



EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN



CSC-Tübingen PhD Scholarship Program

2026/2027 application round: prospective PhD positions at the University of Tübingen

Faculty:	Juristische Fakultät (Faculty of Law)
Institute / Section / Subject:	Institute of Criminology
Supervising Professor(s):	Jun.-Prof. Dr. Jennifer Grafe, LL.M.
About the Supervisor(s):	Jennifer Grafe is Junior Professor of Criminology and Criminal Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Tübingen. Her research focuses on criminal law and criminal policy, criminology, sexual criminal law, sanctions, medical criminal law, criminal procedure, critical criminology and Queer Legal Theory. A particular focus of her work is the relationship between empirical knowledge, social expectations and rational criminal legislation. She combines doctrinal criminal-law analysis with interdisciplinary and criminological perspectives.
Specification/Project title:	Evidence-Based Criminal Law-Making: Epistemic Standards for Rational Criminalization
Topic Description:	The project examines the role of empirical evidence in the justification and reform of criminal law from a comparative perspective. It asks which epistemic standards should guide decisions to criminalize conduct – including questions of evidence hierarchies, causality requirements and the handling of uncertainty – and how legislators actually use criminological, social-scientific and other empirical knowledge in practice. The dissertation will develop a normative framework for evidence-based criminal law-making and apply it to selected areas of contemporary criminalization. A central element is comparative analysis: depending on the candidate's expertise, German and European approaches will be compared with Chinese criminal law and criminal policy, examining differences in legislative reasoning, sources of evidence, institutional frameworks and concepts of rational criminalization across multiple levels. The empirical study will analyze legislative materials, parliamentary debates and expert consultations to assess the actual use of scientific evidence. Possible case studies include sexual offences, technology-related

offences, hate crime or drug offences, selected according to criteria such as discursive polarization, data availability and cross-jurisdictional variance. The project thereby combines criminal law doctrine, criminalization theory, criminology and comparative law, aiming to identify best practices, explore limits of evidence-based criminalization and contribute to questions of democratic legitimacy in criminal law-making.

Intended Degree: Dr. iur. (doctoral degree in law), subject to the applicable doctoral regulations of the Faculty of Law

Type of the PhD Study: Full-time doctoral studies at the University of Tübingen

Required Degrees and Qualifications: A very good university degree in law (Master's degree or equivalent) qualifying for doctoral studies. A strong interest in criminal law, criminal policy and/or criminology is expected. Applicants should demonstrate the ability to conduct independent legal research and to engage with interdisciplinary and empirical scholarship. Prior knowledge of comparative law, legislative studies or empirical research methods is welcome but not required.

Language Requirements: Excellent command of English; the CSC formal requirements apply (TOEFL iBT 95 or IELTS 6.5). No knowledge of German is required. Any knowledge of German, including basic reading skills, may be helpful when engaging with German-language legal and legislative materials, but is regarded solely as an additional asset and not as a prerequisite.

Notes: The precise selection of case studies will be developed together with the successful candidate. Possible fields include sexual offences, technology-related offences, hate crime, drug offences or other areas characterized by intensive criminal-policy debate.