



This translation of the Regulations of the Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research at the Center for Development Research at the University of Bonn is **not legally binding**. Only the German original of this document is legally binding.

This translation was created by the secretariat of the BIGS-DR as a reference material for program participants and other interested parties like applicants to the BIGS-DR who do not have command of the German language.

## Regulations of the Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research at the Center for Development Research at the University of Bonn

On the basis of § 2 Abs. 4 of the Act on the Universities of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz - HG) of 16 September 2014 (GV. NRW. S. 547), last amended by Article 3 of the Act of 17 October 2017 (GV. NRW. S. 806), the University of Bonn has enacted the following regulations:

**Regulations of the Bonn International Graduate School for Development  
Research at the Center for Development Research at the  
University of Bonn**

Version July 2018

**Table of contents**

Section 1 - Position/ Objectives/ Training Concept .....	4
§ 1 - Position of the Graduate School "Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research" (BIGS-DR).....	4
§ 2 - Tasks and objectives .....	4
§ 3 - Training concept .....	5
§ 4 - Time frame and study phases .....	5
§ 5 - Research, teaching and examination language .....	6
Section 2 - Membership.....	6
§ 6 - Members of the Graduate School.....	6
§ 7 - End and loss of membership.....	6
Section 3 - Institutions/Consultative Bodies/Office Holders .....	7
§ 8 - Organs and advisory bodies.....	7
§ 9 - Board of Directors.....	7
§ 10 - Selection Committee.....	7
§ 11 - Academic Advisory Board .....	8
§ 12 - Council of Spokespersons of the Program Participants.....	8
§ 13 - Academic Coordination and Secretariat .....	9
Section 4 - Qualification phase .....	9
§ 14 - Access to the study program .....	9
§ 15 - Structured study program.....	11
§ 16 - Examinations.....	11
§ 17 - Grading.....	12
Section 5 - Doctoral phase .....	12
§ 18 - Admission.....	12
§ 19 - Advice from tutors .....	12
§ 20 - Obligations of program participants.....	13
§ 21 Doctoral Thesis.....	13

Regulations of BIGS-DR

§ 22 - Quality control ..... 13

§ 23 - Affiliation of non-permanent doctoral programs ..... 14

§ 24 - Entry into force ..... 15

Annex 1 ..... 15

## **Section 1 - Position/ Objectives/ Training Concept**

### **§ 1 - Position of the Graduate School "Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research" (BIGS-DR)**

- (1) The Center for Development Research (ZEF) is an international and interdisciplinary center of the University of Bonn (UB) that conducts research on sustainable development. Its three departments cover the following research areas:
  - Political and cultural change
  - Economic and technological change
  - Ecology and natural resources management
- (2) The Graduate School "Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research" (hereinafter referred to as BIGS-DR) is a structured, interdisciplinary and international study program in development research established at ZEF, which complements the doctoral studies at a faculty. It is aimed at applicants whose doctoral thesis is to be assigned to one of the three ZEF research areas listed in paragraph 1.
- (3) Doctoral studies take place under the supervision of a professor in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the faculty that has admitted the student to the doctoral program
- (4) The research activities of the graduate school are oriented towards the research priorities of ZEF, which in turn contribute to the profile area "Innovation and Technology for a Sustainable Future" of the UB.

### **§ 2 - Tasks and objectives**

- (1) The BIGS-DR is an organizational framework for doctoral training in the field of development research.
- (2) BIGS-DR offers a research-oriented training program for doctoral students, which includes all areas of development research.
- (3) The objectives of the BIGS-DR are to promote the education and career of young scientists in the field of development research at a high internationally recognized level and to impart a broad spectrum of skills and knowledge.
- (4) BIGS-DR promotes equal opportunities and the compatibility of academic career and family within the framework of the equal opportunities concept of the UB. The graduate school therefore provides support in the search for child care or makes arrangements for mentoring and coaching, if research is continued during parental leave. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of program participants with an international background.

- (5) The graduate school also supports program participants in organizational matters such as finding accommodation, applying for visas and other administrative matters.

### **§ 3 - Training concept**

The BIGS-DR is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach to development research. The graduate school provides program participants with a comprehensive overview of development research and sustainability issues as described in the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the research profile "Innovation and Technology for a Sustainable Future" of the UB. The combination of theory, methodology and practical experience in areas of social, economic and environmental change enables program participants to explore new areas of knowledge. The training concept of the BIGS-DR further aims at making the program participants competitive in the international labor market.

