



EBERHARD KARLS  
UNIVERSITÄT  
TÜBINGEN



## CSC-Tübingen PhD Scholarship Program

2025/2026 application round: prospective PhD positions at the University of Tübingen

---

Faculty: Faculty of Science

Institute / Section / Subject: Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien (Knowledge Media Research Center),  
Media Psychology

Supervising Professor(s): Prof. Dr. Sonja Utz

About the Supervisor(s): Sonja Utz is a full professor for Communication via Social Media at University of Tübingen. She is head of the Everyday Media Lab at Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien in Tübingen. Sonja Utz holds a PhD in psychology from Catholic University of Eichstätt (1999; Social identification with virtual communities). Before moving to Tübingen, she held positions in Chemnitz, Amsterdam and Leeuwarden. Her research focuses on the effects of social and mobile media use, especially in knowledge related contexts, as well as on human-machine communication. More information on <https://www.iwm-tuebingen.de/en/iwm/personen/sutz>

Specification/Project title: Health communication on social media: the role of social media influencers

Topic Description: People can find information on many topics on social media from a wide range of sources that vary in their degree of expertise. One interesting phenomenon is the rise of social media influencers. Influencers are often peers who function as "ordinary experts". While they have mainly been studied in the beauty and fitness domains, they also play a role in health communication. This has been criticized because they often lack the necessary medical expertise. However, there are also medical experts using social media to share health-related information. The PhD project could use a combination of field studies and experiments to examine how followers perceive these influencers, how they form credibility judgments, and which media, influencer, and user characteristics play a role.

Intended Degree: Dr. rer. nat. (Psychology) or Dr. phil (Media Science)

Type of the PhD Study: 1) Full-time (complete doctoral studies at the University of Tübingen)

Required Degrees and Qualifications: Master or equivalent in Psychology, Communication Science or Media Science

Language Requirements: English

Notes: