The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is supporting technical Doctoral Students from Germany at CERN for a period of up to 3 years (Wolfgang Gentner Scholarships). Goal of the program is to train students from German universities in an international, world-class high-tech environment with close links to industry. The German Doctoral Student Programme is fully integrated into the general CERN Doctoral Student Programme under the same employment conditions, but funded by the BMBF. Additional funds are available to support students’ travelling to Germany.

Key figures of the Gentner Programme

The Gentner Programme is a three-party agreement between the BMBF, CERN and DESY. All doctoral students from EU Member States registered at German Universities are eligible to apply under this agreement. Breakdown of cost sharing:

BMBF (Gentner Programme)
- Monthly subsistence allowances for up to 3 years stay at CERN
- Travel expenses for the doctoral students to travel back to their home university
- Travel expenses + fees for the doctoral students to attend a suitable German national symposium
- Travel expenses for supervisors for certain events (e.g. “Gentner Day”, thesis defense)

CERN
- Miscellaneous integration costs (travel to/from CERN upon contract start/termination, language course, work equipment)
- Travel expenses + fees for the doctoral students to attend an international conference or workshop to present their work results
- Invitation of the university supervisor to CERN

Evolution of Technical Doctoral Students from Germany since 2007

Between 30 and 40 Doctoral Students per year are funded by the Gentner Programme through the BMBF. About one-third of them are female students.

Whereabouts of former Gentner Doctoral Students

First employment

Students come from 31 universities all across Germany. New ties were established with university groups, who never had any contacts with CERN before.

Present employment

More than 60% of all former Gentner Doctoral Students became CERN Fellows as their first employment.

Some are CERN Staff and at present, 21% of the former students are working in industry.

Evolution of German Fellows

About 40% of all German Applied Fellows at CERN are former Gentner Students.

Thesis Topics of active and former Gentner Doctoral Students

The majority of students work in the fields of instrumentation, accelerator technology and computing. Among the remaining fields are also library science and physics teaching indicating the wide range of topics of the Gentner Programme.

10 Years of Gentner Programme

In October 2007, the CERN Doctoral Student Programme saw the addition of the Gentner Doctoral Students Programme, named in honour of the celebrated nuclear physicist, Wolfgang Gentner.

Four years later, in 2011, the first ‘Gentner Doktor’ finished his PhD and took up a position at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) in Germany.

The 100th Gentner Doctoral Student, started his PhD at CERN in summer 2016. Currently, the Programme hosts 34 active and 86 former Students.

In April 2017, the three involved parties, the BMBF, CERN and DESY signed the prolongation of the Programme by 3 x 3 years until 2023. As part of the agreement, funding has been significantly increased.

Wolfgang Gentner

Wolfgang Gentner (1906-1980) was a German nuclear physicist with significant work in the fields of nuclear photo effect, gamma radiation, biophysics and archaeometry. After 1951 he represented, together with Werner Heisenberg, (West) Germany in the negotiations leading to the founding of CERN.

From 1954 to 1959 Wolfgang Gentner was CERN Research Director and Director of the CERN Synchrocyclotron Division. Later he initiated the CERN Fellowship Program for young post-docs, was chair of the CERN Scientific Policy Committee and President of the CERN Council from 1972-74.

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http://cern.ch/gentner