



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service

DAAD Information Centre Kuala Lumpur

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## PhD in Germany - with a scholarship from DAAD

Germany is one of the leading researching nations in the world. Its science and research sector is renowned for its outstanding infrastructure, a widely diverse spectrum of research areas and well-equipped facilities and institutes. In addition, many organisations offer numerous grants and scholarships to foreign doctoral candidates.

Some 25,000 academics receive doctoral degrees in Germany every year – far more than in any other European country. And each year, more and more young international researchers are choosing to write their dissertations or join a doctoral research team in Germany. In fact, the number of foreign doctoral candidates in Germany has more than doubled since 1997.

You can do your PhD in Germany at a university or at one of about 270 excellent non-university research institutes. You can do an individual doctorate, i.e. a doctorate „by research“, guided by an academic supervisor - a most flexible form that may be tailored to your personal needs. Or you can do your PhD in a structured programme, supervised by a team of professors and often offering a curriculum of accompanying courses.

Young Malaysian researchers need a good Master's degree from an accredited university in order to do a PhD in Germany. In the sciences and engineering and in many other subjects, it is no problem to write the PhD in English.

Interested? For more information on doing a doctorate in Germany please refer to

<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/doktoranden/en/>

If you plan to do an individual doctorate, the most important (and often the most difficult) task is to find a German professor who agrees to be your PhD-supervisor. Concerning this task, we prepared some comprehensive information for you in our attached file "How to find a PhD-supervisor". For contacting a German professor, you would need a short sketch of what you want to do as your PhD-research topic. We therefore also attached our information sheet on "How to write a research proposal". On first contacting a German professor, however, it would be recommendable to keep the outline of your planned research short and summarize it within the mail.

DAAD offers long-term scholarships for PhD candidates. We have two kinds of scholarship offers:

- (a) Scholarships for three years research of a PhD-candidate in Germany under the supervision of a German professor. The doctoral title in this case would be awarded by the German university according to its rules and regulations.

- (b) Scholarships for the so-called sandwich model, i.e. for a research stay between one and two years at a German university for PhD-research. In this case, the doctoral title is awarded by the Malaysian university according to its rules and regulations. The German professor who is supervising the research stay in Germany could e.g. act as a secondary supervisor.

The deadline for these scholarships is October 15 each year. Below please find the call for applications for the DAAD PhD-scholarships for both programmes and a list of the formal requirements for the application for your information.

Please note that the most important selection criteria is a convincing, scientifically advanced research proposal and a well established contact to a German professor. It would be quite helpful for your scholarship application if you could motivate the German professor - your potential supervisor - to discuss your research proposal with you in some detail. Experience shows that successful applicants often have changed, developed and improved their research proposal considerably according to the German professor's remarks and comments.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact the DAAD Information Center in Kuala Lumpur.

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For scholarship updates add us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/DAAD-Information-Centre-Kuala-Lumpur/101165326592260>

## How to Find a German PhD Supervisor or Research Partner

In order to be successful with your application for research funding/PhD studies, you will need proof of contact with a German professor. If you have not yet identified a German research partner/supervisor, you might find it difficult to get in touch. Germany has altogether more than three hundred institutions of higher education and, in addition, hundreds of research institutes. So how do you find the proverbial needle in the haystack?

This leaflet is meant to give you some guidelines. However, make sure you also study carefully the general information on doctoral studies in Germany on the DAAD website:

<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/doktoranden/en/>

## 1. International Postgraduate Programmes

If you are a potential PhD candidate or recent PostDoc, you may first want to find out if you can do your research within the framework of a structured **International Postgraduate Programme (IPP)**, in which case you would not normally be required to identify an academic supervisor by yourself. These programmes are university graduate training programmes established at a centre of scientific excellence in a specific field. This ensures that your course meets the highest academic standards. The students work on their thesis within the framework of a coherent and often interdisciplinary research programme; they participate in an accompanying study programme organised by the faculty members and to some extent by the students themselves.

