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Welcome Brochure for International Doctoral Candidates at Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin)

A Guide Covering the Most Important Steps Towards a Successful Doctorate

TU Berlin Center for Junior Scholars (CJS)



Preface

Dear new doctoral candidates at Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin),

Welcome to TU Berlin! I hope you quickly settle in here and become familiar with the University, its infrastructure, and what we have to offer, and use this to advance your doctoral project and academic qualification.

A large university like TU Berlin with more than 30,000 students, 3,000 doctoral candidates, and 300 professors can certainly seem somewhat impersonal and confusing, even more so when located in a major city like Berlin. In addition, the doctoral structure in Germany is very different from that of other university systems which you may be more familiar with.

Each year, about 600 researchers start their doctorate at TU Berlin. A third of these are international candidates (with the largest group from China). Over half have not studied previously at TU Berlin, but at other universities in Germany (36%) or abroad (25%). However, even for former students of TU Berlin, their new status as a doctoral student introduces new tasks and raises new questions. Basic information about doctoral studies at TU Berlin is useful for all our candidates.

We at the Center for Junior Scholars (CJS) at TU Berlin have made it our task to contribute to the University's welcoming culture for doctoral candidates and postdocs. The guide you are now reading is one result of this work, undertaken as part of the measure "Strengthening the Welcome Culture," within the action plan accompanying the 2018 ["Concept for the Advancement of Junior Scholars at TU Berlin."](#)

The guide not only familiarizes you with the formal steps you will take at the beginning of your doctorate at our university, but also presents the many institutions and actors that can offer you support. These include the Center for Junior Scholars (CJS), the Center for Scientific Continuing Education and Cooperation (ZEWK), the International Office, the women's representatives, the Family Services Office, and of course the doctoral offices and the doctoral representatives in the faculties. We would like to thank them all for their excellent cooperation.

However, the essential growth and support you will experience in your research work is made possible by your research group, one of more than 350 at TU Berlin, and your supervisors, who play a key role in your academic success. We wish you every success in your endeavors in the coming years and look forward to meeting you through our various offers.

With best wishes for your time at TU Berlin,

Prof. Dr. Annette Mayer - Director of the Center for Junior Scholars

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1 Introduction and general information on doctorates in Germany

This guide, developed by the [Center for Junior Scholars at Technische Universität Berlin](#) (TU Berlin), is intended to provide you an overview of what it means to pursue a doctorate at TU Berlin.

TU Berlin has a long and rich tradition and is recognized globally as an excellent research university. Not only is it an active participant in Berlin, an international metropolis and outstanding center of science, but it also places significant importance on developing science and technology for the benefit of society.



Watch [this video](#) to find out about reasons to do a PhD in Germany

To this end, the University conducts interconnected research at the highest international level into fundamental principles and their applications. Using its entire breadth of subjects, Technische Universität Berlin establishes innovative fields and promotes inter-faculty research activities with external key players. [Six characteristic key application areas](#) form the framework of these activities along with the [Clusters of Excellence](#) approved by the federal and state governments in the Excellence Strategy.

As of 2019, TU Berlin is part of the [Berlin University Alliance](#), which makes researching at its institutes and academic chairs even more attractive. If you want to contribute to science and conduct outstanding research, we invite you to find out more about starting your scientific career at TU Berlin.

We will give you a short exemplary overview of the entire process from first contacting a professor to finalizing your dissertation and earning your doctoral degree. This is not a guaranteed path to success, but rather an overview of a possible route towards a doctorate.

1.1 Different ways to obtain a doctorate

Generally, there are five different ways of obtaining a doctoral degree in Germany:

- an individual doctorate,
- a doctorate in a structured program,
- a joint doctorate with a university abroad,
- a joint doctorate at a university of applied sciences or
- a doctorate at a non-university research institution or in a company.

Since rules and regulations differ from one structured program to another, this guide mainly focuses on the individual doctorate as the most common and traditional option. When reading this guide, you might discover that a structured program suits you better, in which case you should refer to this list of [programs in the Berlin area](#), as well as further information regarding regulations on their individual websites.

