

## **NEXtra Programme – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **1. Can I propose my own research topic?**

No. The list of eligible topics will be provided in the call for NEXtra.

### **2. Is prior contact with a supervisor recommended?**

No, you do not need to contact supervisors before applying.

### **3. Am I eligible if my Master's degree is not strictly in the Resource Nexus field?**

Yes. Please refer to the preferable educational background listed for each topic in the open call.

### **4. Is professional work experience mandatory, and what counts?**

Yes. A minimum of 2 years of professional work experience is required. Internships and volunteer work do not count toward this requirement but can be included in your application.

### **5. Do I need a fully developed research proposal before applying?**

Yes. The research proposal should follow this structure (maximum 13,000 characters including spaces, plus references):

- Background and Motivation (context, problem/gap, related work, significance)
- Review of State-of-the-Art Scientific Knowledge
- Problem Statement, Research Aim, and Objectives
- Research Approach and Methods
- Work Plan
- References

**Note:** Any use of AI must be declared and will be verified.

### **6. Do I apply to NEXtra first or to DAAD EPOS, or simultaneously?**

You only need to apply to UNU-FLORES for the NEXtra programme. No separate applications are required.

### **7. Which documents are mandatory, and do transcripts or certificates require certified translations?**

Mandatory documents:

- EPOS Checklist [epos\\_checklist.pdf](#)

- [EPOS application form](#)
- [Europass CV Template](#)
- Motivation Letter
- University Degree Certificates and Transcripts
- Secondary School Certificate
- Work Certificates
- Two Letters of Recommendation (employer + academic supervisor)
- Proof of Language Skills (English and/or German)
- Full Master's Thesis

**Additional Documents:** Optional, if relevant.

**Note:** Always refer to the open call for the latest list of required documents. Certified translations are required if documents are not in English.

**8. Is there an interview stage, and what does it focus on?**

Yes. The interview includes competency-based questions, your interest in the NEXtra programme, and a presentation covering your academic background, work experience, and research proposal.

**9. When does the PhD start?**

PhDs start in April or October each year. All selected candidates must attend a mandatory 2-month in-person German language course prior to the start of the PhD (February for April intake, August for October intake).

**10. Is proof of language required?**

Yes, but an active IELTS or TOEFL certificate is not strictly required. Other forms of confirmation are acceptable, such as:

- University confirmation that instruction language was English;
- Recommendation letters confirming language skills;
- Employer confirmation of language proficiency and etc.

**11. If I completed my Master's degree more than 6 years ago, am I eligible to apply?**

Yes, provided you can demonstrate ongoing engagement with academia or research, e.g., scientific publications, part-time research positions, or completed courses/programmes with assigned credits.