

PhD – Step 2

Finding a supervisor

Once you have decided that you want to complete a doctorate and have gained insight into the subject area as well as your own research interests in that field, the most crucial step to take is finding a supervisor who is willing to guide and supervise you in your doctoral work. In order to find a supervisor whose research interests are in line with your doctoral project it is advisable to consult the website of the department or institute representing your preferred subject area. If you have identified a potential supervisor from among the professors listed you should send your inquiry about open PhD positions directly to this faculty member, enclosing your curriculum vitae and a description of your research interests or the doctoral project which you strive to pursue. Apart from contacting potential supervisors by email your chances of being accepted as doctoral candidate are better if you visit the department of your choice and make an appointment with the faculty member you would like to be your supervisor. Please note that a supervisor's consent to take you on as a doctoral candidate is not necessarily combined with offering you a paid research position.

If you are unsure about what kind of challenges completing a doctorate might involve and whether your motivation and personal preferences are likely to make you a successful doctoral candidate, the brochure "[Shaping a Doctorate Together - Guidelines for Doctoral Candidates](#)" will be a relevant source of advice for you.

Getting Set Up

Have you been successful in finding a supervisor who is interested in your doctoral project and prepared to supervise your thesis? Then you may have to write a research proposal / research synopsis about your planned project. Submitting such a research synopsis is often one of the prerequisites, especially in the humanities, in order to be admitted as a doctoral candidate at one of the faculties at Goethe University. For your support, GRADE offers training in successfully writing doctoral research proposals. Apart from the formalities there are several topics that you should talk about with your supervisor: Where will the funding for your doctoral project come from? Can your supervisor offer you a paid position or will you have to apply for a scholarship? You are welcome to go through our list of [Funding Options](#). Another topic you should clarify whether you intend to write your dissertation in a classical way (as a monograph), or whether you prefer a cumulative dissertation. The answer might affect your approach when starting your research project. Another point to consider is who should be your second supervisor. Also you and your supervisor should discuss which GRADE professional skills workshops may be helpful during your first year.

All these aspects are addressed in the GRADE [Supervision Agreement](#) between doctoral candidates and their supervisors that we recommend to set-up.