



## Applying for Doctoral Studies at

# RWTH AACHEN UNIVERSITY

**RWTH Aachen University** is one of the world's top-ranking technical universities. The main focus of RWTH Aachen University is on Engineering, IT, and the Natural Sciences. In addition, we offer a broad range of important, mostly interdisciplinary subjects. All academic departments cooperate closely with national and international industrial partners.

RWTH Aachen University currently has about 30,000 students, 17% of which are international.

The staff includes 460 full professorships and 2,000 other academic staff members.

Each year, about 800 doctoral candidates take up their doctorate, many of them partly or fully financed by scholarships or by third-party research projects. In the fields of Engineering, IT, and the Natural Sciences in particular, doctoral candidates are employed by RWTH Aachen University, where they work in teaching and research while being able to complete their doctoral thesis.

In principle, all research vacancies are open to international applicants, and RWTH Aachen University is interested in attracting excellent international staff. The proportion of international staff differs according to discipline and job description, but is quite high with an average of 20%.

For more detailed information on how to pursue a doctorate at RWTH Aachen University, please check <http://www.international.rwth-aachen.de/ca/k/tgc/>.

How to proceed successfully with your application

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Information for prospective doctoral candidates  
with non-German Academic Degrees  
[www.rwth-aachen.de/international](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/international)

## How can I pursue doctoral studies at RWTH Aachen University?

Unlike in many other countries around the world, earning a doctoral degree in Germany does not usually involve attending a structured PhD programme with set application and programme dates.

A doctorate at RWTH Aachen University consists of an individually conducted research project, which typically does not include taking lectures. Doctoral projects are possible in any subject area represented by an RWTH Aachen University professor.

As a doctoral candidate, you will pursue your project under the supervision of and in very close cooperation with a supervising professor called Doktorvater or Doktormutter. As a doctoral candidate you can be a scholarship holder without employment or be employed in full- or part-time positions at the respective institute (chair of your supervisor). Your primary task is your research project, which will usually lead to scientific results. Upon finishing the project, you will publish your results in a thesis (Dissertation, Doktorarbeit) to be submitted to the faculty. After acceptance of the thesis, you will need to take an oral examination. The duration of the entire process is typically three to five years.

## How can I apply?

### 1. Make sure you have the right qualifications

As an international graduate, you must have a university degree equivalent to a German university degree in order to be admitted as an RWTH doctoral candidate. The International Office will evaluate your university degree and make a decision regarding its equivalency. If the degree is not fully recognized, you may be able to take certain classes or exams related to your field of research in order to be admitted as a doctoral candidate.

### 2. Find a supervisor

An RWTH Aachen University professor must issue a written confirmation that he or she is willing to accept you as a candidate into his or her research team. Therefore, finding a supervisor who supervises your research project is the most important task for pursuing your doctorate. You have various opportunities to find the right supervisor:

- Using the contacts and recommendations of a professor in your home country who has connections to RWTH Aachen University.
- Contacting the RWTH subject study advisors (Fachstudienberater) of the department you would like to join. (please take a look at: [www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/hld/](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/hld/))
- Searching RWTH Aachen University's website for information on specific professors and their research fields.
- Searching current job openings, which often are positions for doctoral candidates. These can be found at [www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/hxm/](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/hxm/). Please note that German language skills are often required.

### 3. Apply for doctoral studies

After having found a supervisor you must officially apply for the doctorate at the department the professor belongs to and at the International Office of RWTH Aachen University. In every department, there is a coordinator in charge of the admission of doctoral candidates. Please check [www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/bsp/](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/bsp/) for more information on how to apply.