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TUM Graduate School
Technical University of Munich



December 2025

Newsletter for Doctoral Candidates

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Dear Doctoral Candidates,

As we approach the final stretch of the year, we hope your projects are progressing well and that you are ready for the festive season and hopefully some days of vacation.

This edition of our newsletter brings you a curated selection of upcoming events, exciting opportunities, and valuable offers from across the TUM community.

We are especially thrilled to share some news about our Kick-Off Seminar at the TUM Science and Study Center Raitenhaslach. Starting in March 2026, the seminar will take on a refreshed format with a redesigned concept and new elements to better support your doctoral onboarding process at TUM. The next registration period for seminars in March and April 2026 will open in January 2026. We are eager to welcome you to our redesigned Kick-Off Seminar and to creating memorable memories together.

Before the year ends, don't miss our [First-Generation Academics Event](#) on 17 December. This evening promises a warm and festive atmosphere, offering you the chance to connect with fellow First-Generation Academics and allies. Secure your spot and join us for meaningful conversations and networking.

In this newsletter's [TUM Graduate Council](#) issue, we are happy to introduce the newly elected speakers for the year 2026 (including their statements to fellow doctoral candidates).

In our [Internationalization section](#), we take a look back at the innovative event formats we introduced in 2025 and offer a sneak peek into what's coming in the next year.

Finally, explore additional events and calls in our TUM & Co. section, designed to keep you informed and inspired.



GOOD TO KNOW:

Are you considering going abroad during your doctorate or attending a conference in another country? If you would like to internationalize your doctorate, please note that two conditions are essential before applying for TUM-GS Internationalization Support. First, you must have successfully participated in the TUM-GS Kick-Off Seminar. Second, as the TUM-GS Internationalization Support is designed to support international activities in the second half of your doctorate, you must have also completed your Feedback Talk.

For more details, visit our Internationalization Support FAQs:

<https://collab.dvb.bayern/spaces/tumgs21/pages/93329302/Internationalisierung+FAQs+Internationalization+Support+FAQs>

New Concept Kick-Off Seminar from March 2026

In March 2026, the TUM-GS will implement a new concept for its Kick-Off Seminar. The three-day Kick-Off Seminar prepares the doctorate at TUM, comprises transferable skills training, and, as structured onboarding, is a unique offer by a German university. Building on the previous feedback from doctoral candidates and a state-of-the-art approach to doctoral onboarding, the TUM-GS will update the Kick-Off Seminar by adding a session on expectation management and a tailored introduction to the academic system in Germany and at TUM, while also streamlining certain aspects of the program.



Main hall in Raitenhaslach
(Photo: TUM-GS)

In total, doctoral candidates spend three days at the [TUM Science & Study Center in Raitenhaslach](#) during the Kick-Off Seminar, which serves as TUM's onboarding of doctoral candidates, and a unique platform for participants to get to know their peers from other disciplines. Per year, the TUM-GS hosts 16 to 18 editions of the Kick-Off Seminar, which allows the approximately 100 participants per seminar to network, learn about TUM's doctoral program, and acquire valuable skills for their doctoral journey. The TUM-GS will now introduce a new concept for the seminar, including additional sessions on the specifics of the doctorate at TUM, transferable skills classes that highlight three essential focus areas for the doctorate (communication skills, interdisciplinary cooperation, and productivity management), and presentations by professors and colleagues from the TUM services.

The previous design of the Kick-Off Seminar allowed for longer transferable skills classes with wide-ranging topics and centered less on the academic environment of the TUM. A highlight of the new version is a novel session on expectation management that will allow doctoral candidates to cross-check their expectations with the ones supervisors have. Coupled with additional sessions and an in-depth introduction to the academic environment at TUM, the new concept aims to provide an even better start to the doctoral journey.

The participation in the TUM-GS Kick-Off Seminar is mandatory for all doctoral candidates. To benefit the most from the Kick-Off seminar, we highly recommend participating within the first six months of the doctorate. The registration for the next Kick-Off seminars in March and April 2026 will open in the second half of January 2026.

[Learn more](#)

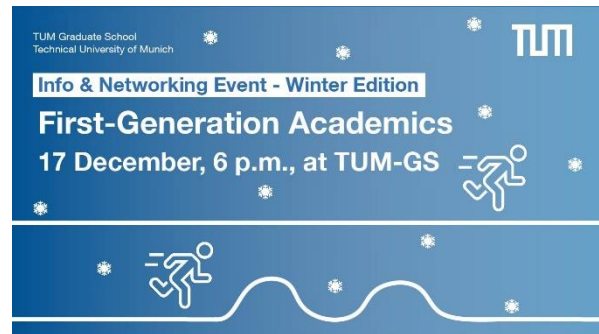
Reminder: Upcoming First-Generation Academics Info & Networking Event

Our upcoming Info & Networking Event is designed for doctoral candidates navigating academic life and anyone interested in supporting and celebrating diversity at TUM, including those who wish to be allies to First-Generation Academics.

Join us to share experiences, learn from one another, and strengthen our TUM community. Together, we can foster inclusion and create a space for First-Generation Academics.

Please register by 11 December:

[Register now](#)



First-Generation Academics Event
(Photo: TUM-GS)

Graduate Council

Newly elected TUM Graduate Council Speakers – Congratulations!

