

# Next Career Step - Doctorate?!

A Program Offer for Master's Students

Start: September 22, 2025



STUDY  
FOR  
LIFE

Getting  
Started



Professional  
Skills



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## Next Career Step - Doctorate?!

About to finish your degree and wondering what comes next? If you enjoy academic and scientific work, research in your field of expertise and stimulating discussions with fellow academics, then you might also be considering a doctorate. But what does it mean to pursue a doctorate? What funding options are out there? What general qualities and strengths should you have, aside from a love of your field of research?

We would like to support you through the decision-making process. Therefore, we have created the “Next Career Step - Doctorate?!” program, which gives 14 master’s students, both German and international, at least halfway through their studies the chance to find out all about doing a doctorate as the next stage in their career. After the great success last term, we are happy to offer the program for the second time. You will be given valuable information and the opportunity to chat to like-minded people specializing in different subjects. You will acquire personal skills that will be useful for your master’s thesis and a potential doctorate as well as in other professional situations. You will also learn how to assess the challenges associated with a doctorate more accurately and handle them better. The program is designed to help you find out whether a doctorate is the right step for your career.

## The program at a glance:

### The program offers:

- Access to an exclusive training program with no participation fees
- Workshops conducted exclusively in English
- The opportunity to improve your academic and personal skills
- Experienced, highly qualified trainers
- The chance to build intercultural skills
- Interdisciplinary dialogue
- Networking with other international students and doctoral candidates

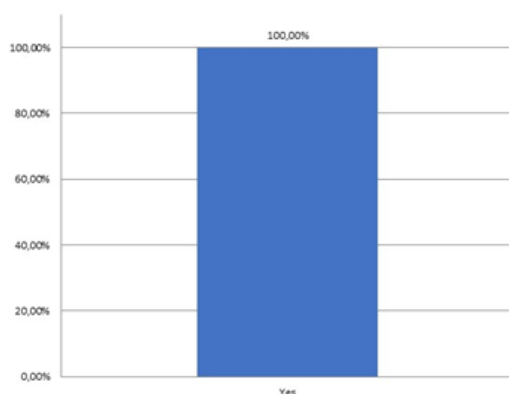
### Requirements:

You must...

- be enrolled as a master’s student at the University of Bonn in the second half of your degree program.
- be seriously considering a doctorate after obtaining your master’s degree.
- have very good English skills.
- be committed to attending at least 80 percent of program events.
- present a letter of support/letter of recommendation from a University lecturer.

### Evaluation 2024:

Did you find the overall program helpful in making a decision regarding pursuing a PhD?



## Program

The program consists of two parts, both of which are mandatory:

- **Part 1: Intensive short program (September 22 – 26, 2025)**
- **Part 2: Workshops during the winter semester 2025/26**

### Part 1: Intensive short program

Monday, September 22 09:00 – 10:00 p.m.	<b>Opening with Coffee &amp; Croissants</b>
Monday, September 22, 10:00 a.m. – 04:00 p.m.	<b>Kick-Off Workshop</b> <u><b>Dr. Merjam Wakili</b></u> <p>We will start the program with a kick-off workshop where you will get to know each other in order to create a good group feeling and a facilitated safe space for reflection. Who are your peers? How do you benefit from being part of the summer school community? How can you support each other in your journeys? This kick-off is designed as a get-to-know-each-other-day and learning about your motivation and team spirit.</p>
Tuesday, September 23, 09:00 a.m. – 05:00 p.m.	<b>Preparing for Your Doctorate: Critical Steps and Advice</b> <u><b>Dr. Maia George</b></u> <p>This workshop is designed to assist prospective doctoral candidates in making informed decisions and navigating the journey towards a successful PhD. This on-site workshop, conducted in English, caters to both international and local Master's students considering a doctoral path. Through a blend of presentations, interactive exercises, and discussions, participants will gain insights into key aspects of embarking on and completing a PhD journey. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the decision to pursue a PhD: Self-reflection and career goals</li> <li>• Finding effective supervision: What constitutes good mentorship?</li> <li>• Navigating common challenges in a doctoral program</li> <li>• Essential insights into the German academic landscape</li> </ul>