1.1.1 The individual doctorate

The individual doctorate differs from the type of education you have received so far in your bachelor's and master's programs. It is very important to understand that individual doctorates in Germany also differ from doctorate programs in other countries, as there is **no external structure** guiding you through

the steps towards your finished dissertation. By external structure we mean courses or classes to attend, deadlines to meet, and a cohort of fellow students with the same starting date. This lack of an external structure does not mean you are solely responsible for your research and progress. It does mean, however, that certain personal skills make pursuing your doctorate easier e.g.

- **above-average self-organizational skills**
- **perseverance and stamina**
- **the ability to cope with setbacks**
- **the ability to plan and execute your research plan independently**

Therefore, you need to think about your motivation for pursuing a doctorate at TU Berlin. Possible reasons could include:

- Aptitude for scientific writing
- Intellectual curiosity
- Contributing new knowledge, conducting original research, and contributing to the literature in your field, conducting independent research
- Filling discovered gaps in the literature
- Absence of tuition fees (only administrative fees, which are paid per semester)

When pursuing your doctorate individually, you will have a supervisor and a team of fellow researchers at your side to discuss your ideas, your progress and also your setbacks, but **you are the one who sets the pace and needs to initiate the dialog**. In return, you might be able to offer advice to your colleagues when they are struggling. You might even find a common research area to cooperate with someone from inside or outside your research group or university.

1.1.2 Structured programs

Candidates in [structured programs](#) receive specialized and interdisciplinary training as part of continuing education. Furthermore, they are usually supervised by more than one person. The duration of a structured program is three to four years (if completed within the regular period). The structured doctoral programs at TU Berlin include, for example, the highly regarded [Berlin Mathematical School](#) funded within the Excellence Strategy. Please note that structured doctoral programs are often also referred to as graduate schools, research schools or research training groups.

1.1.3 Joint doctorate with a partner university abroad or a university of applied sciences

If your research topic is closely linked to two different countries, or if you are considering working in another country after your doctorate and you or your supervisor are in close contact with researchers at another university abroad, you can also consider pursuing a joint doctorate, also known as a bi-national doctorate or Cotuelle de thèse.

A different kind of cooperation would be a joint doctorate (*Kooperative Promotion*) with a university of applied sciences (formerly *Fachhochschule*) either in Berlin or elsewhere. If you are interested in doing

a joint doctorate, please discuss this with your supervisor and contact the relevant person in your [faculty service center](#).

1.1.4 External doctorate

A doctorate can also be completed at non-university research institutions and in industrial companies. The TU Berlin Executive Board concluded a [code of conduct](#) in July 2017 which stresses the importance of a free choice of topic, the possibility to participate in academic discussion, and the obligation to publish research results for doctorates completed within a commercial organization. Supervisors are required to make the various parties involved aware of these principles and all participating parties are required to confirm their compliance by signature when candidates register their intent to pursue a doctorate.



The doctoral regulations state which qualifications you require, which regulations apply as well as your rights. Read them carefully.

1.2 Timeframe

Plan adequate time from your first interest in pursuing a doctorate to actually commencing it. This may take six to twelve months, especially if you need to prepare a particularly difficult research proposal. The research proposal is often submitted before even meeting with your potential supervisor at their office. The administrative procedures for starting your life in Germany may also require considerable time and effort.

Once in Berlin, the time to actually complete your doctorate depends on the form, supervision, and your personal effort. On average it takes four-and-a-half years to complete a dissertation. Three years is a standard time span in the sciences, whilst it may take up to eight years in the humanities. If you can only work on your own research part time, for example if you are employed at TU Berlin and have other obligations such as teaching, please note that the Berlin State Higher Education Act ensures that you may use half of your working-time for research, writing, and continuing your professional development. If you work on a third-party-funding contract, you may use one quarter of your time for your academic and professional development. If you can focus all your time on your research, it may only take three years to submit your dissertation.

Once you have defended your dissertation, you need to publish your work within a year. Only after publication will you receive your certificate and be able to use your title officially.

1.3 Eligibility regarding previous degrees

As the first step in your orientation phase, you need to find out if your highest university degree allows you to pursue a doctorate at TU Berlin. As a general rule, it is necessary to have a master's degree that is equivalent to a German university master's degree. For exceptions to this rule, please refer to the [doctoral regulations](#).

