

Technische Universität Dresden - Research Training Group RTG 2947 "AirMetro"



TUD Dresden University of Technology, as a University of Excellence, is one of the leading and most dynamic research institutions in the country. Founded in 1828, today it is a globally oriented, regionally anchored top university as it focuses on the grand challenges of the 21st century. It develops innovative solutions for the world's most pressing issues. TUD has established the Research Training Group "AirMetro - Technological & Operational Integration of Highly Automated Air Transport in Urban Areas" (RTG 2947), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). This interdisciplinary group, involving five faculties and the German Aerospace Centre (DLR), will conduct research on 11 research topics. The goal is to address the technical and social challenges of Innovative Air Mobility (IAM), considering ecological, economic, technological, and sociological factors. The RTG's structured PhD program aims to train young researchers in highly automated, networked mobility, featuring international collaboration with mentors from the USA, Asia, and Europe. TUD and the RTG embody a university culture that is characterized by cosmopolitanism, mutual appreciation, thriving innovation and active participation. For TUD diversity is an essential feature and a quality criterion of an excellent university. Accordingly, we welcome all applicants who would like to commit themselves, their achievements and productivity to the success of the whole institution.

Research Associate / PhD Student (m/f/x)

The Research Training Group RTG 2947 "AirMetro", funded by the DFG, offers a position, as Research Associate / PhD Student (m/f/x) (subject to personal qualification employees are remunerated according to salary group E 13 TV-L) starting May 1, 2026. The position is limited until April 30, 2029. The period of employment is governed by the Fixed Term Research Contracts Act (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz - WissZeitVG). The position aims at obtaining further academic qualification (usually PhD). Job ID: RTG2947-T-10/2

Title: Fail safe, Distributed Digital Twin for Innovative Air Mobility (IAM) Operations
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Uwe Assmann, Chair of Software Technology and co-supervised by at least one additional professor plus an international tutor of the RTG Description of the PhD topic: This PhD project focuses on the development of fail-safe, distributed digital twins (DTs) for urban air mobility applications. Existing research model multiple UAVs as a single shared entity in a centralized Digital Twin (DT), which poses safety risks to IAM operations if the cloud or central database becomes unavailable. The research will investigate methods for safe drone control by integrating a digital twin of the urban operational environment, including landing sites, with the fundamental flying characteristics of each UAV. Simulated sensor data from a digital shadow will be incorporated to maintain cyber-physical consistency between the UAVs' status in the model and in the real world. A key goal is to develop methods for distributing bigraphical world models using Conflict-free Replicated Data Types (Bigraph-CRDT) and to extend these methods for the general distribution of DT data, ensuring high availability and resilience. The project also explores human or automated UAM management interaction with multiple UAVs, providing an immersive spatial interface (XR: AR/VR) to plan missions, monitor operations, and manage UAV swarms. Applications focus on disaster response, logistics, and dense urban UAV operations without reliance on a single cloud backbone, with potential transferability to industrial or U-space operations.

City: Dresden; Starting date (earliest): 01/05/26; Duration: limited until April 30, 2029;
Remuneration: subject to personal qualification employees are remunerated according to salary group E 13 TV-L; Reference number: RTG 2947-T10/2; Closing date: 04/02/26

Working field

- develop methods for safe UAV control using a digital twin of the urban environment, including landing sites, combined with the fundamental flight characteristics of UAVs
- integrate simulated sensor data from a digital shadow to ensure cyber-physical consistency between the digital twin and the physical UAVs
- implement distributed bigraphical world models using Conflict-free Replicated Data Types (Bigraph-CRDT) and extend these methods for general DT data distribution
- enable human or automated interaction with multiple UAVs via immersive XR interfaces for mission planning, monitoring, and control of UAV swarms
- validate the distributed DT framework in realistic urban and disaster-management scenarios

Tasks:

