Earn a Doctorate in Leipzig
A Short Guide for International PhD Candidates
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WHY CHOOSE LEIPZIG UNIVERSITY FOR MY PHD?

In Leipzig you’ll find the very best environment and conditions for your PhD studies. You’ll benefit from:

- **Research-oriented, internationally recognised PhD programmes** that allow the creation of knowledge at the highest level thanks to interdisciplinary research focuses and state-of-the-art equipment.
- **A broad spectrum of research opportunities at a comprehensive university** which offers PhD programmes in every department.
- **An excellent research environment** featuring close to 20 research institutes located in Leipzig, including multiple Max Planck, Fraunhofer and Leibniz Institutes.
- **An affordable city with a lively character.** Leipzig offers a vibrant cultural scene, affordable flats and trendy neighbourhoods. And located right in the middle of the city is the new campus of Leipzig University.
Leipzig University offers two different ways to earn a doctorate: either individually or within a structured programme.

**a) Which PhD programme is right for me?**

If you’re looking for:
+ The support of multiple university professors as well as
+ Teamwork and a practical focus to your PhD studies by working and interacting with other PhD candidates and academic advisors in group research projects.

Then a structured PhD programme is the right choice for you. In a structured programme you’ll earn a doctorate working within a Graduate Centre. You’ll have a set time frame to earn your doctorate, a clearly defined curriculum and individual support from academic advisors.

If you’re looking for:
+ More freedom to structure your time while working on your dissertation, and
+ More flexibility in altering the focus and topic of your dissertation?

Then an individual PhD programme would be the better fit for you. Here you’ll work closely together with an advising professor (often referred to as your “Doktormutter” or “Doktorvater” in German) to write your dissertation. You earn your PhD individually at a faculty of the university and your dissertation is usually based on your own chosen topic.

Information regarding the application and admission process: www.uni-leipzig.de/international/phd

Leipzig University also offers a binational doctorate using the co-tutelle programme. For additional information about binational doctorates, please consult the following website: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/phd/binational-doctoral-degrees.html
b) 5 steps to a PhD

Step 1: Prepare for your PhD
First, you’ll need to look at the research profile of Leipzig University (Forschungsprofil) and determine if your research topic falls under one of the research areas therein. Before applying to the university you’ll also need to decide how you want to do your PhD: Are you more interested in working within a structured PhD programme or independently on your own?

If you decide on a structured PhD programme, head over to the website of the Research Academy Leipzig to learn about the application requirements and the application process. Afterwards, move on to step 2.

If you are interested in an individual PhD programme, you’ll first need to find an advising professor who will provide you with a dissertation topic or accept your own suggested topic.

In both cases, however, you will first need a written confirmation from your future advising professor before you can apply for admission through the International Centre.

If you decide on a structured PhD programme, please also note the entrance requirements and the deadlines at the Research Academy Leipzig.

Step 2: Apply for admission at the International Centre
Your application must include a comprehensive overview of all previous education from secondary school to the highest completed level.

Please note, all school reports must be submitted as certified copies in the original language and as certified translations in German or in English. School reports in German or English do not need to be translated.

The following documents are necessary to complete the application:
- Online application form in AlmaWeb https://almaweb.uni-leipzig.de (with date and signature)
- The written advisor agreement from your advising professor (Betreuererklärung).
- Your curriculum vitae
- A certified copy of your leaving certificate from secondary school
- A certified copy of the results of your university entrance exam, if applicable
- Certified copies of any previously completed university degrees, e.g. Bachelor’s / Master’s Degree, Diplom
- A certified copy of your university transcripts
- A certified copy of proof of German language ability (level of DHS-2) if your dissertation is written in German
• Proof of fluent English language ability if dissertation is written in English. This does not have to be a certified copy and can be, for example, an informal written verification from your advising professor.
• Confirmation of acceptance onto the faculty’s doctoral candidate list (Doktorandenliste; may be submitted later)

Step 3: The International Centre checks your application
The International Centre will check the formal qualifications of your application, i.e. how and if your previous university degrees are recognised in Germany.
If you completely fulfil the formal requirements you’ll receive a letter of admission (Zulassungsbescheid). You will most likely need this for your visa application.
If your previous university degrees are not equivalent to the German prerequisites for study, the International Centre can provide a letter of acceptance with conditions.
The formal examination of all academic qualifications is based on the provisions of the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB). The ZAB is a part of the German Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. It is the central office in Germany for questions regarding the evaluation of educational qualifications earned abroad.
Step 4: Enrol at Leipzig University
If you’ve received your letter of admission from the International Centre, you can go there at any time during office hours to enrol at Leipzig University.