To find out if your degree is equivalent to a German master's degree, you may contact our [recognition officer in the Department of International Affairs](#). If your degree does not qualify for a doctorate, you might want to consider studying in a [master's program](#) at TU Berlin.

1.4 Language requirements

At TU Berlin you can do your research and write your dissertation in either German or English. In most labs and research groups, the working language may already be mostly English, while in other offices work is usually conducted in German.

Unlike for structured programs, you are usually not required to present a specific language test to your potential supervisor. However, your language skills in either German or English need to be excellent, as you are required to produce an excellent dissertation and work through a lot of literature. We recommend that your language proficiency is at least at C1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for the language you plan to write your dissertation in. For doctoral researchers from some countries, a specific language skill certificate is necessary for visa application. These regulations are best discussed with the visa section at the responsible embassy as TU Berlin has no influence on requirements or proceedings.

1.5 General information on funding opportunities

Finding suitable funding is the first step and involves a lot of searching, reading, and consideration on your part. There are some very useful pages provided by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), which is the [world's largest funding organization for international student exchange and researchers](#). These provide an excellent overview of the research landscape in Germany and even offer [online courses](#) on how to apply for a PhD in Germany. We strongly recommend checking their information on offers and application procedures.

1.5.1 Work contracts, scholarships, loans or private funding

There are no tuition fees at TU Berlin. All enrolled students as well as doctoral candidates are required to pay a [semester fee](#). This fee is approximately EUR 300 per semester in total, although most of this covers the cost of your [Semesterticket](#), which allows you to use all public transportation within Germany for a period of 6 months.

You do, however, need to be able to fund yourself. It is therefore of the utmost importance to understand that you need to take care of financing your stay yourself and we recommend you find out about different [financing options](#). Each option has its advantages and disadvantages.

1.5.1.1 Work contracts

A [work contract](#) at TU Berlin is a very popular option. You need to be aware that as a research assistant only a quarter or a maximum of half of your time can be devoted to your own research while the rest of the time you might be involved in teaching or other research projects or application procedures for third-party funded work (regardless of whether you are working full-time or part-time).

There are also different types of work contracts at TU Berlin. Some are project-based and can last for one, two or three years (usually with third-party funding and without teaching obligation). Others are funded by the University itself and are usually for five years and include teaching duties.

It is not always a given that your contract will be renewed to cover the time you require to complete your doctoral degree. The legal maximum contract period is six years. This may be extended, though

there is no guarantee, to take account of periods of childcare, chronic illness, disability, and caring for relatives, as well as unpaid research leave.

Open positions at TU Berlin are posted [online](#). You need to apply through the standard application procedure.

1.5.1.2 Scholarships/Fellowships

[Scholarships/fellowships](#) are another option to finance yourself. Unlike in many countries, no full or partial scholarships are awarded directly by TU Berlin. Unfortunately, no professional advisors are available to guide you through the scholarship process and you have to devote a lot of time and effort to find a suitable scholarship/fellowship.

In our experience, you might find opportunities through your previous university, your home government, or private associations. It is always very helpful to look at the [DAAD scholarship database](#), [ResearchConnect](#) or [ELFI](#). We update a list of suitable scholarships for doctoral candidates on [our website](#) but usually cannot offer help with applying.

We can, however, help you directly with applications for the [Elsa-Neumann-Stipendium](#), a scholarship financed by the state of Berlin. If you need further information, feel free to [contact us](#) regarding the requirements and application deadlines.

1.5.1.3 Loans

The [Studentische Darlehenskasse e.V. Berlin](#) - a loan society for students - offers financing for all students and doctoral candidates at TU Berlin, regardless of parental income, degree program, age, country of origin, and the number of semesters completed.

Loans of up to EUR 27.000,00 are available over a maximum of 36 months. The maximum monthly installment is EUR 750. You need to provide somebody to vouch for you and your creditworthiness. Unfortunately, this person must have their permanent residency in Germany.

As researching already involves a lot of pressure, we do not recommend financing your entire doctorate with a loan. If possible, use this option towards the end of your doctorate only or if there is no other possibility to finance yourself.

1.5.1.4 Private funding

It is also possible for your parents or relatives to finance you. However, your chances of finding a supervisor are lower if your finances are not secured by a public sponsor or scholarship, as this can be seen as some kind of approval of quality. Please note that, depending on your home country, you may need to open a German bank account and block a certain amount of money in the account when applying for a visa. Please inform yourself at your home country's embassy.

