



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Research Summer Visit

Population and Social Data Science Summer Incubator Program

Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research

Application Deadline: 14th January, 2026

The Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) is inviting applications from qualified and highly motivated students for a Summer Research Visit.

The goal of the Population and Social Data Science Summer Incubator Program is to enable discovery by bringing together data scientists and population scientists to work on focused, intensive and collaborative projects of broad societal relevance.

For a period of 3 months (June 8th – August 21st, 2026) participating students will work in small teams, with support from experienced mentors, towards a common research goal. **For the summer of 2026, the focus of the program will be on two main research areas:**

- **“Spatial Mobility and Scientific Production”** mentored by Aliakbar Akbaritabar, Andrés Castro (Computational Social Science and Humanities Programme of the Barcelona Supercomputing Center (CSSH-BSC)), and Irena Chen
- **“Digitalization, AI, and Inequalities”** mentored by Carolina Coimbra Vieira, Megan Evans, Nkechi S. Owoo (University of Ghana) and Emilio Zagheni

Participating students will be exposed to best practices across the social sciences and data sciences while contributing to a hands-on project experience that will result in a scientific journal article. All participants will also have access to lectures and will be able to participate in other scientific activities taking place at the MPIDR.

Applicants must be enrolled in a doctoral or master’s university program (at the time they visit the MPIDR). Selected candidates must obtain approval to participate in the program by their supervisor / administrator. The Incubator program values research teams that include early-career scientists from a range of disciplines and backgrounds, with complementary skill sets. Priority will be placed on bringing together a diverse pool of students. The total number of attendees will be defined based on resources and quality of applications. The mentors will provide seed projects and data ideas, with flexibility for students to put forward their own ideas as well.

Successful candidates will have demonstrated ability to work on research projects independently and in interdisciplinary teams, and an interest in research problems related to both data science and the social sciences, broadly defined.



Applications must be in English and submitted online via <https://incubator.demogr.mpg.de/> and include the following documents in one single PDF:

- 1 Curriculum Vitae
- 2 Cover letter (Max 2 pages)
 - Please state why you are interested in spending the summer at the MPIDR, and in which ways you would benefit from participating in the Incubator program.
 - Please articulate your research interests and briefly describe a project you have worked on, the motivation for it and your contribution.
 - Please describe your technical skills, as well as what you would like to learn over the course of the summer visit.
 - Please briefly explain which of the two main focus areas of the Summer Incubator 2026 best matches your research interests and technical expertise. Optionally, feel free to include initial ideas for potential research projects.
- 3 Copies of academic transcripts for undergraduate and, if applicable, graduate education
- 4 Names and contact information for 2 academic referees (no recommendation letter is required at this step)

In order to receive full consideration, applications should be received by January 14th 2026 (11:59 p.m. CET). Notifications will be sent out in March 2026. This will be an in-person summer program, and students will be expected to be in residence at the MPIDR in Rostock for the period of the research visit and to devote most of their working time to the collaborative research project during that period. Selected students will be offered reimbursement for travel costs to/from Rostock and a maintenance grant sufficient enough to cover living expenses during your stay in Rostock. A room in our guest apartments can be reserved to ease the burden of looking for accommodation—subject to availability and on a first come, first served basis.

In line with principles of the Max Planck Society as a whole, we value diversity and are keen to host individuals with minority or traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. We are committed to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in the Max Planck Society and therefore encourage applications from such qualified individuals. Furthermore, we seek to increase the number of women in those areas where they are underrepresented and therefore explicitly encourage women to apply.

More information

You can find more information on previous program participants, projects and publication outcomes on the program webpage: <https://incubator.demogr.mpg.de/>

For additional questions, you can contact us at incubator@demogr.mpg.de