All participants have regular contact with the university teachers responsible for their programme and are given the opportunity to engage in collaborative intensive research. Cross-faculty courses and colloquia offer forums for interdisciplinary dialogue. German and international doctoral candidates participating in the IPP jointly attend courses from the accompanying curriculum. Teaching includes visiting lectures given by foreign academics and scientists. The doctoral thesis may be written in English and the viva may usually be held in English.

A list of structured PhD programmes can be found in DAAD's international programmes database:

<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/studienangebote/international-programs/de/>

More information on structured doctoral programmes offered by research institutions affiliated with universities in Germany is available at:

<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/doktoranden/en/14755-structured-phd-programmes/>

Make sure you visit these sites and study the information given thoroughly!

## 2. Individual Research Projects

If you do not intend to follow a structured doctoral programme but to do an independent piece of research under the supervision of a German professor, you will need to identify a suitable supervisor to take you on as his or her research student. While finding a PhD supervisor or research partner in Germany can sometimes be tricky, there are several ways of identifying a potential partner which you can explore. You will need to invest a little time, but your efforts are likely to be worthwhile. Please consider the following options:

1. Visit the PhDGermany database, which gives you direct access to PhD position offers in Germany. The institutes offering the positions are especially interested in international applicants and you can apply directly via the “apply online now” button. The database can be found here:

<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/promotion/phd/en/13306-phdgermany-database/>

2. Do you know any lecturers or colleagues within your field, who are already in touch with German academics or who will attend an international conference soon? If so, ask them to help you establish contact. A brief introduction or a short letter of recommendation can often go a long way towards facilitating communication.

3. Search international refereed journals in your field for articles which lie within your research interests and which have been (co-)authored by academics and scientists affiliated with German universities or research institutes. As there are prominent German scientists and researchers in virtually any field, relevant publications can be found in all high-ranking journals and conference proceedings.

4. Visit the website <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/studienangebote/international-programs/de/> which is a database of international programmes offered by German universities. Use this database to identify (Bachelor, Master) courses closely related to your area of research. Then approach the programme coordinators via email with a short research proposal and ask them whether they can suggest a potential PhD supervisor you could contact.

5. To find university departments offering PhD studies in your area of interest, go to the web site: <http://www.hochschulkompass.de/en.html>. This is the web site of the association of rectors and presidents of all German universities and universities of applied sciences. In the section “Doctorates” you can find a search engine, where you can key in your area of research in order to get a list of the existing programmes. Through links you can then go to the web sites of the universities. Many universities and departments have bilingual web sites, but in some cases a command of German can be required. You should then look for a lecturer or a professor who does research in an area close to yours. If you have found somebody whose work looks interesting to you, feel free to contact him/her by e-mail. Most successful research cooperations began with personal contact!

6. A comprehensive search of the German research landscape can also be conducted with an online database called Research Explorer, available via our website ([http://research-explorer.dfg.de/research\\_explorer.en.html](http://research-explorer.dfg.de/research_explorer.en.html)). This very useful resource allows you to identify university as well as non-university research institutes working in your area of interest.

### 3. Approaching German professors via email

While there are no hard and fast rules as to how to write a successful email, here are some guidelines you may find useful when first making contact with a German professor.

- ◆ Make sure your e-mail does not contain any grammatical/orthographical mistakes or typos. This includes minor issues such as capital letters or punctuation. Keep in mind that you want to convince the German professor that you are capable of producing academic work of the highest standards.
- ◆ Avoid impersonal letters ("Dear Sir/Madam"). Research has shown that you are more likely to receive a reply, if your mail is geared towards a specific receiver. You may therefore want to make reference to recent publications of the professor, indicating how your research would fit into the research portfolio of your potential supervisor ("With great interest I have read your recent article on ... "). Take on the professor's perspective: how would s/he benefit from supervising your study? What expertise, skills, experience, contacts, cultural perspective etc. would you bring to the professor's research team?
- ◆ Do not approach the professor for funding in your first mail. At this stage you only want to establish contact and find out whether there is general interest in your topic.
- ◆ Attach a concise description of the kind of research you would like to undertake (cf. our leaflet: "How to write a research proposal"), but also show that you are open to discuss your project and to make alterations. Take into account that professors will often have clear ideas as to what kind of research they want to have done under their supervision. You may also want to attach a brief CV so that the professor can get a more comprehensive picture of the person you are (your academic and professional background, age, skills etc.)
- ◆ Do not feel discouraged if some emails of yours remain unanswered. Please understand that many professors are extremely busy and will only get back to you if they are seriously interested in your research proposal and can offer adequate supervision.

