1,200 for international doctoral candidates, and allowance for childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Language certificate (C1) for international doctoral candidates
<b>When to apply:</b>	Possible at any time

### Contact details and further information:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung  
 Godesberger Allee 149  
 53175 Bonn  
 Tel: 0228 - 883 - 0  
 E-Mail: [stipendien@fes.de](mailto:stipendien@fes.de)  
 Homepage: <https://www.fes.de/>



## Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom is affiliated to the FDP party and represents a liberal political orientation. Support is provided to successful university graduates from both Germany and abroad. The scholarship recipients have the opportunity to present their research results at interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary conferences and can participate in seminars and workshops on academic research.

<b>Target group:</b>	Doctoral candidates in the initial phase who have an overall university grade of 1.5 or better
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance and allowance for childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	No funding in human and dental medicine; special conditions for law; no grants for printing or travel expenses; no funding for postgraduate courses
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in April and October

### Contact details and further information:

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit

Karl-Marx-Straße 2

14482 Potsdam

Tel: 030 - 22012634

E-Mail: [service@freiheit.org](mailto:service@freiheit.org)

Homepage: <https://fnst.org/>

## Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung

The Hanns Seidel Foundation is close to the CSU party and supports successful graduates who can demonstrate their commitment to politics, the church or society. Applicants are invited to a selection meeting, which includes a one-hour examination interview. Scholarship recipients must attend a doctoral symposium. In the course of the funding period, at least two events of the respective university groups lasting several days are to be attended each year.

<b>Target group:</b>	Above-average doctoral candidates who can demonstrate political and social commitment or who are actively involved in the church
<b>Funding period:</b>	1 year + opportunity to extend, max. 2,5 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance and allowance for family expenses and childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	German citizenship max. age = 32 years old
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in January and July

### Contact details and further information:

Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung e.V.

Lazarettstraße 33

80636 München

Tel. 089 - 1258 - 0

E-Mail: [info@hss.de](mailto:info@hss.de)

Homepage: <https://www.hss.de/en/>

## Hans-Böckler-Stiftung

The Hans Böckler Foundation is affiliated with trade unions and awards scholarships to prospective doctoral candidates who are pursuing their doctorate at a German university. In addition to career preparation workshops, conferences and academic seminars, non-material support also includes language courses abroad. Membership in a trade union is welcome, but not a prerequisite. In addition to academic expertise, it is primarily social and political commitment that counts. The foundation organizes its own doctoral and graduate schools.

<b>Target group:</b>	Doctoral candidates in the initial phase who can demonstrate a high degree of social commitment
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, allowance for childcare costs and up to €100 for health insurance
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	max. age = 40 years old, no repeat application
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in May and November

### Contact details and further information:

Hans-Böckler-Stiftung  
Hans-Böckler-Straße 39  
40476 Düsseldorf

Tel: 0211 - 7778 - 0

E-Mail: [zentrale@boeckler.de](mailto:zentrale@boeckler.de)

Homepage: <https://www.boeckler.de/36912.htm>

## Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

The Heinrich Böll Foundation is affiliated with the Bündnis 90/DieGrünen party and supports around 180 doctoral candidates each year. Funding is provided for individual doctorates as well as for doctorates within the doctoral programmes established by the foundation at cooperating universities. In addition to offering professional training for academic practice, the scholarship recipients are encouraged to present their results at a forum for doctoral students.

<b>Target group:</b>	University graduates who can demonstrate a high degree of social and political commitment
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, allowance for childcare costs and family expenses is possible
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Not specified
<b>When to apply:</b>	As of 1st March each year

### Contact details and further information:

Studienwerk der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Schumannstr. 8

10117 Berlin

Tel: 030 - 28 534 - 400

E-Mail: [studienwerk@boell.de](mailto:studienwerk@boell.de)

Homepage: <https://www.boell.de/en/foundation/doctorate-stipends>

## Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to promoting Christian social values and is affiliated with the CDU party. Funding is available to doctoral candidates who can demonstrate their social commitment to the purposes of the foundation and have above-average academic achievements. It is also expected that they actively participate in the programs of non-material support, which include seminars and work in university groups.

<b>Target group:</b>	University graduates with above-average academic performance, who demonstrate a high degree of social and political commitment
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, reimbursement for childcare costs / family allowance
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Graduation may be max. 5 years ago, no doctorates in medicine or dentistry
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in January and July

### Contact details and further information:

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

Rathausallee 12

53757 Sankt Augustin

Tel: 02241 - 246 - 0

E-Mail: [zentrale@kas.de](mailto:zentrale@kas.de)

Homepage: <http://www.kas.de/wf/en/>

## Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation is affiliated with the party DIE LINKE and aims to promote social justice. Its focus is on political education at home and abroad. International graduates are also eligible for funding. Scholarship recipients are expected to participate in the non-material support programs (conferences, workshops, colloquia). The Foundation also organizes its own Graduate Training Groups in cooperation with universities.

<b>Target group:</b>	Graduates with outstanding academic achievement who demonstrate social or political commitment towards achieving the Foundation's goals
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance and allowance for childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Special conditions for medical disciplines apply
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in April and October

### Contact details and further information:

Studienwerk der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

Franz-Mehring-Platz 1

10243 Berlin

Tel: 030 - 44310 - 223

E-Mail: [info@rosalux.org](mailto:info@rosalux.org)

Homepage: <https://www.rosalux.de/en/>

## Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft (SDW)

The SDW's Klaus Murmann scholarship foundation provides non-material and material support to prospective doctoral candidates. Applications are open to successful graduates who have completed their studies quickly, who actively volunteer and have the ability to think in an analytical and holistic manner and who can communicate effectively. Non-material support includes additional programs such as doctoral forums, writing weeks, seminars at the Institute for Social and Economic Policy Education (ISWA), and participation in local chapter seminars and academies.

<b>Target group:</b>	High-performance graduates with business-related research projects
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance and allowance for childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (other positions) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Graduation may be max. 5 years ago;
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in February and August

### Contact details and further information:

Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft (sdw) gGmbH im Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft

Breite Straße 29

10178 Berlin

Tel.: 030 - 278906 - 1540

E-Mail: [studienfoerderwerk@sdw.org](mailto:studienfoerderwerk@sdw.org)

Homepage: <https://www.sdw.org/home>

## Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes

The Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes is politically, religiously and ideologically unaffiliated and provides scholarships to support German and international doctoral candidates. Non-material support consists of discussions at doctoral forums, advisory services, workshops and seminars on academic research and professional development. Since 2014, the foundation has also been awarding doctoral grants worth €5,000 for outstanding dissertations. Applications must be submitted in cooperation with the supervisor.

