

Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg



Brandenburgische
Technische Universität
Cottbus

We are a young and dynamic technical university in the heart of Lusatia, developing practical, science-based solutions to address major future challenges and global transformation processes. Are you interested in studying the public acceptance and social sustainability of eco-friendly design tools, materials and fabrication technologies for the responsible co-creation electronics? The two PhD position is part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Network “FERNs - Holistic integration of eco-Friendly dEsign tools, mateRials, fabrication technologies for the responsible co-creation of future Sustainable integrated electronic systems”, funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme. The FERNs Doctoral Network is funded by the European Union and is part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Doctoral Networks (MSCA-DN) programme. The network brings together an eco-system of 12 cross-disciplinary research groups and 6 industry partners to train a new generation of industry-conscious thinkers and leaders who will influence the design and operation of future electronic systems in the fitness, medical and farming areas. It is a consortium of high-profile researchers from various universities, research institutions, and companies spanning 11 European countries (Finland, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, UK and Ireland). The FERNs network offers exceptional opportunities for promising young students to work together on cutting-edge topics such as sustainable materials & fabrication in electronics, eco-design and co-design principles, social appropriation and circularity models to address the key challenges underpinning the field of sustainable electronics. It will offer a research platform and training program for the Fellows to work across the disciplines of material science, engineering, social science and business with the ambition to enable the transition of electronic components and systems towards environmental and social sustainability programme.

Two fully funded PhD positions in MSCA-DN Project FERNs as soon as possible, for 3 years

City: Cottbus; Starting date (earliest): At the earliest possible; Remuneration: Other;
Reference number: 183/25; Closing date: 15/12/25

Working field

DC9: Public acceptance and appropriation

Examine consumer acceptance and readiness to adopt Green/Sustainable Electronics (G/SE).

Analyze how new technologies reshape everyday social practices in FERNs case studies. Explore consumer roles as co-designers, prosumers, promoters, or beneficiaries across the product lifecycle.

Conduct large-scale surveys on electronic use and consumer trends toward green electronics.

Use interviews, focus groups, and regional case studies to investigate adoption patterns and behaviors.

DC10: Social sustainability dimensions for green electronics

Combine meta-study of research on social sustainability in Green Electronics (GE) with participatory case study research.

Develop a multi-dimensional assessment tool for designing and evaluating G/SE projects (formative and summative).

Address ethics, social equity, access, affordability, and health impacts along the value chain.

Identify key challenges, success factors, and obstacles for integrating social dimensions in R&D.

Create practical design and evaluation tools to embed social sustainability dimensions (SSD) in G/SE.

Requirements

Completed university degree (master's/university diploma/equivalent) in a field relevant to the position (sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, or comparable)

You should possess the following qualities:

Methodological competence in empirical research and mixed methods

Very good language skills in English

Social and intercultural competence, ability to work scientifically, independence, flexibility, good written and oral communication skills, resilience, ability to work in an interdisciplinary team

Career Stage: Doctoral Candidates (DCs). These are 3-year PhD positions open for graduated students (Master or equivalent).

Eligibility criteria

The FERNS consortium invites applications of highly-motivated, outstanding candidates, of any nationality, age and gender that respect all the following eligibility rules at the date of the Call deadline:

1. MSCA Eligibility requirements

Applicants must satisfy the MSCA definition of Doctoral Candidates (DC): The applicants should not be in possession of a doctoral degree at the time of the call deadline.

Candidates who have successfully defended their PhD thesis but have not received their degree will not be accepted.

2. MSCA Mobility requirements

Applicants must not have lived or carried out their main activity in the main host and recruiting country for more than 12 months in the past 3 years immediately prior to the Call deadline.

3. FERNS Academic qualifications

Applicants must hold a relevant Master degree or equivalent at the time of the application. The educational background should fit with the required skills announced for each DC.

Exception: In case a candidate has not obtained yet their Master's degree at the Call closing date (see individual project list), they can nevertheless apply. If a candidate is then part of the final ranking list and to be selected for one of the FERNS positions, before being offered a contract of employment, he/she will be required to send to provide the Master's degree certificate (or, alternatively, a formal preliminary certificate) before the

starting date of the employment contract between March-May 2026).

4. FERNS Proof of English

Applicants that are not native English speakers must provide proof of their English language capability as established via an internationally recognised test such as: IELTS: minimum 6.5 for PhD; TOEFL paper test: 550 (TWE 4); TOEFL internet test: 79 (R18, L17, S20, W17). Alternatively, applicants have to prove to have a sufficient level of English (e. g., by providing a Master certificate of bilingual studies or at least 3 years of English study in high school).

What we offer

Successful candidates will receive an attractive salary following the MSCA regulations for doctoral candidates. The exact salary will be confirmed upon appointment and is dependent on the host country (to allow for the difference in the cost of living in different EU Member States).

The salary includes a living allowance (€4058/months, a mobility allowance (€710), and a family allowance (if the recruited doctoral candidate has or acquires family obligations during the duration of the fellowship).

The guaranteed PhD funding is for 36 months. In addition to their individual scientific projects, all doctoral candidates will benefit from further training, which includes internships/secondments in relevant industry, a variety of training courses (including transferable skills), and active participation in workshops and conferences.

Call planning. The FERNS project started on the 1st of Sept 2025 and will last 48 months. A Call for recruitment for selecting the 15 international Doctoral Candidates (DC) is opening the 15th of October 2025, with an application deadline of the 15thst of December 2025. The schedule of the selection process is detailed below:

Activity

Call closing: 15/12/2025

Short list and invitation for interviews: Beginning of January

Interviews: Second week of January 2026

Final ranking list: 15/01/2026

Offer of contract/enrolment/starting of the fellowships: By the end of February 2026

Duration of each fellowship: 36 months

Application

Selection process

Candidates should apply electronically to Prof. Dr. Melanie Jaeger-Erben (melanie.jaeger-erben@b-du.de) for the PhD position(s) of their interest.

Candidates should provide the following documents.

1. a detailed CV, including information on the candidate's proficiency in English
2. a motivation letter
3. additional documents that could help to evaluate the applicants' education/training (specified in the application portal of each institution, e. g. copies of bachelor and/or master's thesis, attested copies and transcripts of completed education, grades and other certificates, links to software repositories with relevant projects.)

The selected (short-listed) candidates will be

Asked to provide two references, and

Invited for an interview

The final decision on whom to recruit will be made by the selection committee.

More information at <https://stellenticket.de/199779/TUBS/>

Offer visible until 15/12/25

