

A short guide to applying at CeNS

Every year, CeNS receives numerous applications from all over the world, though of very different quality. The average success rate (measured by finally accepted candidates) is about 5%. In many cases, applications do not pass the pre-selection process due to formal mistakes, sloppiness and/or missing effort. Please read the following guidance notes carefully before starting your online application.

1) Personal information: CV

Most importantly, your CV should be complete, i.e. it should comprise the complete time period from your high school degree until your present working and/or educational status. If there are longer “gaps” in your CV (more than 3 months), e.g. due to unemployment periods, it is better to be clear and explain. Otherwise the reviewer might ask herself/himself what you have done during that time and why you do not mention it.

If you are applying for a PhD position, a CV covering three or more pages is definitely too long! Keep it short, keep it chronological, and keep it clear. Think of the reviewer and his/her limited time and make it easy for her/him to go through the most important facts of your education and professional life.

2) Education: Bachelor’s and master’s grades and documents

This is the part of your application where formal requirements are checked. This means: You have to **upload transcripts AND certificates**. If they are not in English or German, we will need official, certified translations of the documents. If you haven’t finished your master’s degree yet, please provide the most recent transcript of records. Make sure your **documents are readable**, i.e. that you scan them at a sensible resolution.

If you completed several master’s degrees, please state this in your CV.

Please provide, where possible, explanations of the grading schemes used and an indication of your class ranking/position in class.

We will transform your grades to the German grading system by using the following formula:

with N_{\max} being the best possible grade in the foreign grading system, N_{\min} being the lowest grade necessary for passing in the foreign grading system, and N_d being the grade which is to be transformed into the German grading system.

Example: Iranian grading system $N_{\max} = 20$, $N_{\min} = 10$, $N_d = 17$. $X = 1.9$

Candidates with grades lower than 2.5 have only minor chances to be accepted. On the other hand, good grades alone do not guarantee acceptance!

$$x = 1 + 3 \frac{N_{\max} - N_d}{N_{\max} - N_{\min}}$$
 You will have to present original versions of any uploaded with certified translations once you start your PhD here in Munich and want to enroll as a doctoral student at the university.

Experimental techniques: Please describe the techniques you have used e.g. in your Bachelor's or Master's thesis or during internships. Programming skills are also important to mention here.

You should be proficient in English, since this is an important pre-requisite for a successful PhD. Numerous grammar mistakes and typos in your application will give the reviewer the impression that you either have a problem with expressing yourself correctly in English or that you submitted a rather sloppy application. If you pass the pre-selection round, you will have an online interview via Skype with the PI of the respective project. Since this interview will be in English, so your oral language skills are very important, too.

3) Selection of the research project – motivation essay

Please write a **short statement why you are applying for a position** at CeNS. **Explain why you are interested in this particular project; what is most fascinating for you, how this connects with your previous experiences and your education.** Make clear that you invested some time in finding out more about the group and the topic. Avoid lengthy explanations of the state-of-the-art of your selected research project. The PI probably knows more about this than you do.

Always keep in mind that the reviewer will most likely stop reading if your statement gets too extensive. On the other hand, you should provide concrete reasons why you are applying to CeNS and to this specific position. Make a logical connection between what you have done so far and why you would like to continue at CeNS. Note that the PIs know ChatGPT as well as you do, so avoid empty phrases created by AI that will bore everybody.

Many applicants tend to describe themselves and their previous academic achievements here extensively. This is not what is asked for. Many applications fail because there is no adequate link between the applicant's previous field of studies and the project she/he is applying for. A well-reasoned statement is of outmost importance!

4) Referees

As part of the online application, you will have to provide contact details and email addresses for your two referees. In case your application is preselected, the referees will be contacted directly by the CeNS office or the PI of the project. Make sure to inform your referees about this procedure.

Unfortunately, we have had some cases where the referees' e-mail addresses were obviously not trustworthy. Usually, professors and other supervisors have an institutional e-mail address. Please provide us with this e-mail address. We cannot accept references from personal/private e-mail accounts.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR APPLICATION!