<b>Target group:</b>	High-performance doctoral candidates in the initial phase who demonstrate a high degree of social commitment
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years + opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,350 + €100 flat-rate research allowance and allowance for childcare costs
<b>Additional income:</b>	< 10 h per week (research position) < 5 h per week (position) Income over €3,070 per year will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Graduation may be max. 4 years ago; no part-time doctorate
<b>When to apply:</b>	Possible at any time

### Contact details and further information:

Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes  
 Ahrstraße 41  
 53175 Bonn  
 Tel: 0228 - 82096 - 0  
 E-Mail: [info@studienstiftung.de](mailto:info@studienstiftung.de)  
 Homepage: <https://www.studienstiftung.de/en/>



## Independent foundations

### Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt

Since 1990, the DBU has supported projects that deal with the topic of environmental protection with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises and technical innovation. Every year, up to 60 doctoral candidates are awarded funding to conduct research on sustainability, environmental conservation and green technology. The non-material support program includes individual support from DBU lecturers, the organisation of your own conferences, excursions and the DBU Summer Academy. All up-to-date information is published on their website. This website can also be used to apply for a scholarship.

<b>Target group:</b>	University graduates who develop scientific solutions to national and international environmental problems
<b>Funding period:</b>	max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,500 + €210 allowance for materials, childcare costs and family expenses
<b>Additional income:</b>	Income above the annual basic tax-free allowance (€8,820 for single persons) will be deducted from scholarship
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Compelling curriculum vitae required; above-average exam results
<b>When to apply:</b>	2 times a year in January and June

#### Contact details and further information:

Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt | Stipendienprogramm

Postfach 17 05

49007 Osnabrück

Tel: 0541 - 9633 - 353

E-Mail: [stipendienprogramme@dbu.de](mailto:stipendienprogramme@dbu.de)

Homepage: <https://www.dbu.de/2821.html>

## Gerda-Henkel-Stiftung

Funding is available for doctorates in the field of the Historical Humanities. Applicants from other fields can apply at any time if their project is part of one of the three Collaborative Research Programs of the Foundation. The processing period can last up to six months. A decision on approval is made four times a year. You can find detailed information about the application and selection processes on the foundation's website.

<b>Target group:</b>	Doctoral candidates in the historical humanities
<b>Funding period:</b>	2 years with opportunity to extend
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,600 per month; allowance possible for travel expenses, materials, and stays abroad, allowance for family expenses from €400 (1st child).
<b>Additional income:</b>	The possibility of receiving a salary and funding at the same time is excluded
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Graduation before age of 28; academic expertise; no completion scholarships, overall graduation degree 1,5
<b>When to apply:</b>	Possible at any time; successful applicants will be chosen on four dates during the year

### Contact details and further information:

Gerda-Henkel-Stiftung

Malkastenstraße 15

40211 Düsseldorf

Tel: 0211 - 936524 - 0

E-Mail: [info@gerda-henkel-stiftung.de](mailto:info@gerda-henkel-stiftung.de)

Homepage: <https://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/english>

## Stiftung Bildung und Wissenschaft

The purpose of the foundation is to support young self-employed professionals. Doctorates are funded for applicants who have studied literature. Completion scholarships will also be offered for doctoral students in literature and history. Support is given regardless of national, ideological or religious ties, but will only be granted if no other forms of public or private financial aid are available. Scholarships are advertised on the [foundation's website](#) (in German).

<b>Target group:</b>	Graduates who studied literature who have financed their studies either through BaFöG or on their own
<b>Funding period:</b>	1 year with opportunity to extend
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,200 per month (no additional allowances for travel expenses, material costs, etc.)
<b>Additional income:</b>	Not specified
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Applicants should not be over 30 years of age
<b>When to apply:</b>	Once per year in January

### Contact details and further information:

Stiftung Bildung und Wissenschaft im Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft  
Barkhovenallee 1

45239 Essen

Tel: 0201 - 8401 - 151

E-Mail: [ulrike.johanning@stifterverband.de](mailto:ulrike.johanning@stifterverband.de)

Homepage: <http://www.stiftung-bildung-und-wissenschaft.de/foerdermassnahmen/index.html>

## Stiftung der Polytechnischen Gesellschaft

The Polytechnische Gesellschaft Frankfurt am Main will dedicated to the advancement of interdisciplinary education and research, which fosters social responsibility in the sense of civic engagement. With its program MainCampus.doctus, the MainCampus Scholarship Fund supports outstanding junior scholars from Goethe University and the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst. Potential applicants are proposed by the faculties of the universities. Unsolicited applications are not possible. Further information can be found on the [MainCampus website](#) (in German).

<b>Target group:</b>	Frankfurt doctoral students in the natural sciences, life sciences, the humanities, as well as music education and musicology
<b>Funding period:</b>	1 year with opportunity to extend, max. 3 years
<b>Amount:</b>	€1,300 + €100 flat-rate research allowance, grants for career development purposes
<b>Additional income:</b>	Not specified
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Outstanding academic achievement; doctorate pursued at Goethe University or the HfMDK; doctorate in Natural Sciences, Educational Sciences, Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, Psychology, Music education and Musicology
<b>When to apply:</b>	Deadlines will be announced online in advance

### Contact details and further information:

Stiftung Polytechnische Gesellschaft Frankfurt am Main  
 Untermainanlage 5  
 60329 Frankfurt  
 Tel: 069 - 789 889 - 0  
 E-Mail: [info@sptg.de](mailto:info@sptg.de)  
 Homepage: <http://www.sptg.de/index.php?id=816>



## Corporate foundations

Many companies have a strong interest in promoting their own young talent and maintain their own foundations to provide financial support for suitable doctoral candidates in their research. Although these foundations are not oriented exclusively towards the natural sciences and applied sciences, these two areas are their predominant focus.

Below you will find some selected funding opportunities through scholarships and research cost subsidies from corporate foundations in Germany. In the [database of the Stifterverband der deutschen Wirtschaft](#), you can find further funding opportunities from various companies.



