The German Research System and how to study in Germany

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1. The German research system – 1.1 Universities

- Duality of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and non-university research institutes
- In Germany, there are over 400 universities and universities of applied sciences – public and private ones
- Universities combine research and higher education with a focus on excellence science and the right to award doctoral degrees (with concentration on basic research)
- Universities of applied science concentrate more on the training of BA and MA students in a strong cooperation with the local and regional economy. However, more and more universities of applied science also engage in applied research.
1. The German research system –
1.2 Non-university research institutions

• Beside the HEI-sector, the German research system is characterised by 4 big national research organisations:
  - Max-Planck-Society
  - Helmholtz-Association
  - Leibniz-Gemeinschaft
  - Fraunhofer-Society

• Furthermore, there exist
  - a number of Academies of Sciences,
  - national and regional research institutions of the federal ministries and ministries of the „Bundeslaender“, 
  - private research institutions and
  - research-intensive enterprises.
(a) Max-Planck-Society for the Advancement of Science

• The Max Planck Society is Germany's most successful research organization – with 18 Nobel laureates since 1948.
• 83 institutes are engaged in basic research in the natural, bio- and social sciences as well as humanities.
• ca. 17,000 employees, ca. 6,000 researchers.
• Primarily financed by federal and sub-federal public funds (ca. 1.6 Mrd. Euro/year – ca. 80-90% of the overall budget).
• Additional funds by external funding institutions.
• Head Office: Munich
(b) Helmholtz-Association of German Research Centres

• The Helmholtz Association is dedicated to pursuing the long-term research goals of state and society, and to maintaining and improving the livelihoods of the population.

• Its work is divided into six strategic research fields: Energy; Earth and Environment; Health; Key Technologies; Matter; and Aeronautics, Space and Transport.

• The Helmholtz Association brings together 18 scientific-technical and biological-medical research centres.

• With more than 38,000 employees and an annual budget of more than €4 billion, (70% core budget) the Helmholtz Association is Germany’s largest scientific organisation.

• Head Offices in Berlin and Bonn
The Leibniz Association connects 88 independent research institutions that range in focus from the natural, engineering and environmental sciences via economics, spatial and social sciences to the humanities.

The institutes of the Leibniz Association conduct knowledge-driven and applied basic research, maintain scientific infrastructure and provide research-based services.

Knowledge transfer is addressed to policy-makers, academia, business and the public.

Ca. 17,500 employees, among them 8,800 researchers.

Overall budget: 1.5 Billion Euro (ca. 70-80% core budget, up to 30% external funding)

Head Office: Berlin
(d) Fraunhofer-Society for the Applied Sciences

- Fraunhofer is Europe’s largest application-oriented research organization.
- The research efforts are geared entirely to people’s needs: health, security, communication, energy and the environment.
- 66 institute and research centres with ca. 24,000 employees (mainly in the sector of engineering and technologies)
- More than 70 percent of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft’s contract research revenue of 1.8 billion Euro is derived from contracts with industry and from publicly financed research projects. Approx. 30% is financed by public funds.
- Head Office: Munich
2. Preconditions for a study or research stay in Germany (I)

- Very good to excellent exams / diploma
- Official recognition of the exams / diploma by the universities
  - For PhD:
    - a diploma which is similar or equal to a „Master“ or „Magister“, „Diplom“ or „Staatsexamen“
    - Depending on doctoral rules and regulations of the relevant faculty
  - For BA/Master students:
    - University entrance qualification (recognized by the German institutions)
    - Previous university studies
- Application and Registration at the university (immatrikulation/enrollment)
  - For BA / Master students
    - International Office (Akademisches Auslandsamt) at the universities or
    - Centralised application tool „uni-assit“ (http://www.uni-assist.de/)
  - For doctoral students:
    - Approval by a senior researcher/professor („Doctor-father/mother“)
    - Acknowledged by the faculty or PhD committee
2. Preconditions for a study or research stay in Germany (II)

• Relevant language knowledge
  – For BA/MA students – German, possibly English
  – For doctoral students – German and/or English
• Funding of your research stay needs to be assured.
• To get a longer-term visa for Germany you need to show that you have at least 8,000 Euro/ year at your disposal
• Both, for visa and for the enrollment at a HEI you need a Health Insurance
• PhD thesis can be either prepared solely at a HEI or in cooperation between a non-university research institute, and/or a company and a HEI.
3. Ways to get a German doctoral degree?