### **§ 4 - Time frame and study phases**

- (1) The BIGS-DR program starts in the winter semester, lasts 36 months and consists of the qualification and doctoral phases.
- (2) In the qualification phase of the program, participants take part in preparatory interdisciplinary and disciplinary courses. The qualification phase lasts 6 months.
- (3) The subsequent doctoral phase is aimed at program participants who have successfully completed the qualification phase and are admitted as doctoral students at a chosen faculty.

In the doctoral phase, program participants carry out their doctoral research in developing countries or development-related institutions. The BIGS-DR offers support through research funds, expert advice and infrastructure. Further support is offered via foreign collaboration partners and within larger research projects at the ZEF.

The doctoral phase of the study programme ends at the end of the semester in which the program participants have successfully completed the doctoral examination procedure, have finally failed to pass or lost their membership in the BIGS-DR in accordance with § 6 of these regulations.

In the latter case, the continuation of the doctoral examination procedure at the respective faculty is not affected.

## **§ 5 - Research, teaching and examination language**

The research, teaching and examination language in the study program of the BIGS-DR is English. All written and oral examinations completing the modules of the study program must be taken in English. Dissertations at the BIGS-DR must be written in English as far as this is compatible with the applicable doctoral degree regulations of the respective faculty.

## **Section 2 - Membership**

### **§ 6 - Members of the Graduate School**

The members of the graduate school are:

- (1) The directors of the three ZEF departments;
- (2) the Academic Coordination of the BIGS-DR;
- (3) the program participants admitted to the BIGS-DR;
- (4) the lecturers, as long as they offer courses within the framework of the BIGS-DR study program, and
- (5) The post doctoral researchers at ZEF, who are referred to as senior researchers and who advise participants in the BIGS-DR program on their research.

### **§ 7 - End and loss of membership**

- (1) For program participants who are not admitted to the doctoral studies by a faculty, membership at the BIGS-DR program ends at the end of the semester in which the course program of the qualification phase is completed. The membership of program participants who entered the doctoral phase ends with the semester in which the doctoral examination procedure was successfully completed or finally failed, with exmatriculation or with the end of the 8th semester after the start of the study program of the BIGS-DR. If the doctoral examination procedure is not completed by the end of the 8th semester after the start of the study program, the Executive Board may, in justified cases and upon application, decide to extend membership.
- (2) The membership ends prematurely through:
  1. Declaration of resignation to the Executive Board
  2. Exclusion by the board due to gross scientific misconduct according to the current guidelines for ensuring good scientific practice at the UB or exceeding the maximum study time at the BIGS-DR of 8 semesters.

The doctoral relationship with the respective faculty is not affected by resignation or exclusion. The doctoral project can be continued outside the BIGS-DR. For the further

course of the doctorate, the doctoral regulations of the respective faculty apply exclusively.

### **Section 3 - Institutions/Consultative Bodies/Office Holders**

#### **§ 8 - Organs and advisory bodies**

The organs of the BIGS-DR are the Executive Board and the Selection Committee; advisory bodies of the BIGS-DR are the Academic Advisory Board and the Council of Spokespersons of the program participants.

#### **§ 9 - Executive Board**

The Executive Board consists of the three-member ZEF Directorate and the Academic Coordination of BIGS-DR. A person chairing the board shall be appointed for a period of three years. The chairman of the board also heads the Selection Committee and the Academic Advisory Board.

The Executive Board

- (1) manages the business of the BIGS-DR;
- (2) is responsible for the development and coordination of the research and training program of the BIGS-DR as well as quality control;
- (3) decides on the annual budget of the BIGS-DR, the use of material resources and the allocation of travel and conference grants;
- (4) appoints one professor each to the Academic Advisory Board of the BIGS-DR at the suggestion of the Faculties of Agriculture, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Philosophy of the UB.

#### **§ 10 - Selection Committee**

- (1) The Selection Committee has seven members: the three-member ZEF Directorate, representing the three individual ZEF departments; one senior researcher from each ZEF department, appointed by the directorate of each ZEF department for a period of one year with the possibility of reappointment; and the Academic Coordination.
- (2) The Selection Committee shall select the program participants in accordance with the principles laid down in these regulations.
- (3) The Academic Coordination is responsible for coordinating the work of the Selection Committee.
- (4) The Selection Committee has a quorum if at least four members are present.

- (5) The decisions of the Selection Committee shall be taken by a simple majority of the members present. Resolutions may also be adopted by written consent, unless a member votes against this procedure.