In order to enrol at the Leipzig University and begin registration in local government offices (e.g., town hall or aliens’ registration office) you will need to have the following items available and on hand:

- The letter of admission to Leipzig University (Zulassungsbescheid).
- A valid passport with a valid visa for study purposes, if necessary.
- Spare, unused passport photos.
- Recent proof of a health insurance recognized in Germany (travel health insurance is not sufficient)

Additionally, you’ll need to have enough money available for important initial costs that usually require a payment, e.g. registration costs, a security deposit.

Step 5: Register as a PhD candidate in your faculty
Together with your advising professor you’ll need to submit an application for admission to your faculty’s doctoral candidate list (Antrag auf Aufnahme in die Doktorandenliste). If you are already accepted onto the faculty’s doctoral candidate list at the beginning of the application process, please submit the written confirmation together with your application documents.

Contact
International Centre
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Office hours during the lecture period outside of the lecture period
Tuesday 1:00 - 5:00 pm 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Thursday 1:00 - 3:00 pm -
Friday 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 am - noon

Telephone consultation:
Monday and Thursday 9:00 - 10:00 am and 3:00 - 4:00 pm
The Research Academy Leipzig brings together all postgraduate programmes of Leipzig University and dedicates itself to the support of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.

Young scientists benefit from an excellent working environment, an extensive network for international cooperations, and the opportunity to additionally achieve a joint doctorate with a binational title at a foreign university.

At the Research Academy, around 800 doctoral students, 30% of which are international, pursue a doctorate in around 25 programmes organized in the three Graduate Centres Mathematics/Computer Science and Natural Sciences, Life Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences.

In order to become a member of the Research Academy Leipzig, applications must be addressed directly to the doctoral programme of interest.

**Interdisciplinary Qualification for all Doctoral Researchers**

The Kompetenzzschule ELSYS: Employability and Leadership Skills for Young Saxon Researchers of the Research Academy offers workshops for all doctoral researchers at Leipzig University and prepares for a career inside and outside academia.

The interdisciplinary qualification programme provides the opportunity to acquire key qualifications in the fields of presenting and publishing, scientific methods, finding and seizing opportunities, communicating and managing, understanding the world of science and language.

**International and Intergenerational Learning Community**

The Research Academy implemented the Leibniz-Programme that consists of the Leibniz-Professorship and the Leibniz-Visiting Scientists Programme. It aims to create a “temporary learning community” of internationally renowned senior researchers and highly motivated and qualified graduate students to increase interdisciplinary research and introduce an international environment in the graduates’ qualification.

Research Academy Leipzig:
www.uni-leipzig.de/ral
www.facebook.com/ResearchAcademyLeipzig
DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

Graduate Centre for Mathematics/Computer Science and Natural Sciences
• Graduate School “BuildMoNa – Building with Molecules and Nano-objects”
• International Max Planck Research School “Mathematics in the Sciences”
• International Research Training Group “Diffusion in Porous Materials”
• German-French Graduate College “Statistical Physics of Complex Systems”
• Integrated Research Training Group “Polymers: random coils and beyond”
• Research Training Group “Quantitative Logics and Automata”
• Leipzig Graduate School on Clouds, Aerosols and Radiation (LGS-CAR)

Graduate Centre for Life Sciences
• Research Training School “InterNeuro”
• Research Training Group “Function of Attention in Cognition”
• International Max Planck Research School “Human Origins”
• International Max Planck Research School “NeuroCom”
• MD/PhD-Programme of the Universität Leipzig
• Integrated Research Training Group “Protein Science”
• Integrated Research Training Group “Matrixengineering”
• Integrated Research Training Group “Obesity Mechanisms”
• Helmholtz Research School for Ecosystem Services under Changing Land-use and Climate (ESCALATE)
• Research Training School „Interaction of Grammatical Building Blocks (IGRA)“

Graduate Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities
• Graduate School Global and Area Studies with its components:
• Cultural exchange: Classical studies’, historical and ethnological perspectives
• International Doctorate Programme: German as a foreign language/Transcultural German Studies
• Religious Nonconformism and Cultural Dynamics
• Central-German Doctoral Program Economics
• Secularisations: Configurations and Developmental Paths
INTERNATIONAL PHD CANDIDATE INITIATIVE

In 2005, International PhD CANDIDATE Initiative was created at Leipzig University as a way to bring together all international PhD candidates. It is a programme specially tailored to suit their needs. Its goals include promoting an exchange of experience and insight among international PhD candidates, strengthening their social support networks and supporting their academic development.