1.5.1.5 Student jobs

If you do not have a work contract as a research assistant, you may work almost any job inside or outside the University. Normally, the maximum amount of time you may work when studying is restricted to 20 hours per week. Please note that you are not eligible to work as a student assistant at the Berlin

universities, as these jobs are only open to bachelor's and master's students. Some scholarships or fellowships limit or prohibit additional work. We strongly recommend checking with the office of your scholarship or fellowship before signing a contract.

1.6 Monograph or cumulative dissertation

At the end of your doctoral project, before your oral defense, you need to submit the results of your research in a doctoral thesis. You do not need to decide on this when submitting your research proposal, but you should have a basic idea of where your preference lies: writing a monograph or combining peer-reviewed and published papers in your dissertation and submitting a [cumulative dissertation](#) at the end. You can still decide when working on your dissertation but should definitely reach an agreement with your supervisor.

2 First steps

By now, you have gained a broad overview about pursuing a doctoral degree at TU Berlin. Now we would like to present the actual steps necessary to start your research work here. As mentioned before, there is no single specific way to secure your spot as a doctoral researcher. What is certain, though, is that your approach needs to be iterative. For this reason, some of the first steps mentioned in the following paragraphs may be interchangeable.

Keep an open mind and be flexible. As individual research is the most common route to a doctorate in Germany and at TU Berlin, the rest of this guide will focus on this option. It is a common misconception that being accepted by a supervisor means they have to plan your research for you. Usually, you will select the topic and build the framework for your research yourself.

2.1 Finding a supervisor

At TU Berlin you may conduct your research at one of the [seven faculties](#).



Unfortunately, not all our Internet pages have been translated into English, which may complicate finding a research group in your relevant field. We are committed to translating our entire website in the future. In the meantime, you might need to use translation software or the help of a friend.

A professor or junior professor may supervise your doctoral research. You may also be working on a specific topic within your institute or academic chair where research group leaders (usually postdocs) may oversee your work as well, but the actual supervisor must be a professor or junior professor.

Ideally, you will have already contacted your potential supervisor having come across their work during your master's thesis, attended a presentation they gave at a conference, or gotten their contact details from a professor or researcher at your home university. If this is not the case, we strongly recommend you have your research proposal ready if you wish to contact a professor at one of our faculties. Some professors may have specific information on office hours or appointments regarding doctoral projects and whether or not they need further documents, such as a CV, beforehand.

2.2 Writing your research proposal

Your research proposal needs to demonstrate your potential to conduct excellent and meaningful research. There is a lot of literature available on how to prepare and write about your research project. We recommend the DAAD's sites for great tips and "how to" guidelines on [writing research proposals](#). Your proposal must be related in some way to the research conducted by your prospective supervisor so you can collaborate with them throughout your work. Your research proposal may also be used in the context of your external scholarship or fellowship application.



Did you know that the [Berlin University Alliance's number one objective](#) is to focus on grand challenges?

You are obliged to follow the rules of [good scientific practice](#), both when working on your proposal and when conducting your research.

2.3 Contacting a supervisor

Please prepare well when first contacting a prospective supervisor. Many professors and junior professors are bombarded with doctoral supervision requests. You need to stand out by providing well-written and up-to-date documents. They must be directed towards the professor or junior professor you are writing to. This means you need to write an individual email to each person you are contacting, demonstrating familiarity their research. Always include your

- Motivation letter
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Research proposal
- Funding plan (information on scholarships you have received or have applied for, working positions you hold or have applied for etc.)

2.4 Dealing with rejections

A rejection from a supervisor does not reflect negatively on your work and you should not feel discouraged. It is possible that your research idea does not fit in with the institute’s planned research projects or your supervisor might not have enough time, space, or lab resources to provide you with an adequate work environment. Do ask for feedback, though. There might be the chance to re-apply if you just need to tighten up or clarify some points in your proposal.



To Do: Improve your portfolio: maybe another master’s? Improve your English (“[Coursera](#)” free online classes on research and scientific writing)

3 Arriving in Berlin and commencing your research

Congratulations on receiving a work contract or being accepted to be supervised for a doctorate!