### **Boehringer Ingelheim Fonds (BIF)**

The BIF awards doctoral scholarships to university graduates in the natural sciences who wish to carry out a doctoral project in basic biomedical research in a leading international laboratory. The scholarship recipients are selected three times a year on the basis of external expert opinions and personal interviews by the scientists working on the foundation's board of trustees. Information on the scope of funding and how to apply can be found on the [BIF's website](#).

### **Kekulé Fellowship**

The Fonds of the German Chemical Industry promotes young outstanding scientists in chemistry and chemistry-related life science subjects. The Kekulé Fellowship beneficiary receives monthly payments of €1,850 and an annual material cost allowance of €1,000 to purchase scientific literature, computers including accessories and to attend scientific congresses within Europe. Prerequisites and further information on the application procedure can be found in the [guidelines online](#).

### **Evonik Foundation**

Funding is provided for doctorates in the natural sciences in line with the Foundation's funding priorities, which are determined anew every year. The doctoral scholarship lasts two years and amounts to 1400 euros per month. In addition, applications can be made for the acquisition of research literature and for attending scientific conferences. The current application requirements can be found on the [foundation's website](#) and [information brochure](#) (in German).



### FAZIT Foundation

The FAZIT-Stiftung was created by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the Societätsdruckerei. Among others, it provides doctoral candidates with grants for printing and travel expenses, but also with full 24-month scholarships. Applicants should not be over 28 years of age and must be able to prove their financial need. The foundation has compiled further information in a [brochure for doctoral candidates](#) (in German).

### Hertie Foundation

Twice a year, the Hertie foundation awards up to ten doctoral scholarships in the field of medicine, with particular focus on the disease of multiple sclerosis. In addition to a material resource grant, a one-year financial grant of €800 per month is also awarded. Information on how to apply can be found on the [foundation's website](#).

### Stifterverband der deutschen Wirtschaft

The Stifterverband der deutschen Wirtschaft is an association of around 3000 companies and private individuals committed to promoting science and research. Support is provided to doctoral candidates in various formats.

You can browse through the [association's database](#) to find the individual foundations and their funding opportunities from A to Z.

## Graduate funding from the federal states and universities

In some federal states, prospective doctoral candidates can apply for funding through the state graduate development program. Depending on the federal state, these have now been integrated into specific graduate schools and excellence initiatives through collaborations with state universities. In the federal states that allow an application for an individual scholarship within the framework of the state graduate development program, this comprises a monthly amount of €900–€1,300, which is paid out over a period of two years.

Currently, there is no state graduate development program intended for individual scholarships in Hesse. In Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Hamburg und Mecklenburg Western Pomerania, on the other hand, there are individual funding programs for state graduates.

Other federal states use the funds from the state graduate development program to set up Research Training Groups or graduate schools at public universities and colleges. Accordingly, the application for these funds is limited to specified research areas. A clear list of regulations by federal state can be found on the [German education server](#) (in German). Extracts from the respective state legislation on the advancement of young scholars can also be found there.

Even though the call for „in-house“ doctoral scholarships has become less frequent at many universities, individual universities still offer funding opportunities for their own institutes or research groups. It is therefore worth checking the website for doctoral funding at your current or future university for appropriate opportunities. In some cases, individual faculties or research institutions at the university award scholarships. These scholarships are usually limited to one or two years with the option to extend.





## 2. Doctorate as part of structured programs

Most doctoral candidates pursue the individual doctorate, which is based on independent research carried out under the supervision of one professor. However, a second model of doctoral education, the structured doctoral program, has become increasingly popular over the past decades.

In a structured doctoral program, doctoral candidates take part in special qualification programs, cooperate closely with peers within their research network and are committed to contributing their research to the main focus of their research program. Depending on the university and the faculty, this also includes joint publication projects or the organization of symposia and conferences.



## Structured doctorate with DFG funding

In Germany, structured doctoral programs have been offered since 1990 through the Research Training Groups funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). A group of mostly senior researchers can apply for an RTG at the DFG and will receive funding for up to nine years after a successful interim evaluation. Similar structured programs are also funded by other institutions. They may be called graduate colleges, graduate schools or PhD schools. Research Training Groups are often founded in cooperation with various universities and professors from Germany and abroad.

The Research Training Groups are intended to avoid problems that may arise in the preparation and supervision of purely individual doctoral projects. These include a lack of exchange with other doctoral candidates and experts who have similar research interests, dwindling motivation and a lack of structure in the research process. In the case of individual doctorates, it may be difficult for the supervisors to ensure constant contact and a profitable working relationship with their doctoral candidates. The regularly scheduled colloquia and the cooperative nature of research projects within the Research Training Groups are intended to counter both problem areas and facilitate a continuous and institutionally anchored exchange.

The aim of the Research Training Groups is to bundle the content of research projects and to structure the work on the dissertation projects in an organized manner. For this purpose, doctoral candidates are either employed at the respective university or receive a full scholarship, which covers research and living expenses. In recent years, the DFG provided funding mostly for employment positions.

The Research Training Group offers regular courses, lectures, seminars, project presentations, conferences or workshops to support doctoral candidates in their academic and personal development. Some Research Training Groups also provide for a fixed curriculum of methodologically or theoretically oriented courses that doctoral candidates have to complete as part of their doctoral studies.

The German Research Foundation also supports doctoral candidates through Collaborative Research Centers (CRCs), large research projects which often include a Research Training Group. A number of internal positions are advertised for each funding period.

Whether an RTG or CRC still has staff positions or scholarships available depends on the time during the funding period. New doctoral candidates are chosen by a committee of university professors participating in the RTG. Depending on the discipline, the decisive factors for a successful application include the exposé or research plan, academic background and personal aptitude, which will be decided in selection interviews.

RTGs and CRCs may also admit you as an associate doctoral candidate without funding from the respective RTG/CRC. The prerequisites for such an association are thematic suitability, funding from your own scholarship or academic position, as well as the supervisor's membership with the CRC or RTG. The same framework conditions apply to DFG funding through Research Training Groups and Collaborative Research Centers:

<b>Target group:</b>	Research-oriented doctoral candidates whose dissertation project is related to the CRC's or RTG's research topic
<b>Funding period:</b>	3 years
<b>Amount (per month):</b>	Up to €1,365 + €103 allowance for material costs, child care allowance and allowances for travel expenses or conference fees available on request
<b>Additional income:</b>	Non-academic income is fully deducted from the scholarship. Income from academic work must be below €6,000 per year or be taxed.