## Study and research in Germany

Information Center Kuala Lumpur

# How to Write a Research Proposal

## INTRODUCTION

When applying for a PhD position or a research grant in Germany you will usually be asked to submit a research proposal, at least in part, since individually led research is still the norm in most subject areas. Even if you are applying to an established research project, you will probably be expected, as a part of the university application procedure, to explain how your particular research would develop the basic propositions of the overall project.

The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that the candidates have done sufficient preliminary reading/research in the area of their interest, that they have thought about the issues involved and are able to provide more than a broad description of the topic which they are planning to research. The proposal is of course not a fixed blueprint. Findings cannot be predicted beforehand and often the research may need to be modified as you go along. There is also no fixed formula for writing a proposal. However, your proposal will have to convince members of the academic community that you have identified a scientific problem and a methodical approach to solve the problem within a realistic time frame and at reasonable expenses.

**Please note:** the following recommendations are suggestions only. They do not guarantee a successful research application. They may, however, help you prepare a carefully conceptualized proposal. This may not only be important to the professors or the members of the selection committee who have to decide on your application, but also to yourself, giving you a clear structure for your own work, a rough idea of where you are going and a timetable in which to accomplish your research successfully.



Most research proposals are between 4 and 15 pages, but some institutions or departments specify word limits. It is rarely possible to write a comprehensive proposal in fewer than 1500 words. The proposal should have a proper layout (typeface and line spacing) as well as a table of contents and page numbers. Remember that professors often have to read large numbers of research proposals. Therefore good legibility and conciseness of your proposal will be appreciated.

## **TITLE PAGE**

On the title page, state your personal data like: name, academic title (if applicable), your position at your own university, e.g. junior lecturer, your date of birth, nationality, your work and private address including telephone and e-mail address. Then the title of your planned dissertation (or research project) should follow. Keep in mind that at this stage, the title can only be a working title. Nevertheless, all words in the title should be chosen with great care, and their association with one another must be carefully considered. While the title should be brief, it should be accurate, descriptive and comprehensive, clearly indicating the subject of the investigation. Note that you will only be ready to devise a title once you are clear about the focus of your research. You should also state the area of your research, e.g. Political Science - Theory of International Relations - or Empirical Social Science etc. You may also want to give a realistic time frame in which you plan to complete your project. For a PhD this should not normally exceed three years.

## **GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH AREA AND LITERATURE**

Give a short and precise overview about the current state of research that is immediately connected with your own research project. Name the most important contributions of other scientists. The proposal should contain a clear and logical discussion of the theoretical scope or of the framework of ideas that will be used to back the research. The proposal needs to show that you are fully conversant with the ideas you are dealing with and that you grasp their methodological implications. Your research review should indicate an open problem which then will be the motive for your project.

## **KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

Give a concise and clear outline of what you intend to find out in your project and what objectives you want to achieve. Research questions may take the form of a hypothesis to be tested against a specific set of criteria or a more open-ended inquiry. Together with the general overview this section should establish the relevance and value of the proposed research in the context of current academic thinking. Your proposal needs to show why the intended research is important and to justify the effort of doing the research.



## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a very important part of your research outline and should receive a lot of attention. It may well be the longest section of your proposal. Give detailed information about how you intend to answer your research questions. Anyone who reads your proposal will want to know the sources and quality of evidence you will consult, the analytical technique you will employ, and the timetable you will follow. Depending on the topic, suitable research strategies should be defined to ensure that enough and adequate empirical data will be gathered for a successful research project. You will need to describe the intended methods of data gathering, the controls you will introduce, the statistical methods to be used, the type of literature or documentary analysis to be followed and so on. Ethical issues as well as difficulties in gathering data could also be discussed in this section.

## **TENTATIVE TIME TABLE**

Give information about your estimated time table (if possible in table form), indicating the sequence of research phases and the time that you will probably need for each phase. Take into account that at this stage, it can only be estimated, but make clear that you have an idea about the time span that will be needed for each step.