What follows is a seemingly never-ending stream of administrative tasks. You might feel overwhelmed by the initial load of administrative tasks in Germany, in Berlin and especially at TU Berlin. Be assured that once you have mastered the admissions process, everything else will seem very easy. Additionally, there is always help you can rely on.

Important to know: When first logging in to **tuPORT**, please select "erste Schritte" (first steps) to change your initial password and to select a TAN process. Please use a computer and not a mobile phone during this initial step. You'll need the mobile device to set up the TOTP app during this process.

3.1 Admission as a doctoral candidate at the faculty

According to the doctoral regulations (section 4), you need to declare your intent to pursue a doctorate at your [faculty service center](#). This can normally be done via email using the forms available on the faculty's website. You will have to attach your documents such as a copy of your master's degree or equivalent, a CV, and a schedule or exposé for your doctoral project. Your supervisor will have to confirm their willingness to supervise the project. Forms and checklists can be found at each of the seven faculties. You can send the document to the email address listed at your faculty service center. It may take some time to hear back. If all goes well, you will receive confirmation from the faculty in the form of a letter from the dean. Only then can you take the next step, i.e. enrolling with the [Office of Student Affairs](#), which is voluntary for employees of TU Berlin, but mandatory for everyone else.

3.2 Enrolling with the Office of Student Affairs

Depending on your status, you might need to enroll as a doctoral candidate at TU Berlin. Researchers with a work contract with TU Berlin do not need to enroll but may do so. We recommend you do so as it provides some useful benefits:

- If you do not have an employment contract with TU Berlin, you have to enroll according to the regulations
- If you want to use the student housing facilities or stay at the international village at Schlachtensee or Adlershof
- If you want to use the public transport at a reduced price
- If you want to benefit from student discounts within and outside the university (lowest prices for meals in the canteen, reduced prices in theaters and museums...)

3.2.1 The enrollment process

If you do decide or are required to enroll, the enrollment process can be broken down into three main steps:

1. You need to [register online](#) at TU Berlin to access the TU Portal, which is called tuPORT. Once you have completed and submitted your registration, it should not take longer than 2-3 days to receive the initial login details for tuPORT. If you do not receive them, please [contact us](#) for help. Please use Firefox or Internet Explorer/Edge

when registering online or navigating within tuPORT. Also, you will need to select whether you want to enroll in the summer semester (April- September) or winter semester (October-March), which depends on when you arrive and your study schedule.

2. Once you can log in, you may start your enrollment process and upload the various documents required, such as the enrollment form which is only valid with your handwritten signature. Please try to have all the necessary documents at hand before starting the process, so you can upload them right away. This will give you time to react in case the admissions office rejects certain documents. You will also need to pay the semester fee in this step.

 You need to pay your fees and ask for public transport exemption **each semester.**

3. You need to wait and check your status regularly. After admission has been approved you can download your enrollment certificate (*Immatrikulationsbescheinigung*). You can now activate your account and request your student ID.
4. Only for **visiting doctoral candidates**: If you want to enroll, you have to follow the exact same steps in 1-3, but unlike regular doctoral candidates, you will not receive a generated email with the login data for tuPORT. In order to obtain these, you will have to [contact us](#).

3.3 Supervision agreement

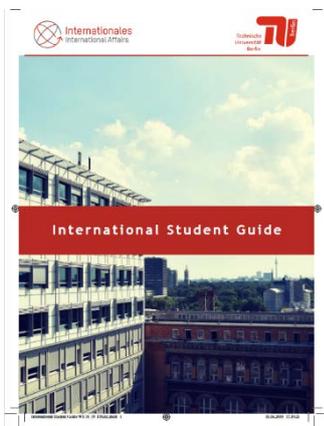
In addition to the official confirmation of supervision included in the form to register your intention to pursue a doctorate, the doctoral regulations further require the doctoral candidate and supervisor to conclude a written [doctoral agreement](#), detailing the nature and extent of the supervision. It not only provides you and your supervisor with a structure and transparency regarding mutual communication and work, but also helps to avoid misunderstandings in the working relationship between doctoral candidate and supervisor.