Applications are submitted directly to the respective DFG Research Training Groups. You can browse through the current Research Training Groups on the [DFG website](#). Further information on DFG funding for doctoral candidates can be found in an [online information brochure](#).

## DFG-funded Research Training Groups at Goethe University

For doctoral candidates, collaboration in a Research Training Group usually consists of participating in a pre-defined curriculum and working on one's own dissertation. In international RTGs, doctoral candidates from universities in Germany and abroad work together on the same topic.

The Goethe University currently houses the following DFG-funded Research Training Groups:

- [RTG 1728](#): Theology as Science. Formation processes of the reflectivity of religious traditions in historical and systematic analysis.  
Faculty: Roman Catholic Theology (since 2012)
- [RTG 1986](#): Complex Scenarios of Light-Control.  
Faculty: Biochemistry, Chemistry and Pharmacy (since 2014)
- [RTG 2016](#): Nominal Modifications.  
Faculty: Modern Languages (since 2014)
- [RTG 2105](#): Doing Transitions. Individual, institutional and discursive forms of designing transitions in the life course  
Faculty: Educational Sciences (since 2017)
- [RTG 2279](#): Configurations of Film  
Faculty: Modern Languages (since 2017)
- [RTG 2336](#): Resolution of Inflammation. Mediators, Signaling und Intervention  
Faculty: Medical Science (since 2017)
- [RTG 2566](#): Interfacing image analysis and molecular life-science  
Faculty: Physics (since 2021)

## Collaborative Research Centers at Goethe University

Thematically related Research Training Groups can be established in CRCs. Trans-regional Collaborative Research Centers (SFB/TR) are also establishing cross-university research groups. In both cases, doctoral candidates are supported in cohorts during each funding period. The following CRCs (located at, or in collaboration with the GU) include a postgraduate research group:

- [CRC 807](#): Transport and communication across biological membranes  
Faculty: Biochemistry, Chemistry and Pharmacy  
(since 2008, last funding period)
- [CRC 815](#): Redox regulation: generator systems and functional consequences  
Faculty: Medical Science (since 2009)
- [CRC 834](#): Endothelial Signalling and Vascular Repair  
Faculty: Medical Science (since 2010)
- [CRC 902](#): Molecular principles of RNA-based regulation  
Faculty: Biochemistry, Chemistry and Pharmacy (since 2010)
- [CRC 1039](#): Signalling by fatty acid derivatives and sphingolipids in health and disease, Faculty: Medical Science (since 2013)
- [CRC 1080](#): Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Neural Homeostasis  
Faculty: Biological Sciences (since 2013)
- [CRC 1177](#): Molecular and Functional Characterization of Selective Autophagy, Faculty: Medical Science (since 2016)
- [CRC 1292](#): Targeting convergent mechanisms of inefficient immunity in tumors and chronic infections, Faculty: Medical Science (since 2018)
- [CRC 1361](#): Regulation of DNA Repair and Genome Stability  
Faculty: Medical Science (since 2019)
- [CRC 1366](#): Vascular Control of Organ Function  
Faculty: Medical Science (since 2019)

Some current vacancies for doctoral students can be found on the [GRADE website](#) or on the [Goethe University website](#).



## Structured doctorates at non-academic research institutions

Even if the doctorate can only be awarded by universities, research in Germany does not only take place there; it also takes place at numerous publicly funded research institutes. The most important non-academic research institutions are combined into four large networks:

- the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung,
- the Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres,
- the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science e. V. and
- the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Scientific Association

All four national organizations receive funding from the public sector and raise external funds independently. The numerous institutes carry out scientific research, often with an international and interdisciplinary orientation. You will find detailed information on the institutes and their locations on the web pages of the [Federal Report on Research and Innovation](#).

In addition, the non-academic research communities are involved in the funding of doctoral research and strive to provide highly qualified graduates with the opportunity to do a doctorate as part of a research project or a structured doctorate. The individual institutes cooperate closely with the universities in many areas.

At Goethe University, there are research collaborations of nonacademic research institutions with various faculties which may be of interest to doctoral candidates who are looking for a scholarship or an academic employment position.

## Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

The research fields of the 75 Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany include health and environment, safety and protection, mobility and transport, energy and raw materials, production and services, as well as communication and knowledge. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft specializes in applied research in close cooperation with companies and public clients.

In many cases, collaborations with universities exist through the appointment of Fraunhofer researchers as professors at universities.. Only positions in accordance with TVöD, EG13 (50%) are intended for doctoral studies in a research project based at a Fraunhofer institute. Vacant doctoral positions are advertised on the [recruiting page of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft](#) and in national weekly newspapers.

In Frankfurt, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft maintained a project group in the field of translational medicine, whose research was based at the Institute for Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology IME. In January 2021, the TMP division of the Fraunhofer IME was transferred to an [independent Fraunhofer institute with headquarters in Frankfurt am Main](#) and locations in Hamburg and Göttingen. Open doctoral positions are not advertised directly at the Institute, but on the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft website.



## Helmholtz Centers

The Helmholtz Association is an association of 19 large scientific-technical and medical-biological research centers, which is financed from public funds as well as from self-acquired third-party funds. In these centers, the Helmholtz Association pursues long-term research goals for the state and society within the framework of broadly designed research programs. More than 7,000 doctoral students are currently doing research there. The Helmholtz Association's advancement of young scientists has a strong international orientation. It is represented in Brussels, Beijing and Moscow and also has individual foreign offices for its research centers. Its research focuses on energy, the earth and environment, aviation, aeronautics and transportation, matter, health and key technologies.

The Research Schools of the Helmholtz Association offer structured doctoral programs that provide a curriculum and a variety of training opportunities. In 2018, the first Internfraunational Research Schools were established in which a Helmholtz Center, a German partner university and an international partner all work together. Those interested can apply there for PhD Fellowships. Employment for scientific collaboration is also possible. At Goethe University, there are currently two Helmholtz Research Schools cooperating with the Physics Faculty:

- [Helmholtz Research School for Quark Matter Studies in Heavy Ion Collisions](#)
- [Helmholtz Graduate School for Hadron and Ion Research](#)



## International Max-Planck-Research Schools (IMPRS)

The 86 Max Planck Institutes are located at various locations throughout Germany and conduct basic research in the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities. Their international orientation is reflected, among other things, in the advancement of researchers who are beginning their academic careers. Currently there are about 3,300 doctoral candidates working at one of the International Max-Planck-Research Schools (IMPRS). There are collaborations with universities and DFG Collaborative Research Centers.