<p>Wednesday, September 24, 09:00 a.m. – 03:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>How to Fund your Doctorate in Germany</b></p> <p><u><b>Dr. Maia George</b></u></p> <p>This workshop offers a condensed session designed to equip prospective doctoral candidates with essential knowledge and resources about the intricacies of financing doctoral studies in Germany, catering to both local and international participants. Through an interactive format comprising presentations, practical exercises, and collaborative discussions, attendees will gain invaluable insights and actionable strategies. Throughout the workshop, we'll explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the landscape: An overview of funding options available for doctoral studies in Germany</li> <li>• Navigating the application process: Tips and best practices for crafting successful funding applications</li> <li>• Personalizing your approach: Identifying funding opportunities</li> <li>• Leveraging resources: Discovering databases and search platforms</li> </ul> <p><b>The Bonn Graduate Center will introduce its support for prospective doctoral students as well as funding opportunities offered by the University of Bonn.</b></p>
<p>Thursday, September 25, and Friday, 26, 10:00 a.m. – 04:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>2-Day Course: Essential steps on how to get started with your PhD: Self-presentation and motivational letter</b></p> <p><u><b>Dr. Alexandra Leipold</b></u></p> <p>This course addresses key aspects of academic careers that relate to your expertise, self-confidence, self-awareness, and writing skills.</p> <p>Over the two days, we will discuss the formal requirements of a motivational letter and explore individual aspects such as your research focus, the originality and innovative character of your research question, its potential impact, and the relevance of your skills and future goals. Most importantly, we will work on strategies to effectively convince your audience. Since many of these elements are part of the Exposé and motivational letter, the course includes group work and writing sessions.</p>

## Part 2: Workshops during the winter semester 2025/26

<p>Saturday, October 11, 2025 10:00 a.m. – 04:00 p.m.</p>	<p><b>‘Mental Health’</b> <u>Dr. Merjam Wakili</u></p> <p>Dealing with the topic of mental health can help us to become more aware of our own resilience and self-care. What helps in stressful phases? How can I draw on my resources without draining myself? Which methods and which mindset help to create a good basis for healthy productivity?</p> <p>In this workshop, we will talk about specific tips for taking good care of your own mental health in everyday (study) life.</p>
<p>Friday, November 14, 2025 01:00 p.m. – 04:00 p.m. Part one via Zoom &amp; Friday, November 28, 2025 10:00 a.m. – 05:00 p.m. Part two in class</p>	<p><b>‘Project Management for your doctorate’</b> <u>Dr. Jan Schmidt</u></p> <p>Planning a PhD? In this interactive workshop, you'll learn how to approach your doctoral journey as a one-person project: clarify expectations, manage stakeholders, set milestones, and bring structure into your academic ambitions. Practical tools and techniques will help you stay focused and organized from week to week.</p> <p><b>Part one consists of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder analysis</li> <li>• Goal definition</li> <li>• Identification of potential risks and obstacles</li> </ul> <p><b>Part two consists of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work breakdown structure and phase planning</li> <li>• Creation of a task list</li> <li>• Weekly and daily planning</li> </ul>



**To apply for the program, please complete the registration form by July 27, 2025:**

If the number of applicants exceeds availability, admission to the program will be decided by a committee, in which case you will be notified by August 15, 2025.

**[Apply now](#)**

## Contact:

### International Office

Section International Students and Study Programs

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### Bonn Graduate Center

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# NEXT CAREER STEP - DOCTORATE?!

## Intensive short program - Schedule

**MON, 22**

Opening  
**9 am-10 am**  
Coffee & Crossiants

Kick Off  
**10 am-4 pm**  
Dr. Merjam Wakili

**TUE, 23**

Preparing for Your  
Doctorate: Critical  
Steps and Advice  
**9 am-5 pm**

Dr. Maia George

**WED, 24**

How to Fund your  
Doctorate in Germany  
**9 am-3 pm**

Dr. Maia George  
Dr. Robert Radu, BGZ

**THU, 25**

2 Day Course:  
Self-presentation and  
motivational letter  
**10 am-4 pm**

Dr. Alexandra Leipold

**FRI, 26**

2 Day Course:  
Self-presentation and  
motivational letter  
**10 am-4 pm**

Dr. Alexandra Leipold

**IMPORTANT**

All Workshops are  
held at  
Poppelsdorfer  
Allee 53, 53115  
Bonn

