

JOB OPENING

One Doctoral Student Position

Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) / in collaboration with the University of Rostock

Application Deadline: April 15, 2026, 23:59 CET

The Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) is inviting applications from qualified and highly motivated students for a doctoral student position in the Lab of Migration and Mobility of the Department of Digital and Computational Demography.

The MPIDR is one of the leading demographic centers in the world. It is part of the Max Planck Society, a network of more than 80 institutes that form Germany's premier basic-research organization. Max Planck Institutes have an established record of world-class research and they offer a unique environment that combines the best aspects of an academic setting and a research laboratory.

The Lab of Migration and Mobility of the Department of Digital and Computational Demography, headed by MPIDR Director Emilio Zagheni, is looking for candidates with strong quantitative and programming skills, and with research interests in the fields of demography, migration studies, science of science, and computational social science.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF DOCTORAL PROJECT

Large-scale bibliometric data have opened up unprecedented opportunities to measure, model and forecast migration of scientists (see the [Scholarly Migration Database](#)). This, in turn, has enabled social scientists to advance our theoretical understanding of migration processes for highly skilled individuals.

The successful candidate is expected to contribute to research projects in this area (see [Migration and Mobility of Scholars](#)), with a cumulative dissertation that advances our understanding of scientific mobility. In addition to using observational bibliometric data, we plan to run a survey to inquire about aspirations, reasons, and context behind mobility and immobility of researchers and the high-skilled population. The theoretical and methodological advancements of this cumulative dissertation will directly contribute to the Scholarly Migration Database. Particular attention would be devoted to gender, discipline, and geographical differences in global scientific mobility.

SUPERVISORY TEAM

This project will be supervised by an interdisciplinary team of scholars that includes Aliakbar Akbaritabar (MPIDR and University of Rostock), and Emilio Zagheni (MPIDR). The doctoral student is expected to be in residence at the MPIDR and enroll at the doctoral program of the Institute of Sociology and Demography at the University of Rostock. Additionally, the doctoral student will receive support for national and international research visits, in order to have further scientific exchange with other researchers and participate in relevant scientific conferences.

For questions and additional information regarding the doctoral project, please contact Aliakbar Akbaritabar (akbaritabar@demogr.mpg.de) using the subject line: "MPIDR doctoral position 2026". The doctoral studentship offers an excellent opportunity for motivated students to work with a highly international team of researchers, to take advantage of the interdisciplinary intellectual environment at the MPIDR, as well as substantial support for travel, research training and data acquisition.

The admitted student is expected to be part of the International Max Planck Research School for Population, Health and Data Science (IMPRS-PHDS) that merges demography, epidemiology and data science. IMPRS-PHDS promotes interdisciplinary research training and exchange within a network of European and US universities. The research school offers core training in Rostock, extensive networking opportunities across partner sites and high-quality supervision across at least two institutes. Further information on the IMPRS-PHDS curriculum can be found at <https://www.imprs-phds.mpg.de>.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted online via this [survey](#) by **April 15, 2026, 23:59 CET** and include as a **single PDF file**, in English:

1. **Curriculum Vitae**, including a list of your scholarly publications.
2. **A motivational statement (maximum two pages)** explaining i) why you applied, ii) how your research interests fit with the project; iii) how the MPIDR could foster your career development; and iv) describing your technical skills and areas of expertise.
3. **Copies of transcripts of undergraduate and master's degrees**. Applicants should hold a master's degree or equivalent at the time of starting the doctorate in October 2026.
4. **Names and contact information for two academic referees**.
5. **One writing sample** (published or unpublished work where the student was the main contributor).

The starting date is flexible, but no later than November 1st, 2026. The doctoral student is offered a 3-year contract with remuneration based on the salary structure of the German public sector (Öffentlicher Dienst, TVöD Bund) currently starting at €40,618 gross a year.

The MPIDR is an equal opportunities employer. Respect and inclusivity are central to our work culture, where diversity in gender, background, beliefs, abilities, and identities is embraced and valued. We are committed to shaping a culture that encourages continuous development of each person's skills and potential.

We value diversity and are keen to employ individuals from minorities and under-represented groups. The Max Planck Society is committed to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in its workforce and therefore encourages applications from such qualified individuals. Furthermore, the Max Planck Society seeks to increase the number of women in those areas where they are underrepresented and therefore explicitly encourages women to apply.

The Max Planck Society offers a broad range of measures to support the reconciliation of work and family. These are complemented by the MPIDR's own initiatives. For more information, see: <https://www.demogr.mpg.de/go/work-family>. In addition, there are a range of Max Planck Society-wide initiatives and measures primarily geared towards helping young female researchers and mothers to advance their career. For some examples, see: <https://www.demogr.mpg.de/go/career-development>.