## **SELECTIVE RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Here you list those academic works which you have mentioned in your research outline. At least some of them should be recent publications, indicating that you are aware of the current discourse in your area of research.

## **EDITING**

Once you have finished the conceptual work on your proposal, go through a careful editing stage, in which you make sure your proposal does not contain any grammatical/orthographical mistakes or typos. Check whether the title, the abstract and the content of your proposal correspond with each other. If possible, ask someone within the academic community to proofread your proposal in order to make sure the proposal conforms to international academic standards.



## CHECKLIST FOR A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

In most cases your research proposal will need to include the following:

- ✍ Table of Contents
- ✍ Abstract
- ✍ Introduction into the General Topic
- ✍ Problem Statement and Justification of the Research Project
- ✍ Hypothesis and Objectives of the Study
- ✍ Literature and Research Review
- ✍ Research Methodology
- ✍ Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation of Data
- ✍ Expected Results and Output of the Study
- ✍ Bibliography
- ✍ Appendix, e.g. Tables, Graphs, Questionnaires etc.
- ✍ Financial Budget and Timetable

## DAAD-Scholarship programme

### Research Grants for Doctoral Candidates and Young Academics and Scientists for 2014

#### Objective

Research grants provide young foreign academics and scientists with an opportunity to carry out a research project or a course of continuing education and training at a German state (public) or state-recognised higher education institution or non-university research institute. The prime goal is the funding of the doctoral dissertation. Specifically, this grant serves the following purposes:

- research projects at a German higher education institution for the purpose of gaining a doctorate in the home country (this includes the doctoral programmes offered for developing and transformation countries under the "DAAD Sandwich Model" - see Information Leaflet, which is also available on the Internet [www.daad.de/extrainfo](http://www.daad.de/extrainfo));
- research projects at a German university for the purpose of gaining a doctorate in Germany; for projects of these kinds, we would particularly refer to the structured doctoral study programmes, such as Research Training Groups or Doctoral Research Groups, International Postgraduate Programmes, Graduate Schools, Max Planck Research Schools, etc. Please go to the following website for further information: [www.daad.de/ipp](http://www.daad.de/ipp);
- research projects or continuing education and training, but without aiming for a formal degree/qualification.

Postdocs can also refer to the funding opportunities offered by the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation.

#### Duration

- The length of the grant is set by the grant committee at the selection session. Depending on the project in question and on the applicant's work schedule, grants can be paid generally for between one and ten months, in the case of full doctoral programmes in Germany for up to three years, and in exceptions for up to a maximum of four years.
- Support can only be provided for the completion of a full doctoral programme in Germany when special support policy reasons exist. Such reasons include, for example, the lack of comparable research or academic supervision opportunities in the home country or when the doctoral topic requires several years of research in Germany.
- Support for full doctoral programmes in Germany is based on a programme length of three years; if foreign graduates first have to qualify for admission to a doctoral programme, then grants can be awarded for a period of four years. Even when support has been awarded for a full doctoral programme, that award will initially be limited to a maximum of one year. Extensions then depend on whether or not the evaluation finds the previous award period to have been successfully completed.

## Value

- Depending on the award holder's academic level, the DAAD will pay a monthly award of 750 euros (graduates holding a first degree) or 1,000 euros (doctoral candidates). As a rule, the scholarship additionally includes certain payments towards health insurance cover in Germany. Furthermore, the DAAD generally will pay an appropriate flat-rate travel allowance, unless these costs are covered by the home country or by another funding source.
- Award holders completing a stay of more than six months receive a study and research allowance plus, where appropriate, a rent subsidy and family allowance. Funding for attendance of a language course is decided on a case-by-case basis (cf. Requirements).
- When award holders take doctoral programmes run under the "DAAD Sandwich Model", then the award may include the travel expenses of an academic supervisor - as long as this was already applied for in the first application.