The initiative frequently organises cultural, social and academic events for international PhD candidates of Leipzig University and is a dependable source of help and advice throughout their PhD studies.

Academic and social exchanges are encouraged through:

- Open discussions unrestrained by national or academic barriers
- An emphasis on intercultural learning
- Building contact networks
- Communication
- The deconstruction of language barriers
- Individual help and support

Common activities organised by the initiative:

- Tours of Leipzig
- Excursions
- Workshops
- Evening events featuring specific cultures, bicycle tours around the city, and more.

Contact

Website: www.uni-leipzig.de/initiative/index-en.html
E-mail: dokinfo@rz.uni-leipzig.de
Office: Internationale DOKTORANDEN Initiative
Tarostraße 14, 04103 Leipzig, Germany

Office hours:
Every Thursday from 19:00 to 20:30.
The Council of PhD candidates or “PromovierendenRat” (ProRat) as it’s called in German, represents PhD students at Leipzig University and facilitates information exchanges and networking to help make a candidate’s doctoral work easier from start to finish.

**Representing Students**
In its role as an advisory committee of the University, the ProRat represents all PhD candidates and gives their needs and issues a voice.

**Networking**
The ProRat is a platform for the exchange of individual experiences and interdisciplinary knowledge. Through regularly organised meetings, PhD candidates have the chance to make new contacts with colleagues. Work groups are responsible for implementing ProRat projects, and anyone who wants to help can join.

**Opportunities for Further Education**
In addition to workshops, the ProRat also organises PhD candidate lectures based on their own on-going research. The topics are interdisciplinary in nature and are geared towards all PhD candidates at Leipzig University. Once held, lectures are then published in the scientific journal “arbeitstitel. forum für leipziger promovierende”.

**Advising Students**
The Handbook for PhD Candidates, published by the ProRat, includes important information and tips for successful doctoral studies from start to finish. You can download the handbook at the following link (in German): www.prorat.uni-leipzig.de/en/
WEBLINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Leipzig University

General information: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/study/international-study/general-information.html

PhD Studies at Leipzig University: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/international-mobility/international-phd-candidates.html

Research Academy Leipzig - International PhD programmes: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/ral


Graduate Centre Life Sciences: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/ral/graduate-centre-life-sciences.html

Graduate Centre Social Sciences and Humanities: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/ral/graduate-centre-humanities-and-social-sciences.html

Collaborative research projects: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/collaborative-research-projects-and-centres.html

Kompetenzschule ELSYS (English: School of Expertise; a school with the goal of helping PhD candidates with career planning): www.kompetenzschule.uni-leipzig.de/?lang=en


PhD regulations (in German): www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/universitaet/profil/entwicklungen/amtliche-bekanntmachungen.html?kat_id=40
Organisational Help

Information about visas and entry regulations: http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/study/international-study/international-applicants/visa.html

Information about health insurance: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/study/international-study/international-applicants/health-insurance.html

Living in Leipzig: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/study/international-study/international-applicants/accommodation.html

Learning German in Leipzig: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/study/international-study/international-applicants/german-language-courses.html

Website of the German Studentenwerk (organisation which assists international students): www.internationale-studierende.de/en

Financial Aid

General funding opportunities: www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/en/research/ral/information-about-research-academy-leipzig/funding-opportunities.html


Scholarship database of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (in German): www.stipendienlotse.de

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Studying and doing research in Germany: www.daad.de/en

General information about doctorates in Germany: www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/en/

Individual PhD: www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/doktoranden/en/14754-two-ways-to-do-your-phd/

Further Weblinks

List of research training groups (Graduiertenkollegs) funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG): www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/coordinated_programmes/research_training_groups/index.html

List of collaborative research centres (Sonderforschungsbereiche) funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG): www.dfg.de/en/funded_projects/current_projects_programmes/index.jsp

The EU Liaison Office of the German Research Organisations (Kooperationsstelle EU der Wissenschaftsorganisationen) (KoWi): www.kowi.de/en

Network for PhD students (Doktorandenforum) – privately run, non-commercial website: www.doktorandenforum.de/english.htm

THESIS – Interdisciplinary Network for PhD students (in German): www.thesis.de

Portal for research & teaching run by the weekly DIE ZEIT (in German):
www.academics.de

Information and advice for a scientific career (run on behalf of the rector of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule (RWTH) Aachen) (in German): www.kisswin.de


Information site of the German Rectors’ Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz): www.hochschulkompass.de/en

Research Explorer of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Research Foundation (DFG): www.daad.de/research-explorer or www.research-explorer.dfg.de/research_explorer.en.html

Eurodoc – European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers: www.eurodoc.net

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