

HOW TO FIND AN ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR IN GERMANY

The system of doctoral studies in Germany differs from the Indonesian system. Therefore we would like to provide you with some brief information about how to find an academic supervisor for your proposed doctoral thesis in Germany.

In Germany you have two generally different ways to undertake doctoral studies. One possibility is that you choose an international doctoral program. These programs are comparable to the Indonesian system: Students study partly in a course system, take a number of seminars, pass exams etc., and they undertake their research and write their thesis. For a searchable list of these doctoral programmes see <http://www.daad.de/ipp>.

The other possibility is to undertake your doctoral studies independent from such a structured doctoral program. This is actually the classical way to do a PhD in Germany; the clear majority of our scholarship holders is doing its doctoral studies this way. In this case, you don't search for a doctoral program in the internet. Instead, you have to identify and contact a professor at a German university and ask him whether he would be interested in being your academic supervisor.

German professors generally feel honoured if a young scientist from a country as far away as Indonesia contacts them and wants to do their PhD-research under their supervision. But please note: German professors are often contacted by more potential PhD-candidates than they can accept - and whether they choose you or not is completely up to them. In general, they will only accept you if they are interested in your work. Thus, you need to

- (a) find a professor who is working in the field in which you want to write your doctoral studies,
- (b) convince him that you have a well-prepared plan for the theme of your doctoral studies and
- (c) convince him that you have the knowledge, experience and attitude necessary for undertaking your planned research successfully.

Ad (a):

There are of course different solutions for (a). You may already know the name of a professor from the scientific literature you read, or you may ask your teachers in your faculty, especially if they have studied in Germany. You may search for an international study program in your field (again www.daad.de/ipp) and check the research profiles of the professors teaching there. And you may of course just use an ordinary search engine like *google* to look for professors working in your field of interest.

Please note:

In any case the professor you are going to contact strongly expects that you checked his homepage before (every German professor has a homepage, mostly at his university). You may (and should) contact more than only one professor, e.g. two or three. So you get contacts - and if all of them accept you, you have a choice.

ad (b):

You may contact the German professor directly by E-mail (the E-mail-addresses are easily traceable in the internet). In order to convince him that you have a suitable plan for your doctoral thesis you need to send him your research proposal - the one you present to DAAD when you apply for the scholarship. If the professor accepts you, he needs to accept you and your research proposal and provide DAAD with a written comment on you and your proposal in his letter of acceptance.

Please note:

Your research proposal which you send to the professor should be well-prepared, but need not to be perfect. Your professor might wish to discuss it with you and even ask you to change it in some respects. Add copies of this exchange to your scholarship application to show that your professor is really interested in your work and actually started to act as your supervisor.

Ad (c):

In the mail you write to your professor you should of course introduce yourself (say who you are, where and in which field you graduated, where you work, what scientific work you have done, what your scientific interests are etc.), inform him that you are going to apply for a DAAD-scholarship and that you need a letter of acceptance from a German professor and why you actually choose to contact him. It would also be helpful if you attach your CV.

Please note:

If the professor tells you that he is not accepting you as a doctoral student (for whatever reason), you may ask him to recommend other professors to you who work in your field of interest. If the professor is willing to accept you, you should ask him for specific requirements of the doctoral exam. Most importantly, if you don't speak German you should find out whether you need any German at any moment in the process of your doctoral studies and in the doctoral exam.

The whole process may last a month or more. Therefore it is important that you search for the academic supervisor as early as possible.

Useful link to look for professors and/or institutions where you can carry out your research project :

<http://www.daad.de/deutschland/forschung/research-explorer/08308.en.html>