A structured doctorate at one of the 68 IMPRSs is based on pre-defined curricula in which professional skills workshops are integrated alongside research seminars. PhD candidates receive an employment contract at the respective Max Planck Institute. Some IMPRSs may still offer scholarships.

Interested applicants should inquire about the funding model of the research school they are interested in. IMPRS partnerships with Max Planck Institutes have also been established at Goethe University. These provide for various types of funding, ranging from a preliminary one-year contract to competitively awarded scholarships:

- [Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics](#)  
(Faculty: Geosciences and Geography / MPI for Chemistry)
- [Neural Circuits](#)  
(Faculty: Biological Sciences / MPI for Brain Research)
- [Structure and Function of Biological Membranes](#)  
(Faculty: Biochemistry, Chemistry and Pharmacy / MPI for Biophysics)
- [Heart and Lung Research](#)  
(Faculty: Medical Science / MPI for Heart and Lung Research)

The [MPI for European Legal History](#) offers the opportunity for a doctorate in cooperation with Goethe University, but it has no IMPRS.

## Leibniz Graduate Schools

The Leibniz Association comprises a total of 96 research institutions whose research areas range from natural, engineering and environmental sciences to economics, spatial and social sciences and the humanities. The Leibniz Association encompasses a wide variety of institutions that conduct their own research and/or provide services for science: from research institutes to computer centers and museums.

Some 3,800 of the 18,144 employees are also doctoral candidates. At the Leibniz Graduate Schools, which have been gradually established since 2006, these doctoral candidates benefit from a structured doctoral program, which is carried out either at the corresponding Leibniz Institute or at the cooperating university. The doctoral candidates are usually employed as research assistants. Current vacancies can be found on the institute's website.

Since 2016, there has also been a Leibniz PhD Network led by selected doctoral candidates, which offers all early career researchers of the Leibniz Association a platform for discussion and exchange. Within this framework, conferences and career fairs are also organised for doctoral candidates.

There are no Leibniz Graduate Schools at Goethe University. However, several institutes cooperating closely with Goethe University are part of the Leibniz-Gemeinschaft and offer their own doctoral programs. These include:

- [Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education \(DIPF\)](#)
- [Peace Research Institute Frankfurt \(PRIF\)](#)
- [Senckenberg Society for Nature Research \(SGN\)](#)
- [Leibniz Institute for Financial Research SAFE](#)



### 3. Funding for international doctorates

#### **DAAD scholarships for German and international doctoral candidates**

The DAAD supports doctoral candidates from Germany during short-term stays abroad and supports international doctoral candidates during their doctoral studies in Germany. Doctoral candidates who spend several months abroad for their research can apply to the DAAD for suitable one-year or short-term scholarships (up to six months). You will find further information on the [DAAD homepage](#). The only prerequisite is that a doctoral degree is pursued at a German university. For subjects with a strong practical orientation, such as the fine arts, music or architecture, there is a separate DAAD program for one-year funding.

It is important to note that doctoral candidates who already receive a scholarship from a foundation for the support of gifted students cannot apply for DAAD funding abroad, since their foundation already provides them with similar financial benefits for research stays in many cases.

Scholarship recipients in DFG Research Training Groups are only eligible to apply for short-term research scholarships. Funding of more than 6 months is possible if DFG funding is suspended for this period. However, the awarding of a one-year and a short-term scholarship for doctoral candidates is mutually excluded.

Doctoral candidates of foreign nationality can apply to the DAAD for research grants, which provide grants of approximately 1,000 euros, and which may be paid out for up to four years for a doctorate. A prerequisite for this is enrollment at a German university. This rule does not apply to international doctoral candidates who are already receiving an Incoming DAAD scholarship in Germany.

The DAAD also offers international doctoral candidates [research grants for binational research projects](#) with a maximum funding period of two years. Monthly subsidies are supplemented as required to cover health insurance and additional research costs.

## Scholarships by the Fulbright Commission

In 1946, the Fulbright Program for international exchange between the USA and other countries was established. Today, it covers more than 150 countries. More than 40,000 scholarship holders from the USA and Germany have received funding to date. Doctoral students wishing to obtain a PhD in the USA can also apply for scholarships there.

Information on the relevant Fulbright Foreign Student Program can be found on the German and English [websites of the Fulbright Commission](#). German doctoral candidates planning a four- to six-month research stay in the USA receive financial support from the Fulbright Commission with their own Fulbright doctoral programs.



### Marie-Skłodowska-Curie-Actions (MSCA)

With the MSCA Program, the European Commission promotes the European and global exchange of researchers. In this context, the most important funding opportunity for doctoral students is the Innovative Training Networks (ITNs). ITNs are joint research projects involving several European research institutions. They offer a structured doctoral program with longer stays abroad. However, doctoral candidates do not apply to the EU, but directly to the ITNs themselves.

As a rule, German doctoral candidates can only apply for ITN research positions abroad. Further requirements can be found on the [program's website](#). A list of all MSCA programs involving Goethe University can be found [here](#).



## 4. Funding opportunities at Goethe University

The [Graduate School of Economics, Finance and Management \(GSEFM\)](#) at the Frankfurt House of Finance provides financial support for a limited number of incoming PhD candidates during the first year of their doctorate. In addition, applicants holding a degree from an University abroad can apply for a two-year scholarship. The GSEFM regularly offers scholarships to doctoral students, each of which is intended for doctoral students with specific research interests. Further information on funding can be found on the [GSEFM website](#).

The [Friends and Sponsors \("Freunde und Förderer"\) of Goethe University](#) support the research activities of scientists at all levels of qualification. For example, the active participation of doctoral candidates at conferences can be funded by covering travel expenses or conference fees.

Within the framework of the DAAD-funded [scholarship and support program \(STIBET\)](#), GRADE awards graduate scholarships on a regular basis. These are intended to provide financial support to doctoral candidates in the final phase of their doctoral studies. Applications are only open to international doctoral candidates at Goethe University. Current calls for proposals can be found on the [GRADE website](#). As part of STIBET, GRADE also awards several research assistantships to international doctoral candidates at Goethe University. What is more, GRADE offers scholarships by the Ad Infinitum Foundation for PhD candidates from the Humanities and scholarships for PhD candidates with family. Further information on the calls for proposals can also be found on the [GRADE website](#).