#### **§ 11 - Academic Advisory Board**

- (1) The Academic Advisory Board advises the Executive Board on the development and quality of the BIGS-DR training program and its coordination. It meets at least once a year.
- (2) The Academic Advisory Board has 11 members: one professor each from the Faculties of Agriculture (1), Mathematics and Natural Sciences (1) and Philosophy (1) of the UB, one senior researcher each from each ZEF department (3), one representative of the spokespersons' council of the program participants from each ZEF department (3) and two members of the Executive Board, one of whom is the Academic Coordination (2).
- (3) The Academic Advisory Board shall appoint the first chair and deputy chair from among its members for a period of two years.
- (4) The recommendations of the Academic Advisory Board shall be adopted by a simple majority of the members present. Resolutions may also be adopted by written consent, unless a member votes against this procedure. A record of all results shall be made available to the members of the Academic Advisory Board. The decisions of the Academic Advisory Board have a recommending character for the Board.

#### **§ 12 - Council of Spokespersons of the Program Participants**

- (1) The program participants of each yearly cohort of the program elect for three years three representatives for the spokespersons' council of the program participants, consisting of one representative per ZEF department.
- (2) The Council of Spokespersons of the Program Participants deals with all aspects of the BIGS-DR which concern the studies, in particular the quality of the training program.
- (3) Decisions and concerns of the program participants are presented to the Executive Board and the Academic Advisory Board by the Council of Spokespersons of the Program Participants.
- (4) Once a year, the Council of Spokespersons of the Program Participants elects three spokespersons (one person from each department of ZEF) to the Academic Advisory Board.



### **§ 13 - Academic Coordination and Secretariat**

The Academic Coordination of the BIGS-DR is responsible for the organization and coordination of the graduate school's study program. This person is responsible for

- (1) the preparation and regular evaluation of the course program;
- (2) the processing of applications;
- (3) public relations including the maintenance of the website;
- (4) support of program participants in administrative and organizational matters;
- (5) national and international contacts and networking;
- (6) communication with applicants, participants of the program and alumni of the program;
- (7) the organizational support of the Selection Committee, and
- (8) the preparation of the meetings of the Selection Committee and the Academic Advisory Board.

The Academic Coordination is supported by the secretariat of the BIGS-DR.

## **Section 4 - Qualification phase**

### **§ 14 - Access to the study program**

- (1) The study program of the BIGS-DR is aimed at potential program participants with master's or equivalent academic degrees (better than 2.0 in the German system, GPA higher than 3.0 in the American system or comparable degrees) in agricultural sciences, general natural sciences, geography, economics, political sciences, sociology, engineering or mathematics as well as related disciplines of the disciplines listed here.

The application to the BIGS-DR consists of two steps: the online registration and the submission of written application documents. The application must be written in English or German and contain the following documents:

- the BIGS-DR application form;
- a motivation letter (one page);
- an abstract of the master's or diploma thesis in English;
- information on other previous university work or research that is relevant to the application;
- a graduate research statement for the doctoral thesis (5 pages), which shows that the applicant is basically able to conceive a scientific work in the field of development research with innovative ideas, which contains an initial proposal of the intended doctoral research;
- letters of recommendation from two reference persons;
- a curriculum vitae in tabular form, showing the scientific career to date;
- all relevant completion certificates;
- Proof of English language proficiency (TOEFL at least 550 points paper-based or at least 80 points for the internet-based test; IELTS volume 6) or equivalent proof of language proficiency with an assessment of at least B2 according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages.

(2) The selection is based on the following principles:

1. Each application will be evaluated independently by at least two reviewers appointed by the Executive Board from among the members of the professorate, the lecturing personal, and the members of ZEF who hold a doctorate.
2. The reviewers appointed shall make a preselection from among the applicants, taking into account the overall grade of the university degree granting access to the doctorate in accordance with § 67 Abs. 4 HG and the information from graduate research statement.
3. The short-listed applicants will then be interviewed personally or by telephone by the reviewers. The interview should provide information about the applicant's motivation, language ability, personality and suitability. A protocol form is used for the interview, which contains the questions to be answered and concludes with an overall assessment by the reviewers involved in the interview.

The Selection Committee decides which applicants will be admitted to the program on the basis of the application documents and the votes of the reviewers. In making its decision, the Selection Committee will take into account whether the proposed research topic fits the ZEF research agenda. Admission to the study program also contains an assignment of the research topic to a research area of the three ZEF departments and thus an assignment of the program participants to a ZEF department.