- independent and cooperative qualification through scientific research within one of the PhD study projects on offer
- training in the technical tasks of the individual dissertation topics through study of the literature and in making the objectives more precise
- working on the individual PhD study project with experimental, numerical in collaboration with other RTG members (fellow students and supervising professors)
- implementation of the planned research program, evaluation and interpretation of the results and transferring them to a RTG internal ex-change platform, elaboration and presentation of the state-of-the-art in the respective research fields
- participation in lectures, workshops and summer schools according to the guidelines of the RTG curriculum
- supporting scientific graduation work (Bachelor/Master/Diploma) in the subject-specific research field
- regular reporting on research progress to the supervising professors
- publishing the results of the research work individually and in concert with others
- cooperative maintenance of exchange platforms (database, information pages, etc.)
- summarizing the results of the individual PhD study project in a dissertation within the due time of three years
- Successful candidates will work together with an experienced PhD researcher at the Institute of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and together with other chairs being part of the RTG.

Requirements

- good or very good university degree in computer science, mechatronics, robotics, electrical engineering, or a related field
- strong background in distributed systems, real-time computing, or networked control systems
- knowledge of UAV systems, swarm coordination, or digital twin frameworks
- experience with programming, simulation, and software development (e.g., Python, C++, ROS, MATLAB)
- analytical skills and ability to combine theoretical modeling with experimental validation

— We are looking for first-class graduates with expertise in the RTG-addressed PhD subjects, high interdisciplinary desire to learn and willingness to cooperate, very good verbal and written English communication skills as well as the absolute determination to submit the dissertation after three years of research.

What we offer

- Pioneering Research Environment: Shape the future of advanced air mobility through involvement in innovative drone-related projects that bridge technology, urban planning, material sciences, sensors and aviation. With the upcoming Smart Mobility Lab in Lusatia, Saxony, you will have access to state-of-the-art and extensive facilities for experiments. This includes a hall measuring 100x100x30 meters and outdoor space (available from 2027).
- Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Immerse yourself in a highly collaborative and interdisciplinary research environment, where you'll work alongside experts from fields such as engineering, data science, urban studies, and aerospace.
- Skill Development: Our extensive qualification concept goes beyond research, offering targeted training in drone technology, data analytics, regulatory aspects, project management, and leadership skills. This ensures you graduate not only as a specialist in your field but also as a well-rounded professional.
- Global Networking: Collaborate with our network of local and international partners, fostering connections that transcend geographical boundaries and enrich your academic and professional network. This includes a paid research stay abroad for three months.
- Career Advancement: Receive dedicated support for fellowship applications and tailored guidance for your career.
- Quality of Life in Dresden: Experience a high quality of life in Dresden, with its dynamic urban scene, relatively affordable living, rich cultural offerings, and vibrant nightlife.

Application

Further questions regarding this call can be addressed to Prof. Dr. Uwe Assmann (uwe.assmann@tu-dresden.de).

TUD strives to employ more women in academia and research. We therefore expressly encourage women to apply. The University is a certified family-friendly university. We welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If multiple candidates prove to be equally qualified, those with disabilities or with equivalent status pursuant to the German Social Code IX (SGB IX) will receive priority for employment.

Please submit your detailed application including a cover letter detailing your research interests stating the job-ID "RTG 2947-T10/2" along with your curriculum vitae, academic transcripts with marks, a letter of recommendation and your publications (if applicable) by February 4, 2026 (stamped arrival date of the university central mail service or the time stamp on the email server of TUD applies), preferably via the TUD SecureMail Portal <https://securemail.tu-dresden.de> by sending it as a single pdf file to airmetro@tu-dresden.de or to:

TU Dresden, RTG 2947 "AirMetro", Prof. Hartmut Fricke, Helmholtzstr. 10, 01069 Dresden, Germany.

Please submit copies only, as your application will not be returned to you. Expenses incurred in attending interviews cannot be reimbursed.

TUD is a founding partner in the DRESDEN-concept alliance.

Reference to data protection: Your data protection rights, the purpose for which your data will be processed, as well as further information about data protection is available to you on the website: <https://tu-dresden.de/karriere/datenschutzhinweis>.

More information at <https://stellenticket.de/200830/TUBS/>

Offer visible until 04/02/26