3.4 Housing

Unfortunately, the housing situation in Berlin is not the easiest. We recommend checking various websites to find accommodation. With a student ID (which you will receive after enrolling at TU Berlin), you are eligible for subsidized student housing in Berlin ([Studierendenwerk Berlin](#)). However, waiting lists are currently very long (a year or even more). Still, you should consider registering with Studierendenwerk, in case there is a place you can move in to. You can also find private rooms or apartments on [various sites](#) put together by the Department of International Affairs. You can also get in touch with your future colleagues, as they might know possible openings or somebody you can move in with.

3.5 Administrative tasks before your arrival

Shortly before arriving in Berlin, you need to complete some additional administrative tasks:



The Department of International Affairs has put together a few [necessary administrative to-dos for international students](#) once they arrive at TU Berlin.

A must read is also the [International Student Guide](#). It provides information on how to set up a bank account, how to get a Mensa Card as well as a general idea of life and culture in Berlin.

3.5.1 Registering with the city of Berlin

After finding a place to stay, you will need to register as a resident of Berlin at one of its administrative offices (*Bezirksamt*). If you are a citizen of the European Union, your registration comes with voting rights for the local government of your district.

Your landlord will provide you with confirmation that you are indeed moving into your new place. You will need this confirmation for registering. You should also download, fill out, and print the registration form for the city of Berlin.

Now comes the tricky part: [getting an appointment](#) for this registration. Please note that you can register at any district, and that you can even try to secure an appointment two months ahead before

coming to Berlin. If you need an appointment quickly, you should be flexible and check for open slots online regularly (10 times per day). Appointments are offered for the coming two months.

3.5.2 Health insurance

In order to be employed or enrolled at a German university you will have to prove that you have adequate health insurance.

Students who are citizens of the European Union can use their European health insurance card (EHIC). If you do not have an EHIC but are privately insured in your home country, you need to check if your insurance is also valid in Germany. If it is, you could obtain a waiver for the statutory health insurance requirement (*Befreiung von der Versicherungspflicht*) from one of the German statutory health insurance companies. This will then suffice for your enrollment. If not, please [inform yourself](#) about the procedure and possible insurance companies in Germany. If you receive a fellowship from the DAAD, a combination of health, accident and personal liability insurance is normally covered by the DAAD. For others, their insurance package may also be an option – please [check their website for details](#).

3.6 Learning German

At TU Berlin's Center for Modern Languages ([Zentrum Moderne Sprachen, ZEMS](#)) you can register for German classes, usually at the beginning of each semester. For now, all [German classes](#) at ZEMS have waiting lists. However, we strongly recommend that you register as a spot might open up.

There is also a student-organized language and culture exchange ([Sprach- und Kulturbörse, SKB](#)) which also offers German courses in intercultural and informal settings.

Please note that all German courses come with fees. You can of course also make use of the many German language training opportunities offered by other institutions and companies in Berlin, e.g. the [Volkshochschule \(VHS\)](#).

[Deutsche Welle](#) offers free online German classes, which are surely very helpful for an introduction to the German language.

3.7 Your first days at TU Berlin

Plan a few days for getting oriented, setting up your workspace, and getting to know your team. The following is a list of some of the things you will probably need to take care of:

- Setting up your email account, changing your email signature, and installing software (to receive your email account you might need to get in touch with the IT team at Campus Management ([ZECM](#)))
- Arranging an introduction to your faculty and its members as well as the structure of TU Berlin
- Getting to know the library (and software for using and organizing literature like Citavi, Zotero etc.)
- Asking about the [Berlin University Alliance](#) (BUA) or further current cooperation projects within your faculty, institute, or department

- Checking out courses, you may want to register for at the [Zentraleinrichtung für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung und Kooperation](#) (ZEWK, Center for Scientific Continuing Education and Cooperation)
- Finding out about possibilities for getting in touch with fellow doctoral candidates, social events as well as [sports courses](#) at TU Berlin

4 Researching at TU Berlin

Once you have settled into your life as a junior researcher, you might come across more challenges than you expected. This is totally normal, but it also means you have to tackle these problems once they arise. There are a lot of people and offices at TU Berlin to assist you with these challenges. It is important to know where and when to find help.

