



UNIVERSITÄT  
LEIPZIG



KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana University of  
Ibadan, Nigeria INES-Ruhengeri,  
Rwanda Mount Kenya University,  
Kenya University of Tunis, Tunisia  
IRGIB Africa University, Benin  
University of Leipzig, Germany

## **ACCESS: Call for PhD Applications – 3 further scholarships available**

The “African Centre for Career Enhancement & Skills Support (ACCESS)”, a consortium of six African Universities and the University of Leipzig in Germany, is pleased to announce the call for our second round of applications for PhD candidates, with studies to commence in January of 2022. The programme, which is financed by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), will analyse the employability of university graduates within the African context. The programme aims to research how graduates in Africa search and find work and build up their careers, and to develop and test innovative concepts for employability promotion at Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Africa. Employers in Africa say that they are looking for graduates who can think for themselves, take initiatives, integrate into fast-paced work environments, learn new ways of working and develop creative solutions to real problems. But what does this mean in practice? How can students best be supported in developing these job-relevant capabilities that rely more on methodology and key skills than on academic content? How can job-relevant learning approaches be integrated into all disciplines and study programmes (curricula) at African and European Universities? What can be learnt from the experiences of existing graduates and from the existing efforts at employability promotion at universities in African and Europe? How can university employability promotion be developed in collaboration with partners outside universities in the private or public sector? What do we know about the functionalities and experiences with digital (coaching) platforms?

After the first selection round, out of which 3 candidates were successfully selected, there are still three grants (ca. €1,200 per month) to be awarded with a total duration of 36 months - from 1 January 2022 to December 2024. All partner universities belonging to the consortium are invited to submit two candidatures by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, whereby the candidatures already submitted in the first selection round can be submitted again.

ACCESS is an interdisciplinary programme, therefore applicants from a wide range of disciplines, including History, Politics, Economics, Business Studies, Education, Anthropology, Human Geography, Information Systems, Engineering and cognate disciplines, may be considered. One candidate will be accepted from each of the following countries: Benin, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Tunisia.

The successful doctoral candidates will be supported for 36 months, within which they will be expected to produce their PhD thesis in the subject area. They will become member of the Research Academy at the University of Leipzig. Each PhD candidate will be coached and supervised by at least two academic supervisors: one from his/her home institution in Africa and one from Leipzig University.

Supported by:

**DAAD**  
Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



**Requirements:**

1. Applicants should have an excellent Master (or equivalent) degree that qualifies for studies in doctoral programmes at Leipzig University;
2. Previous studies in areas such as History, Politics, Economics, Business Studies, Education, Anthropology, Human Geography, Information Systems, Engineering, etc.;
3. A PhD topic which is related to the aims of the ACCESS programme;
4. Be a citizen of Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, or Tunisia.

This is the third call for doctoral candidates in the ACCESS projects. Following the first and the call, we awarded eleven PhD grants.

The PhD candidates who started in 2020 are working on the following topics:

- Impacts of social networks on labour markets and effects on graduates' job opportunities (in Ghana)
- The adoption of digital marketing in entrepreneurial universities (in Kenya)
- Communities' expectations from higher education institutions in their regions (in Rwanda)
- The role of universities in the internationalisation of business competences (in Ghana)
- Soft-skills exhibition as predictor of female graduate employability (in Nigeria)
- Unemployment of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduates (in Tunisia)
- The role of university-business linkages for promoting employability (in Benin)

**Research topics:**

To add to the research topics already being worked on (see above), we are seeking applications that focus, for example, on the development and challenges of digital labour markets; on new forms of equal work collaboration (e.g. start-ups, new cooperatives, community oriented crowd-funding initiatives), interfaces between HEIs and potential employers, both in formal and informal economies; evaluation tools and e-coaching experiences in HEI; roles of SMEs in the employment of HEI graduates before and after COVID-19; new approaches to enhance social security among young workers.

### **Applications should include:**

1. A certified copy of the Master (or equivalent) degree, including completed and official certificates and transcripts of previous university studies (academic records which are not in German or in English must be accompanied by English translations);
2. A research proposal in which an innovative project which falls into the research areas of the programme is outlined. This proposal of not more than 3,500 words should include: a brief summary of the proposed project (max. 15 lines); of the international state of the art of research on the topic; and a work plan indicating how the project will be completed within a maximum of three years;
3. A curriculum vitae;
4. Two references from academic referees;
5. When the language of instruction at the candidate's university is not English then evidence of sufficient English language skills is required (TOEFL 78% or B2 of the European Reference Framework).

Successful applicants will be expected to take up residence in Leipzig, to participate in a course programme, as well as to undertake field research in their home country. Travel and family grants are paid according to DAAD guidelines.

The University of Leipzig is an equal opportunity employer. Women are encouraged to apply. Severely challenged persons with the same occupational aptitude will be privileged.

**Please send your application as one or separate PDF documents by E-Mail (indicating in the subject header which one of the six\* African universities you wish to be considered by) to:**

**phd-application-access@uni-leipzig.de**

**All applications must be received by 20.09.2021**

\*University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
\*INES-Ruhengeri, Rwanda  
\*Mount Kenya University, Kenya  
\*University of Tunis, Tunisia  
\*IRGIB Africa University, Benin  
\*KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana  
University of Leipzig, Germany