## GRADE Centers

In addition, doctoral candidates in the GRADE Centers benefit from various funding opportunities. This includes funds for workshops, lecture series, travel, publication and translation costs. Short-term scholarships are also offered at some centers. The centers aim at strengthening the cooperation in research and doctoral supervision beyond faculty boundaries. The program of the centers is designed to enable the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work of doctoral candidates and postdocs. Further information is available on the [websites of the GRADE Centers](#).





## 5. Funding opportunities for women in research

The funding opportunities gathered here are aimed specifically at female doctoral candidates. They contain models for full and partial funding for various specialized target groups.

### **Christiane-Nüsslein-Volhard Foundation**

Partial financial grants are awarded to doctoral candidates and postdocs from the Natural and Life Sciences with children. Applicants are expected to be able to support themselves. Support is provided for private childcare, the purchase of household appliances or other costs incurred by single mothers. More detailed information is provided in an [information brochure](#).

### **Deutscher Akademikerinnenbund (DAB)**

The DAB supports young female academics by accepting them into academic networks, in exceptional cases through scholarships, but above all through printing subsidies for the publication of scientific publications. The individual funding opportunities and application requirements can be found on the [website of the DAB funding committee](#) (in German).



### **Hildegardis-Verein**

The Catholic Women's association Hildegardis supports women Christians of all ages with their academic qualifications and continuing education. Doctoral candidates can also apply for [interest-free loans](#) there. The non-material support of the association is organized in [mentoring and tandem programs](#) (in German).

### **Gunda-Werner Institute**

This institute is part of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and focuses specifically on the promotion of education, research and academic public relations work on feminism and gender democracy. The scholarships awarded by the Institute are subject to the same conditions as the Heinrich Böll Foundation's scholarships. Current calls for proposals can be found on the [institute's website](#).

### **UNESCO-L'Oréal-Förderprogramm**

With the „For Women in Science“ program, UNESCO and L'Oréal support young women scientists worldwide who are aiming for an academic career. In cooperation with the Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard Foundation, the German program supports three applicants from the experimental natural sciences each year. You can view [program and application information](#) online at their website.

### **Funding for Women in Research**

The federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate have established programs for the advancement of women, which are also aimed at doctoral candidates. These include non-material support, start-up funding and scholarships. A list of other individual German state funding opportunities for women in research can be found on the [German education server website](#) (in German).

Further funding opportunities for women in science and research even beyond the doctorate are listed in the the [Funding brochure of the Center of Excellence Women and Science](#) at the GESIS Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences (in German). There are also special programmes for female scientists at non-university research institutions, such as the [TALENTA network of the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft](#) or the [equal opportunities program of the Max Planck Society](#).



## Partial funding and international doctorates

In order to further elaborate on the variety of funding options mentioned in the previous section, we will present some partial funding opportunities below. In addition to the above-mentioned positions and scholarships, which cover research costs, possible fees for university placement and the cost of living, there are also funding opportunities for specific activities or costs that have to be covered by external sources as part of the dissertation, sometimes even by those doctoral candidates with a regular grant or income. Moreover, some of the programs for the advancement of international doctorates and stays abroad should be mentioned, which are subject to certain discipline-specific and institutional conditions.



## 1. Partial funding

### Support for research and travel costs

During several years of work on a dissertation, costs incurred often exceed the individual's private budget. For example, these may include costs for trips abroad to conferences and symposia, costs for laboratory materials, accommodation and food for research stays, for memberships and for one-off fees for field research. These research-related costs can be covered or shared by state institutions such as the DAAD, universities and colleges, as well as public and private foundations or associations upon a successful application.

Some universities and faculties also regularly invite applications for project funding, which can be used for short-term research work. This type of partial financial support is an essential part of the research work as a young researcher

and is therefore often solicited by postdocs for their continuing research projects. Even if you have no need for this type of grant during your doctorate, it makes sense to consider these funding opportunities, as they may become relevant throughout the course of your future academic career.

### Temporary grants

Some universities offer regular bridging scholarships for graduates, which can be used to fund the time between graduation and the beginning of the doctorate. Many universities in Germany and Europe also award write-up and completion scholarships that serve to fund the final phase of the doctorate. Here, the focus is usually placed on the final draft of the dissertation as well as its publication and presentation to the academic community.

Research archives and institutes in Germany and abroad also regularly award scholarships for short-term research stays. Some universities also support guest stays through which international doctoral candidates can gain teaching experience. At Goethe University GRADE offers [completion scholarships for international doctoral candidates lasting several months](#) each year.

### Printing subsidies

Publishing your dissertation is obligatory in Germany. While doctoral theses in the natural and life sciences are often published online or by university libraries, high costs are incurred in other disciplines for printing and publishing work, depending on circulation. For this reason, a number of private foundations have now specialized in taking on selected doctoral theses.

In addition to private foundations, VG-Wort also grants financial support for printing costs for outstanding academic works that could not be published without financial assistance due to their high degree of specialization and small circulation. Further information on VG Word Funding can be found in an [online brochure](#) (in German).



## 2. International doctorates

With a few exceptions, German funding institutions support graduates who wish to pursue a doctorate at a German university. However, some of the foundations for the support of gifted students (“Begabtenförderwerke”) also award scholarships for the preparation of a dissertation abroad. If you are interested in a doctorate abroad, you should contact the appropriate funding institutions personally. The DAAD does not provide scholarships for full doctorates abroad for German applicants, but rather grants doctoral candidates at German universities one-year and short-term scholarships for doctoral research stays abroad. Various private and public foundations also offer funding options for such short-term stays abroad during the doctorate.

For prospective doctoral candidates with German citizenship who wish to obtain their PhD entirely from a university abroad, however, there are hardly any opportunities to access German scholarship funds. In this case, we usually recommend searching for suitable scholarships and funding programs in the country where you plan to pursue your doctorate.

## Advice for international doctoral candidates

Young international researchers are very welcome at German universities. For this reason, the foundations for the support of gifted students, as well as other funding organizations, support doctoral candidates from abroad with scholarships and research awards. The DAAD, for example, sponsors the stay of around 5,000 international doctoral candidates in Germany every year.