On 3 December 2025, the TUM Graduate Council elected the new doctoral speakers for the year 2026, and we proudly present them to you in this newsletter edition!

The First Speaker is Henry Winner, doctoral candidate at the TUM School of Engineering and Design, and the Second Speaker is Alina Hafner, who is doing her doctorate at the TUM School of Computation, Information, and Technology.

We are happy to share their short statements:



The TUM GC Speakers for 2026:
Henry Winner and Alina Hafner
(Photos: Andreas Heddergott/ TUM & Fotoatelier M / TUM)

“Dear doctoral candidates, my name is Henry Winner, and I am honored to have been elected as First Speaker of the TUM Graduate Council. With my background in academic self-governance and dedication to improving the doctoral experience, I will work to ensure your voices are heard, strengthen representation, and advance initiatives that support both current and prospective doctoral candidates.” – Henry

“Dear fellow and prospective doctoral candidates, my name is Alina Hafner, and I am honored to serve as Second Speaker of the TUM Graduate Council. With experience in academic self-governance and a strong personal commitment to managing challenging situations in academia, I aim to represent your interests with empathy and integrity. I have an open ear for all your matters and look forward to fostering collaboration, transparency, and inclusiveness within our doctoral community.” – Alina

[Learn more](#)

Internationalization

Many Internationalization Formats and More to Come

This year, we have established some new formats in our internationalization category at the TUM Graduate School. In May, we hosted the first “Research Collaboration across the Globe” event, with a focus on Latin America, and started our online format, “Internationalize your Doctorate”, to provide detailed information about our TUM-GS exchange programs and funding options.

In 2026, we are eager to welcome you to two more regional spotlight and networking events on India and Southeast Asia. We will also continue with our information sessions about TUM-GS internationalization offers and funding options. Of course, you are very welcome to send us your questions and topic suggestions for our information sessions and events.

We are looking forward to meeting you next year and making your doctorate more international! Meanwhile, if you have specific questions (concerning the internationalization of your doctorate or research stays abroad), please send them to international@gs.tum.de!



A globe in front of the sky
(Photo: Unsplash/ Lucas George Wendt)

Find out more

TUM & Co.

Employee and Health Survey of TUM

TUM employees are welcome to participate in the TUM corporate health management program, which focuses on promoting workplace health. This survey collects information on various factors related to the physical and mental health of employees at TUM, as well as on work-related stressors and health resources. The results of this questionnaire will make an important contribution to understanding the work-related health status of TUM employees. Your participation will also provide valuable insights into health-relevant job demands. <https://www.unipark.de/uc/tumbgm/ospe.php?qb>

GLÜHNIX (15 – 17 December) at Garching Campus

This year, the student representation will again organize our very own on-campus Christmas market in Garching, and you can expect: Glühwein, children's punch, tarte flambée, crêpes, Feuerzangenbowle, and much more that the Christmas soul desires. The GLÜHNIX will take place at the forecourt of the Faculty of Mathematics/Informatics building and will open from Monday, 15 December to Wednesday, 17 December from 11 a.m. – 9:30 p.m. [GLÜHNIX - Student Representation](#)

AI-Powered Literature Research

In the course “AI for Literature Research Essentials – Optimizing Search Queries” from the TUM University Library, you will learn how the smart use of AI tools can optimize your academic literature research. By combining AI-powered search queries with traditional methods, you can achieve efficient and precise results. The course is designed for students and doctoral candidates. <https://www.ub.tum.de/en/webinar/ai-literature-research-essentials>

Access to Eurostat Microdata

TUM has been recognized by Eurostat as an eligible research entity. TUM researchers can therefore apply for access to restricted, confidential microdata for scientific projects. The Statistical Office of the EU provides a wide range of data on economy, population, environment, education, health, and the labor market.

<https://www.ub.tum.de/en/news/access-eurostat-microdata>

Data Talks by the TUM Architecture Museum (Oct 2025 – March 2026)

As part of the accompanying program, the TUM Architecture Museum is launching the Data Talks series – seven public discussions, held live and published as a podcast. They bring together experts and the public to explore the exhibition's themes in greater depth. The upcoming event on 18 December is called “Behind the Scenes: Narrating the Raw and the Overcooked (with Curator Team)”. Participation is free of charge.

<https://www.tum.de/en/news-and-events/events/details/data-talk-behind-the-scenes-narrating-the-raw-and-the-overcooked>

Call for Application: Heidelberg Laureate Forum

Young researchers in mathematics and computer science from all over the world can apply for one of the 200 exclusive spots to participate in the Heidelberg Laureate Forum (HLF), an annual networking conference. The HLF offers all accepted young researchers the unique opportunity to interact with the laureates of the most prestigious prizes in the fields of mathematics and computer science. Application deadline is 11 February 2026.

<https://www.newsroom.hlf-foundation.org/news/article/the-application-process-for-the-13th-heidelberg-laureate-forum-has-begun/>

Call for Application: KlarText-Preis for Science Communication

The Klaus Tschira Foundation is seeking young researchers who have written an outstanding doctoral thesis and are interested in presenting their research to a non-scientific audience. This should take the form of an article that is accessible to a general audience or a clear infographic. Application is possible until 28 February 2026.

<https://klartext-preis.de/der-preis-klartext/> (website is only available in German)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!
Best regards from the TUM-GS Management Office Team,



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