

### Answers to frequently asked questions (AFAQ)

1. The letter of recommendation should be obtained from a respectable person, i.e. someone who is well acquainted with the applicant's academic past especially from the latest academic and professional achievements (e.g. previous professor, employer, etc.). They should contain necessary information about the applicants academic abilities especially in relation to a PhD research.
2. All required study documents have to be **certified true copies** (copy of High School certificate, B.Sc. and M.Sc. certificates and transcripts of records) e.g. by the issuing authority or an acknowledged notary. No other documents will be accepted! In order to enable a swift processing of your application, make sure that you submit all requested documents by post. Please understand that we can not accept digital documents as we are not able to check the originality.
3. In order to check the equivalence of your academic education we need to know the **standard period of study** for all the study programmes you have passed successfully or are presently undergoing. Further we need to know about the grading system and how the final grade is calculated. If this information is not provided sufficiently on the transcript of records make sure to include an official statement from your university about these information.
4. It is not necessary to submit your complete master or bachelor thesis, a summary version (three to five pages) is completely sufficient. But make sure that one can get enough information about methodology, targets and solutions of your work
5. The applicant decides on which research topic to write her or his proposal. Although some research proposals are provided by the university, the applicant is not limited to those suggestions. The purpose of the PhD research proposal is to evaluate the student's ability to work on the chosen topic and it helps further to assist in identifying a supervisor (professor) for the PhD work. The proposal submitted by the applicant is forwarded to a potential supervisor who reads through it and decides if the candidate grasps the academic qualities for the programme and suits the profile of the respective chair. The candidate has to decide on her or his own how smart and detailed the research proposal should look like. We are expecting a **concise research proposal** (about **ten pages**), providing **detailed information about** your hypothesis, the objectives and expected outcome of your thesis, the methodology, data availability, time and work schedule for the three years of research, the references you are planning to use, budget calculation, possibilities and constraints of financing, etc. Important is that a PhD thesis contains **new scientific findings** and it is necessary to use the latest international scientific methods. You should make clear that you know about the worldwide state-of-the-art in your research field.
6. It might be difficult to contact a professor independently regarding a proposal as they like to evaluate your complete set of application documents altogether. They might not find the time to read your research proposal in advance. Nevertheless they might ask for revisions after they evaluated your complete set of application documents.

7. In case you have already work experiences, were involved in relevant projects or have certain other qualifications please make sure to include a certificate to your application documents.
8. The PhD programme does not provide scholarships or financial support for the upkeep of students; the admitted PhD students have to meet their own expenses. Applicants should consider looking and applying for a suitable scholarship besides the application to the PhD programme.  
A good source of information is offered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). They provide a scholarship database under the following link:  
<http://www.daad.de/deutschland/foerderung/stipendiendatenbank/00462.en.html>  
Nevertheless applicants should also use other sources of information to get a suitable scholarship.
9. The PhD - Commission decides whether an applicant must undergo the preparatory studies or not. The preparatory studies are relevant for those students who gained admission to the programme but have certain academic or formal deficiencies (e.g. a Master degree which does not completely suit our programme profile or not enough credit points)
10. The procedure to admit students may take up to 3 months; it depends, among other factors, on how fast a supervisor is identified.

We are confident, that this information may assist you in applying to our ERM PhD programme and look forward to receive your application!

If you have any other questions feel free to contact me:

[palekdmy@tu-cottbus.de](mailto:palekdmy@tu-cottbus.de)

Dmitry Palekhov, ERM PhD Programme Coordinator