In principle, it is not the origin of the applicants that is decisive for the funding of the doctorate in Germany, but the fact that the dissertation project is linked to a university in Germany. Non-German graduates can therefore apply for all scholarships that are also available to German doctoral students, provided they are enrolled as doctoral candidates at a German university. The foundations for the support of gifted students have compiled information specifically geared at international doctoral candidates. The non-academic research institutions previously mentioned are also always looking for highly qualified doctoral candidates from abroad. The website [Research in Germany](#) and the [DAAD database](#) provide a good overview of current funding and scholarship opportunities.

## Cotutelle / binational doctorates

In a Cotutelle, doctoral candidates acquire a PhD title awarded jointly by one German and one international partner university. This dual academic qualification can be advantageous for both academic and non-academic careers. Various sponsors offer additional funding for binational doctorates. Additional costs for the travel of doctoral candidates, supervisors and examiners are funded in particular. The Franco-German University (DFH) supports Franco-German Cotutelle doctorates with a grant of 5,000 euros, which can be applied for over a period of three years. DAAD scholarships for stays abroad can be increased for Cotutelle-related travel costs. The DFH has compiled further information for PhD candidates [online](#). You can find basic guidelines and advice on the Cotutelle Process in cooperation with Goethe University on the [GRADE website](#).



## Further tips and advice

### 1. The scholarship application

Applying for one or more scholarships takes a lot of time. The sooner you start, the better! Depending on the culture of your field of study, your current scope of research and your career situation, the planning, preparation and completion of such an application can take from one month to one year.

To ensure that the high amount of time required is worthwhile and that your application is taken into consideration by the respective funding institution, it is essential that you observe a few points which are explained in detail on the following pages.

## Discipline-specific and thematic suitability

Before submitting an application, you should check whether your doctoral project really does match the profile of a foundation in terms of research content. Some foundations have very specific requirements and define strict boundaries, even within disciplines. Therefore, you should adapt your exposé or your research plan to suit different applications. The same applies for the cover letter or when stating your personal reasons for applying or writing your letter of motivation. In this respect, you should emphasise how close your project relates to the research priorities of the funding institution. Private and public foundations sometimes pay very close attention to whether a doctorate might match their profile.

## Personal aptitude

Besides your doctoral project, one of the decisive factors for the success of your application is whether you fit in with the foundation on the basis of your curriculum vitae and your person. What is sought after and what is not is usually clearly outlined in the application requirements of the individual scholarship providers. For example, if you cannot demonstrate any commitment to civil society or political projects, you should not apply to foundations that state this as the basic prerequisite for your application. The same applies to any maximum age stated for applicants, although it may also be worth asking over the telephone. Some foundations handle the granting guidelines more flexible, depending on the number of applicants each year.

## Formal requirements

Sponsors are always grateful for formal mistakes in an application process. These are a legitimate reason to reduce the large number of incoming documents without a great deal of effort. Therefore, you should pay close attention to the official requirements for the documents to be submitted with each application. Depending on the foundation or university, this includes the minimum and maximum number of characters specified in the exposé, the file format and file size, the sequence of the individual documents and a proper layout of the cover letter. You must also meet the application and submission deadlines. It is safe to assume that an exceptional doctoral project will not be rejected if the number of characters is slightly exceeded. However, you can significantly reduce the risk of rejection if you actually avoid avoidable mistakes.



## 2. Advice regarding social insurance

From a legal point of view, no separate status is provided for doctoral candidates in the Social Security Code. Your social security in the event of illness and your retirement provision during the doctoral phase depend on your occupational status: Are you an employee in employment subject to social security contributions, are you self-employed, or are you a scholarship recipient?\*

### Health insurance

In Germany, health insurance has been compulsory since 2009. This includes doctoral candidates, provided they hold a position and receive an income subject to social insurance, for example research and project positions at a university. Since 2015, the contribution rate for state health insurance has been 14.6 percent of your liable income. Doctoral candidates who are not employed on a wage-dependent basis are not obligatory and automatically members of the public health insurance according to § 1 No. 1 SGB V but they are required to take out health insurance for themselves. Doctoral candidates with a scholarship are considered „full-time self-employed“ by health insurance companies and must take out public or private health insurance. Compared to those with public health insurance in an employment contract, they can claim a reduced contribution rate of 14 percent of income, whereby the contribution rate is calculated using the respective monthly income.

Since September 2017, recipients of scholarships from the German foundations for the support of gifted students have been able to apply for a health insurance subsidy amounting to 50% of the required contributions and up to a maximum of €100 per month in the event that there is no mandatory membership in the public health insurance scheme. Information on this should be obtained from the respective foundation beforehand, as not all foundations for the support of gifted students have so far made this possibility known to everyone.

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\* The following information on health insurance, long-term care insurance and unemployment insurance is based on the GEW Union's brochure [„Sozialversicherung für Promovierende. Ein Ratgeber“](#), Würmann, C., Frankfurt a. M. 2017 [in German].



Information on this should be obtained from the respective foundation beforehand, as not all foundations for the support of gifted students have so far made this possibility known to everyone.

If you actually earn your living from self-employment, you are also formally exempt from mandatory public health insurance, but must take out insurance with a public or private health insurance company. Doctoral candidates with an employment are also able to leave the mandatory public insurance scheme and choose a private insurance if their income exceeds € 59,400. However, this amount is above the usual gross income earned on a 50% or 75% position according to TVöD 13, so that the change to a private fund is probably out of the question for most employed doctoral candidates.

Doctoral candidates who are not subject to social security contributions or insured via a family member can also in principle switch to private health insurance. Although some of these promise more favourable contribution rates than the public health insurance funds, the corresponding offers should be carefully examined in individual cases, especially with regard to advancing age. Contribution rates can rise dramatically depending on your personal and medical history, whereas public health insurance always charges the same rates.

In principle, even if you are enrolled as a doctoral student, you cannot claim health insurance in an insurance scheme for students. In individual cases, however, a reduced contribution can be negotiated with the health insurance company according to the student tariff. The decisive factors here are your age and the educational character of the work you pursue as doctoral candidate. Public health insurance is recommended for families, as in this case, spouses and children are always covered free of charge. In general, women are exempt from contributions during maternity leave, as well as men and women on parental leave.