The following chapter provides a short overview of the most important contacts at TU Berlin. Keep in mind that the [CJS](#) is always a good point of contact, as we can help with most inquiries or refer you to other colleagues who can. Confidentiality is important to us and we will not proceed with any issue or conflict you discuss with us, unless requested to do so by you.

4.1 Introductory workshops at your faculty

Usually, an introductory session, organized together with the Center for Junior Scholars, is offered each year by almost all faculties to welcome all new doctoral candidates and provide the chance for networking. We recommend taking part, even if you have been at TU Berlin for several months already. It gives you the opportunity to build a network within your faculty and obtain or refresh information on how to succeed as a doctoral candidate at our university.

4.2 Continuing education

TU Berlin offers a wide range of courses, trainings, and workshops designed for the specific needs of research and teaching. Many of these are specifically intended for doctoral candidates. The majority of these are organized by [ZEWK, the Center for Scientific Continuing Education and Cooperation](#). It is worth checking their program regularly – they offer specific workshops for the different stages of your doctorate, [many of them in English](#), and also have courses on teaching skills that (among others) end with a certificate, e.g. Teaching in English – Basic and Advanced Courses ([TIE-BAC](#)) or [Teaching for University's Best](#).

You may also [take courses](#) offered by one of the other universities in Berlin, which are open to candidates from institutions of the Berlin University Alliance. Courses address structural, field-specific, methodological, and teaching related content as well as many more areas.

4.3 proMotion for female doctoral candidates

The [proMotion program](#) aims to support female doctoral researchers at TU Berlin. It consists of two components. The first is the qualification program proMotion training, where a group is created that works together for at least a semester. The application window is advertised regularly, but you can also contact the coordinator directly. The second is the accompanying framework program proMotion support. Here, lunch talks and one-off events are offered to all female doctoral candidates at the University.

4.4 International Career Week by the TU Alumni Program

Each year, usually in October, the Alumni Program organizes a [career event](#) together with the Center for Junior Scholars that

- connects you with former TU Berlin doctoral candidates,
- provides useful information on academic and non- academic career paths,
- helps you find out how to find and apply for jobs in Germany and
- discusses the different visas available to you after you obtain your doctoral degree.

You should automatically receive information about the event from the [Alumni Office](#) and CJS. If not, please contact either of us. You can also register with the Alumni Office well before you finish your doctorate to be informed about all their events.

4.5 Open Access publishing

TU Berlin is part of the growing movement to grant free access to (at least publicly funded) research results. It adopted [an Open Access Policy in 2017](#), following the “[Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities](#)” of 2003, which was initiated by the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft and started a long row of support from nearly all institutions in science and research. To promote open access to research results including your publications, the University Library’s Open Access Team advises TU affiliates on all aspects of Open Access publishing as well as legal and financial issues. The team also offers information and training sessions on publication strategies in collaboration with CJS and ZEWK. In certain cases, you can also receive financial support for [open access publishing costs](#).

4.6 Proofreading for junior scholars

The [Proofreading Service](#) in the Department of International Affairs offers TU Berlin junior scholars the opportunity to have their external funding applications and academic papers for publication in peer-reviewed journals written in English proofread, thus improving their written English and their chances of success.

4.7 Degree completion grants

At the end of your research or writing process, you may run out of financing before you are quite finished. If you expect to submit your dissertation within approximately the next six months, you may qualify for a STIBET degree completion grant funded by the DAAD and offered by CJS. When funds are available, we will publish information about the application and funding period on [our website](#) and emails. You must have submitted your declaration of intent to your faculty to be eligible for this grant.

There is also a [completion grant \(PAS\) available for female doctoral candidates](#) offered by the women’s representatives. Their stipend is offered each semester.

4.8 A word about mental health

One in two doctoral students experiences psychological distress, as shown in a [renowned study by Levecque](#). TU Berlin offers free [psychological counseling](#) to guide you through difficult times. Networking with other doctoral candidates at TU Berlin or attending courses like “Resilience-Training” by [ZEWK](#) can also be helpful in realizing that you are not alone with your challenges and in finding healthy coping mechanisms. Please ask for help if you find yourself struggling.