- **Individual programme** between a doctoral student and a professor
- **Structural programmes** – Graduate schools
  - Similar to US or British PhD programmes
  - Doctoral courses and interdisciplinary curricula incl. soft skills development
  - Currently about 700 programmes all over Germany – at universities and non-university research institutes
  - Often English as working language
- **Helpful Links:**
  - [www.daad.de/research-explorer](http://www.daad.de/research-explorer); [www.phdgermany.de](http://www.phdgermany.de);
4. Financial Support Instruments (a) National Programmes (I)

- **Financial Support for what?**
  - No or limited study fees / tuition fee at public institutions
  - Administrative cost for application/registration
  - Living cost and accommodation

- **Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)**
  - Support of doctoral studies in Germany – up to 3 years
  - Support of short-term research stays in Germany – up to 12 months
  - 1,000 €/month + health insurance, travel cost, language courses, family allowances
  - Application via DAAD
  - [https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/de/](https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/de/)
4. Financial Support Instruments (a) National Programmes (II)

- Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)
  - Support of graduate schools – up to 3 year
  - 1.468 €/month study grant or 65% research position Stelle (ca. 2.400 € gross salary/month minus taxes and social insurances) + travel cost, family allowances
  - Application via individual graduate schools
4. Financial Support Instruments
(b) Public Foundations for academic support – „Begabtenförderungswerke“

• Financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
• They reflect the plurality of the German society:
  – Religious or
  – Political – oriented towards specific political parties / spectrums or
  – Entrepreneurial or
  – Linked to trade unions or
  – Independent from any political or religious spectrum.
• Both, financial and non-material support – via seminars, workshops, summer schools, network activities etc..
• Therefore, good German language knowledge (at least B2) is required.
• Political or societal engagement according to the foundation‘s principals is expected.
• Helpful Link: [http://www.stipendiumplus.de/startseite.html](http://www.stipendiumplus.de/startseite.html)
4. Financial Support Instruments
(b) Public Foundations for academic support – „Begabtenförderungswerke“(II)

- Precondition: Admission to doctoral programme at a German university.
- Application possible in the starting phase of the doctoral studies (in the first 12-15 months)
- Funding period: 24 months + up to 12 months prolongation.
- Funding amount similar in each of the foundations: ca. 1.000 Euro / month + flat rate for material cost + family allowance (all together approx. up to 1.500 Euro)

- Please, be aware of the following:
  - Upper age limits in some of the foundations (usually 30 years)
  - Not all foundations can support foreign doctoral students from outside EU or Switzerland.
4. Förderinstitutionen in Deutschland (b) Begabtenförderungswerke (III)

- Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation - http://www.kas.de (CDU-oriented)
- Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation – http://www.fes.de (SPD-oriented)
- Heinrich-Boell-Foundation – www.boell.de (Green-oriented)
- Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation – www.rosalux.de (Leftist-oriented)
- Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit - https://www.freiheit.org (Liberal-oriented)
- Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft - Studienförderwerk Klaus Murmann - https://www.sdw.org (entrepreneurially oriented)
- Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes - http://www.studienstiftung.de (politically and religiously neutral)
- Evangelisches Studienwerk Villigst - http://www.evstudienwerk.de (related to Protestant Church)
- Bischöfliche Studienförderung Cusanuswerk - http://www.cusanuswerk.de (related to Catholic Church)
- Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk - http://www.eles-studienwerk.de (related to Jewish community)
- Avicenna-Studienwerk - http://www.avicenna-studienwerk.de (related to Muslim community)
- Katholischer Akademischer Ausländerdienst - http://www.kaad.de (related to Catholic Church)
5. Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions – Funding support from the EU

- Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions EU – General Informationen -
  http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/marie-skl%C5%82odowska-curie-actions

- Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions EU – Programme Sites MSCA-
  http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/

- Marie Sklodowska Curie Actions EU – Programme Site ITN -

- Offered MSCA PhD positions:
  http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/apply-now/jobs-for-you/index_en.htm
  http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/jobs/index

- MSCA programmes for post-docs – Individual Fellowships:
  http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/about-mscicactions/if/index_en.htm

- National Contact Point in Germany: http://www.nks-msc.de/
Thank you very much and Good Luck!

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