## Requirements

- Applications for DAAD research grants are open to excellently-qualified university graduates who hold a Diplom or Master's degree at the time they commence the grant-supported research and, in exceptional cases, graduates holding a Bachelor's degree or already holding a doctorate/PhD (post-docs).
- It is required that doctoral candidates wishing to take a doctorate/PhD in their home country will already have been admitted to an appropriate course at their home university.
- The application papers must generally include written confirmation of academic supervision by a professor in Germany and expressly refer to the applicant's project, thereby confirming that the host institute will provide a workplace. If the applicant is planning to complete a doctorate at the German host university, the letter of confirmation must come from the academic supervisor (Doktorvater/Doktormutter) for the applicant's doctoral programme/thesis.
- Applicants who intend to gain their doctorate within the scope of a structured doctoral study programme are required to present a letter of admission from their study programme or at least proof that they are being considered for admission.
- Besides previous study achievements, the most important selection criterion is a convincing and well-planned research or continuing education and training project to be completed during the stay in Germany and which has been coordinated and agreed with an academic supervisor at the chosen German host institute.
- German language skills are generally required, although the required level also depends on the applicant's project and topic, as well as on the available opportunities for learning German in the applicant's home country. In the natural sciences and in engineering disciplines, in particular, and when English is spoken at the host institute, proof of good English language skills may also be accepted. The DAAD decides on a case-by-case basis whether the applicant can attend a German language course before beginning the research grant (free of charge for the award holder). This option is only available for research grants lasting more than six months. Besides, the internet-based language course "Deutsch-Uni Online (DUO)" is recommended to help improve the German language skills. For scholarship holders with funding to run for more than six months, the DAAD will pay the course fees for six months as from their receipt of the Scholarship Award Letter. Furthermore, scholarship holders with funding to run for more than six months can apply to the DAAD for a subsidy towards a personally chosen German course. Further information will be included with the Scholarship Award Letter. The country-specific information on the DAAD homepage will tell you which language skills are required from applicants from your home country.
- At the time of application, generally no more than six years should have passed since gaining the last degree; in the case of doctoral students, no more than three years should have passed since starting the doctoral process; and in the case of postdocs, no more than two years should have passed since gaining the doctorate. In the case of postdocs who are applying for a short stay (of up to six months), no more than four years should have passed since gaining the doctorate. Depending on the country of origin of applicants, for example, special conditions prevailing in the home country education system, etc., exceptions are possible. The country-specific information on the DAAD homepage will provide you with more detailed information.
- Applicants, who have been resident in Germany for longer than one year at the time of application, cannot be considered.
- Special note for medical students: The special leaflet "Additional information on DAAD-research-grants for applicants from medical fields" provides information on specific requirements (also available on the Internet [www.daad.de/extrainfo](http://www.daad.de/extrainfo)).

### **Application papers**

- Detailed information on what application papers need to be submitted can be found on the Application Form for "Research Grants and Study Scholarships" ("Antrag auf ein Forschungs-/Studienstipendium"), which can be obtained on the Internet ([www.daad.de/en/form](http://www.daad.de/en/form)) or from the [diplomatic and consular representations](#) of the Federal Republic of Germany, from DAAD Lektors, from the [DAAD regional offices](#) or [Information and Advice Centres](#), and from partner organisations.
- The DAAD will not consider incomplete applications.

### **Country-specific information, dates and deadlines, application address and advice**

- The DAAD website [www.daad.de/stipendien](http://www.daad.de/stipendien) provides further specific information for applicants from your home country. This information includes the language skills which applicants from your country of origin must meet, as well as information on the exact deadlines for the submission of the application papers and on where applications should be sent.
- Applications must not be sent direct to DAAD head office in Bonn.
- The above-mentioned website will also provide the addresses of institutions which you can contact in your home country for further information and advice.

### **Application deadline:**

- 15.10.2013

### **Contact and further information:**

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## DAAD-Scholarship programme

### Information Leaflet: Research Grants for Doctoral Candidates within the Sandwich Model

#### Objective

Whereas conventional scholarships for doctorate or PhD studies assume that a scholarship holder will stay at a German institution of higher education, for several consecutive years, the "Sandwich Scheme" described hereafter is a flexible multi phase funding programme. Within the Sandwich Scheme, PhD students carry out their research and studies alternately in their home country and in Germany, following a schedule set in advance and under continuous supervision by a German academic. The doctorate is obtained at the homeland university.