4.9 Healthy mind and healthy body

Maintaining or establishing a healthy mind goes hand and hand with a healthy body and taking enough breaks. Whether you prefer a low-impact or high-intensity sport, the [TU Berlin Sports Center](#) and sports centers at the other universities and colleges in Berlin (e.g. [Freie Universität Berlin](#) or [Humboldt University](#)) offer a wide range of fitness and relaxation classes. Take advantage of the reduced rates for enrolled students. Please note that classes usually sell out quickly. Note the start of the booking period in your calendar and review courses and classes you are interested in beforehand.

4.10 Diversity

Gender equality and diversity are central aims anchored at the highest level of our university. The [Coordinating Office for Women's Advancement and Equality](#) as well as numerous programs, e.g. [proMotion](#), ensure equal conditions are implemented in all areas. Aside from its individual offerings, the University also has extensive measures in place to promote balancing career/studies and family life. These measures include flexible working times, partial parental leave and more. The [Family Services Office](#) is the first point of contact for all of these matters.

TU Berlin is also committed to the goals of [equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination](#). Thus, TU Berlin's [Representative Council for Severely Disabled Employees](#) supports, helps and promotes all employees with a disability at all levels: Be it with employment, integration, workplace equipment, the preparation of applications or the like. If needed, contact the counseling team. For doctoral students with prolonged or permanent health impairments, there is also the option of contacting the team at the [Counseling Center for Students with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses](#), which advocates for equal opportunities to participate in their studies. Advice can also be sought on inclusion services, such as additional equipment for laptops or PCs or communication aids in the form of sign language interpreters, for example.

A list of other advising offers and self-help can be found on their [website](#).

5 Finalizing your dissertation and what comes after

The last phase of your doctorate is about to start. As a doctoral candidate you have probably experienced many ups and downs, but now a new phase of your life begins, and you may even leave Berlin for good. This chapter focuses on the completion phase.

5.1 Formal procedure

Refer to your [doctoral regulations](#) to find out how to start your examination procedure, which documents you need, and where to submit them. Your [faculty service center](#) may assist you in the process and can answer all your questions. Once you submit your thesis, the review process will start and – provided that your dissertation is accepted – lead to the scientific defense, or *wissenschaftliche Aussprache* at TU Berlin. After your defense, you will receive your final grade. However, you will not hold the degree or receive your certificate until you publish your dissertation. All essential information regarding publication is available from the [University Library Dissertation Service](#).

5.2 Printing cost grants

If you or your research group does not have sufficient funds for publishing your dissertation, printing cost grants are available. One well-known grant is offered by the [FAZIT Stiftung](#). There are also several, subject-specific grants which you can find via [ELFI or ResearchConnect](#). Alternatively, you can always publish your thesis and the corresponding research data online through [DepositOnce](#) – TU Berlin’s repository for research data and publications. Talk to your colleagues and your supervisor if you are having trouble finding the right fit or contact the library’s [publication service](#) for assistance.

5.3 Deregistering (exmatriculation)

There are two ways to [deregister](#) from TU Berlin. The easiest and most common way is to stop paying the semester fees after you defend. You will then be automatically deregistered and lose your status as doctoral candidate as well as all the benefits of being enrolled. It is important to download all the documents you need from your account for future reference before deregistering. Your email account will be deactivated six months after your exmatriculation. Once you exmatriculate, your Semesterticket will also be invalid, and you will no longer have a public transportation pass. You may be entitled to a refund of (some) fees and contributions when terminating your enrollment. Please contact the Office of Student Affairs for details.

The other option is to actively terminate your status as an enrolled doctoral candidate in your tuPORT account. Make sure to download and save your documents and files before doing so.

5.4 Alumni registration

To stay in touch with TU Berlin we recommend [registering as a TU alum](#). Registering with our alumni program offers a number of benefits such reduced fees for sports courses, access to the library, an alumni email address, and access to alumni events and courses.

5.5 Leaving Berlin

If you decide to leave Berlin, you need to cancel your apartment, electricity, and other services or contracts well in advance. Please inform yourself accordingly six months before leaving about the deadlines. Once you know when you will be leaving Berlin, you need to make an appointment with the city of Berlin to deregister your residence.

Feedback

The information provided here is a summary of the most common topics we encounter when advising doctoral candidates. This guide is not conclusive nor is it tailored to individual cases. If you require more specific information or would like to give us feedback on things missing from this guide, feel free to [contact us](#) any time.

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