### **Long-term care insurance**

If you have health insurance, you also have to pay long-term care insurance contributions. The respective contribution rate is subject to a statutory assessment. In Germany, the contribution to long-term care insurances in 2021 is about 3,05 percent of the liable income. Doctoral candidates must fulfil their obligation to take out long-term care insurance in both private and public health insurance funds.

## Unemployment insurance

In employment arrangements with an income over of 475 euros, a mandatory contribution to unemployment insurance applies. This will amount to 2.4 percent of your income in 2021, half of which will be paid by your employer and half by you as an employee. The same applies to doctoral candidates in an employment position. After the end of their employment, they are entitled to Unemployment Benefit I (ALG I) if they have worked for more than 24 months and on 360 calendar days.

Self-employed individuals and scholarship recipients do not have to pay any mandatory contributions to unemployment insurance, as they are not considered to be employees. In the event of unemployment, for example after a scholarship has expired, there is therefore no entitlement to ALG I. Instead, unemployment benefit II can be applied for the so-called minimum security (currently €446 per month + benefits for housing etc.), provided you are available to the labor market during the duration of benefits. This availability requirement also applies to doctoral students who have acquired a claim to the ALG I through previous employment. The rejection of a so-called reasonable employment by the employment agency (Arbeitsagentur) or of further training can lead to the forfeiture of the claim.

Your entitlement to ALG I can also become invalid if you receive a scholarship for several years, as you are not subject to social security contributions during this period. However, if you have been employed for at least 360 calendar days in the past two years and subsequently receive a scholarship, you can prevent this from happening by registering as „seeking employment“ shortly before the scholarship begins and by claiming ALG for a short time span. Your claim will then remain valid for up to four years after the first application.



## Pension insurance

Employees have to pay obligatory contributions to the pension insurance fund. This also applies to doctoral candidates if they hold an employment. The current contribution is 18.6 percent of the liable income and is automatically paid by the employer. If you are employed part-time or are a member of a professional pension fund (e.g. lawyers, architects), insurance is not required. This also applies to self-employed individuals and doctoral candidates with a scholarship.

To be eligible for benefits from pension funds later on, a minimum contribution period is required. To achieve this period, self-employed individuals and doctoral candidates with a scholarship can make voluntary contributions to their pension fund. However, self-employed educators and teachers (possibly also in the academic sector) are subject to a mandatory pension fund. What is meant by teaching in this context should be examined on a case-by-case basis with the relevant HR department or trade union.



### 3. Useful links

#### Doctoral Positions

- <https://www.academics.de/>  
Job opportunities for academics
- <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/phd/de/13306-phdgermany-datenbank/>  
Doctoral positions at German universities
- [https://www.hsozkult.de/job/page?q=&sort=newestPublished&fq=clio\\_contentTypeRelated\\_m\\_Text%3A%22ds%22](https://www.hsozkult.de/job/page?q=&sort=newestPublished&fq=clio_contentTypeRelated_m_Text%3A%22ds%22)  
Doctoral positions and scholarships in the Humanities
- [https://jobs.zeit.de/stellenmarkt/wissenschaft\\_lehre\\_39811.html](https://jobs.zeit.de/stellenmarkt/wissenschaft_lehre_39811.html)  
Research positions at universities and non-academic research institutions
- <https://www.euraxess.de/>  
EU-funded doctoral positions in Europe
- <https://www.mystipendium.de/jobs/doktorandenstellen>  
Doctoral positions and scholarships in Germany
- <http://jobs.e-fellows.net/Akademische-Stellen-suchen>  
Doctoral positions in Germany

- <https://recruiting.fraunhofer.de/Jobs/1?Reset=G&lang=ger&searchFunktion=10040&search1>  
Doctoral positions at the Fraunhofer Institutes
- <http://www.medicinooxy.com/>  
Doctoral positions in medicine, pharmacy and biology
- <http://drarbeit.de/>  
Doctoral positions in the natural sciences and medicine
- <https://www.jobvector.de/>  
Vacancies in the areas of natural science, medicine and computer science

## Scholarships

- <https://www.daad.de/ausland/studieren/stipendium/de/70-stipendien-finden-und-bewerben/>  
DAAD scholarships
- <https://www.mystipendium.de/stipendien/stipendienprogramm>  
Doctoral positions and scholarships in Germany
- <https://www.hsozkult.de/grant/page>  
Scholarships in Social Sciences and the Humanities
- <https://www.vergleich.org/wp-content/uploads/Der-grosse-Vergleich.org-Stipendien-Ratgeber.pdf>  
Scholarships for studies and doctoral studies in Germany
- <https://stiftungssuche.de/>  
Database of the Bundesverband deutscher Stiftungen
- <https://www.deutsches-stiftungszentrum.de/foerderung/index.html>  
Database of the Stifterverband der deutschen Wirtschaft

## Research Training Groups and graduate schools

- [http://www.dfg.de/en/funded\\_projects/current\\_projects\\_programmes/index.html](http://www.dfg.de/en/funded_projects/current_projects_programmes/index.html)  
List of current DFG Research Training Groups
- <https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/39281669/nachwuchs-verbundforschung>  
Research Training Groups and doctoral programs at Goethe University
- <https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/karriere/wissenschaftlicher-nachwuchs/leibniz-graduate-schools/liste/>  
Leibniz Graduate Schools
- [https://www.helmholtz.de/en/jobs\\_talent/science/phd\\_candidates/helmholtz\\_research\\_schools/](https://www.helmholtz.de/en/jobs_talent/science/phd_candidates/helmholtz_research_schools/)  
Helmholtz (International) Research Schools
- [https://www.mpg.de/7329881/IMPRS\\_Broschuere.pdf](https://www.mpg.de/7329881/IMPRS_Broschuere.pdf)  
International Max Planck Research Schools:

## Social Insurance for doctoral candidates

- <https://www.work-in-hessen.com/>  
Information on job application, employment and social insurance by the federal state of Hesse
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare\\_in\\_Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_in_Germany)  
General information on social insurance in Germany
- <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/nach-deutschland/bewerbung/en/58221-health-insurance/>  
General information on health insurance in Germany, provided by the DAAD



**Imprint:**

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3rd and updated edition

September 2021

**Editorial:**

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**Layout:**

Moritz Hoffmann

**Print:**

Data Print Ratz

Am Brunnengarten 5

60437 Frankfurt am Main

**Image reference:**

Booklet: Foto Juridicum: Uwe Dettmer (GU);

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