#### Purpose

Within the academic funding schemes of numerous development countries, training and further education of future and young university teachers is given special priority. Besides specialisation and increasing previously gained knowledge, students very often strive for a PhD or doctorate degree as frequently required according to the regulations ruling university careers in their home country. Even in cases where PhD studies would be possible in the student's home country, a doctorate degree from an industrial nation is often preferred for reasons of prestige. PhD studies abroad, however, carry with them risks: of alienation connected with very long study courses, loss of originally reserved lecturing posts at the home university, of research geared too much to the developed country and its needs, and finally the risk of temptation to settle in the host country.

In an effort to minimize these risks, the DAAD has developed the scheme of cooperative PhD funding (Sandwich-Scholarships) for nationals of developing countries whose universities offer doctorates.

## Procedure

This means the procedure can be as follows:

- the German university lecturer/professor travels to the homeland of the future doctoral candidate to draw up a joint protocol signed by both the local and the German supervisor, which details the dissertation subject, the planned work measures, and their duration
- preparatory studies and research for the PhD thesis in the home country (data collection and field research) without DAAD funding (special guidelines and procedures apply to some African countries)
- studies and research at a German institution of higher education (1 - maximum 2 years)
- if necessary, visit by the foreign academic supervisor and co advisor at the German institution (progress control, consolidation of institutional contacts)
- completion of the thesis in the home country (without DAAD funding)
- visit of the German supervisor to the home country of the PhD student (last corrections and participation at the viva as external examiner)

The main characteristic of this Sandwich Scheme is the individually tailor-made PhD programme schedule set with the greatest flexibility possible regarding the beginning and duration of each individual funding phase.

Eligibility, application forms and documents for this programme are the same as for research grants for doctoral candidates and young academics and scientists. The extensive and detailed research proposal must be accompanied by a work- and time schedule agreed upon by the academic advisors, both in the home country and in Germany.

### Application deadline:

- 15.10. each year

### Contact and further information:

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**<http://ic.daad.de/kualalumpur>**

## **DAAD-PhD Scholarships: Requirements**

Please note that applications for a DAAD PhD scholarship have to be submitted to the DAAD Information Centre Kuala Lumpur by 15th October and have to be submitted online through the DAAD portal at the same time. Detailed information on the online application procedure will be available by August 2013.

The scholarship period would then commence the following autumn. The basic requirements are:

1. a good Bachelor's degree
2. a Master's degree, which should have been obtained no more than six years before start of the PhD studies

The following documents need to be submitted with your application (in duplicate where indicated):

1. Green application form. The form can be downloaded from the website:  
<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/hinweise/en/8527-application-forms-downloads/> ["Application for research grants and study scholarships"] [2x]
2. Recent photographs (white background), attached to the application forms [2x]
3. Full curriculum vitae [2x]
4. Detailed and precise description of your research proposal [2x]
5. Detailed timetable and an estimated budget for fieldwork expenses (if there are field work expenses, please include official letter of confirmation of funding, as the DAAD does not cover field trip expenses) [2x]
6. Evidence of any existing contact with academics at the chosen German host institutions (copies of correspondence), making explicit reference to the research project, its feasibility and the support you would receive; letter of supervision [2x]
7. Two letters of reference from senior academics from the applicant's field. [1x]  
Referees should only use the form which can be download from the website  
<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/hinweise/en/8527-application-forms-downloads/>  
["Reports on scholarship applications submitted by foreign students, graduates, doctoral students and postdocs"] Since the references are confidential, they should be presented in a sealed envelope.
8. (certified copy) School-leaving certificate, indicating the individual grades [2x]
9. (certified copy) Bachelor's Certificate plus transcripts [2x]
10. (certified copy) Master's Certificate plus transcripts [2x]
11. Language certificate (if applicable), giving evidence of the applicant's level of proficiency in German at the time of application; preferably issued by the Goethe-Institute. [2x]
12. List of publications, if applicable [2x]
13. Proof of English language proficiency: TOEFL or IELTS certificate

**P/s: Documents no. 8,9 & 10 must be certified by the German Embassy Kuala Lumpur.**