Getting a PhD –
DLR_Graduate_Program

Are you an engineer, a natural scientist, a computer scientist or a graduate in a similar subject area?
Are you looking to enhance your career by undertaking a PhD?
Do you have the drive to conduct research and break new ground? Do you want to work on exciting, visionary issues with the greatest minds from a broad variety of disciplines and every part of the world?
If so, PhD work with DLR is the ideal starting point for your career in cutting-edge research.
You can find current recruitment options at DLR.de/jobs/en

DLR at a glance
DLR is Germany’s national research centre for aeronautics and space. Its extensive research and development work in aeronautics, space, energy, transport, digitalisation and security is integrated into national and international cooperative ventures.
As Germany’s space agency, DLR has been given responsibility for the forward planning and the implementation of the German space programme by the German federal government as well as for the international representation of German interests. Furthermore, Germany’s largest project management agency is also part of DLR.

Approximately 8,000 people are employed at 20 locations in Germany: Cologne (headquarters), Augsburg, Berlin, Bonn, Braunschweig, Bremerhaven, Dresden, Goettingen, Hamburg, Jena, Juelich, Lampoldshausen, Neustrelitz, Oberpfaffenhofen, Oldenburg, Stuttgart, Trauen, and Weilheim. DLR also operates offices in Brussels, Paris, Tokyo, and Washington D.C.

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Your PhD – our joint mission
Encouraging scientific talent is key at DLR. In our 40 institutes and facilities, round 1,000 young scientists are continuously conducting research as part of their thesis in some of the most exciting subjects of our time. They make pioneering contributions to the fields of aeronautics, space, energy, transport, digitalisation and security. This inspiring, interdisciplinary environment will fascinate you too. At DLR, you will find a place to pursue your ideas and research interests, and get extensive support to successfully complete your PhD. You can look forward to:

• excellent technical support: at DLR, in addition to the support you receive from your university, you will receive specialist technical guidance from one of our scientists.

• networking and interdisciplinary exchange: DLR researchers are happy to share their knowledge and experience with young colleagues.

• an unrivalled technological infrastructure – from powerful hardware and software, the most modern laboratories, simulators, wind tunnels and rocket test benches to the largest fleet of civilian research aircraft in Europe. Whether you are involved in basic or applied research, at DLR you will find the best set-up for your scientific work.

• the unique DLR_Graduate_Program – motivating you to help you achieve your PhD effectively and successfully, and establish solid foundations for your success in the scientific world at an early stage.
Volker Maiwald
is working on a PhD in aero-space engineering at the Institute of Space Systems, on the subject of orbital trajectory computation for electrical low-thrust propulsion units.

„The management of the DLR_Graduate_Program is highly committed, and there is constant communication with the PhD candidates. The programme is well thought out, and I have picked up a great deal of very useful knowledge. Also, seminars such as ‘Effective scientific presentations’ have prepared me exceptionally for participation in international conferences.“

Ruzica Vujasinovic
is undertaking a PhD in Air Traffic and Transport Engineering at the Institute of Flight Guidance, on the subject of pilot assistance systems for optimising flight presentations’ have prepared me paths using real-time information on the concentration and development of ash clouds.

„The sessions provided by the DLR_Graduate_Program are at international conferences and congresses. My work at DLR is the first milestone in your career in research. Our aim is to give you everything you need to set you on your way – and this goes far beyond well-founded technical support. Our motto for your success is: An extra boost for your PhD.

The DLR_Graduate_Program is a high quality, interdisciplinary, professional qualification programme oriented towards the needs of our PhD students. Offering a wide range of training courses, workshops and seminars, we want to provide you with the scientific and methodological tools to deliver excellent research work. We will also provide you with the key cross-disciplinary skills that you will need for a perfect start to a career in science, as well as for employment in the industry. The range of topics is as varied as the day-to-day research conducted. Whether it’s scientific publication and presentation, cross-cultural skills, project management, leadership, negotiation skills, basic business administration or the acquisition of external funding, a lasting knowledge development is guaranteed through interactive learning methods and practical experience. Furthermore, interdisciplinary scientific learning opportunities are a substantial component of the DLR_Graduate_Program. In this way, we offer you the possibility to develop beyond your specialist area, and prepare you properly for your next professional move.

Tailored and flexible

The DLR_Graduate_Program is a programme aimed at all PhD students at DLR. It includes compulsory, elective and optional courses, so you can focus on specific areas and choose precisely the aspects that will enhance your personal skills, bringing you closer to your career goals. As you define your personal curriculum, you will still have the flexibility to customize your programme to the requirements of your dissertation.

DLR_Graduate_Program

We’ll take you further

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DLR_Graduate_Program

Three modules, one goal: making the best of your time as a PhD candidate

1. Interdisciplinary qualification and development

The path to a PhD and cutting-edge research is challenging, but with the right cross-disciplinary key competences you will reach your goal much more easily. Therefore, we will provide you with practical experience in cross-institutional sessions that will enhance your knowledge in four key areas:

• Working techniques and methodology skills
• Project management
• Language and cross-cultural skills
• Communication/social skills

You will choose from a range of programmes and subjects, depending on the topic of your PhD and your future goals.

2. Qualification offerings at the institutes

The institutes regularly hold seminars for PhD candidates, during which every PhD candidate gives a talk on the subject of their PhD at least once a year. It is the perfect environment for developing your skills in scientific presentation, discussing results with peers and acquiring technical knowledge beyond the subject of your thesis.

3. Scientific communication and didactics

Communication is a key aspect of modern research work. For this reason, it is also an important component of the DLR_Graduate_Program. We offer you the opportunity to acquire relevant experience in this area during your doctoral work as well. Educational science activities, such as supervising final theses, getting involved in one of our DLR_School_Labs or assisting with lectures, are part of the agenda, along with scientific publications in technical journals and presentations at international conferences and congresses.

Investing in your future

Participation in the DLR_Graduate_Program is voluntary and freely accessible to our PhD candidates. You will attend sessions during working hours. What you will contribute: commitment, a readiness to learn, and willingness to embrace new subjects. What you will get: interdisciplinary skills that will help you move forward, and, in the end, a valuable certificate that will impress future employers.

Stefan Griesche
is doing a PhD in mathematics at the Institute of Transportation Systems, on the subject of pattern recognition and adaptation in cooperative vehicle guidance.

„With the DLR_Graduate_Program, DLR has offered me more than other organisations. The programme is very demanding and varied. Networking with other PhD candidates has helped my work a great deal. It is fascinating to get a perspective beyond your own specialist area and to see how similar technologies are being used in very different areas.“

Modular design