## **§ 15 - Structured study program**

- (1) The qualification phase consists of two modules spread over the first half of the program. The first module is interdisciplinary and obligatory for all program participants regardless of their disciplinary background. The module is intended to convey the theoretical basics of the complex interrelationships and problems of development. The second module is discipline-oriented and deals with economics, sociology, geography, political science, ecology and agricultural sciences, with a special focus on theory and methodology. In the second module, program participants are obliged to take advantage of the training opportunities offered in their respective discipline.

BIGS-DR offers additional courses in GIS, remote sensing, mathematics and statistics. In addition, individual program participants can attend laboratories, lectures and training seminars at the UB or other collaborating institutes in Germany or abroad. Courses are offered on intercultural competence, research ethics, leadership competence in development and good scientific practice. Annex 1 to these regulations contains a curriculum for the structured study program.

- (2) In addition to the structured study program, program participants have time during the qualification phase to develop a research plan. The tutors and supervisors review the research plans and budgets to ensure that the scientific content meets the quality requirements at ZEF and that funds are available for research costs. Finally, the research plans must be discussed in a research colloquium and have to be approved by the supervisors. The approval is a prerequisite for the start of the field research supported by the BIGS-DR.

## **§ 16 - Examinations**

Both the interdisciplinary and the disciplinary module conclude with a written examination. In the interdisciplinary module, a term paper on a topic relevant to development must also be written. The paper must be written interdisciplinary by program participants from up to three disciplines. The module examinations of the qualification phase are accepted and evaluated by the respective lecturers responsible for the modules, unless the Executive Board, deviating from this, commissions another person who must fulfil the requirements of § 65 HG with the acceptance and evaluation of the examination.

The successful completion of the interdisciplinary as well as the disciplinary module is a prerequisite for admission to the doctoral phase of the BIGS-DR.

Failed examinations of the qualification phase can be repeated once.

## **§ 17 - Grading**

The grading system for the assessment of examinations in the courses of the BIGS-DR during the qualification phase comprises six assessment levels:

Excellent	>98% to 100%
Very good	> 87.5 to 98 %
Good	>75 to 87.5 %
Satisfactory	>62.5 to 75 %
Passed	50 to 62,5 %
Not passed	< 50 %

For each module, participants receive a certificate and a transcript of records in German and an English translation listing all lectures attended and examinations passed. The certificates and the performance record shall be signed by the chairman of the Executive Board.

## **Section 5 - Doctoral phase**

### **§ 18 - Admission**

The ZEF Directorate decides on the admission to the doctoral phase at the request of program participants. Admission to the doctoral phase is granted to those who have successfully completed the qualification phase and have been admitted to a doctorate at a faculty with a doctoral topic based on a research plan approved in accordance with § 15 Abs. 2.

### **§ 19 - Advice from tutors**

- (1) Senior researcher of ZEF are available as tutors for advice on scientific questions concerning doctoral research for the program participants. This support is being made available in addition to the scientific supervision of the research in the doctoral phase by the supervisors, which is guaranteed in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the respective faculty.
- (2) Each program participant must develop a research and supervision plan which is agreed with the tutor and the supervisor. The plan describes how training and research content is to be designed for the relevant supervision period.
- (3) The Executive Board mediates on request in event of a conflict between program participant and a tutor. In the case of conflicts between doctoral students and supervisors, the relevant body in the doctoral regulations is responsible.
- (4) The dissolution of a supervision agreement by supervisors and tutros and doctoral students is governed by the applicable doctoral regulations.

## **§ 20 - Obligations of program participants**

- (1) During the doctoral phase, no examinations have to be delivered that are evaluated by BIGS-DR. The successful completion of the doctoral phase is documented by the doctorate at the chosen faculty.
- (2) During the doctoral phase, research progress must be presented twice in the BIGS-DR research colloquium. The research colloquia at the ZEF serve to practice the interdisciplinary scientific discourse. Doctoral students should regularly participate in the research colloquia.
- (3) Program participants are expected to publish in recognized scientific journals during or directly after the delivery of the doctoral thesis.

## **§ 21 - Doctoral Thesis**

- (1) The regulations laid down in the doctoral regulations of the faculties apply.
- (2) In addition to the printed copies of the doctoral thesis required for the faculty according to the doctoral regulations, doctoral students of the BIGS-DR must submit at least three printed copies of the doctoral thesis to ZEF: one for the respective department of ZEF, one for the ZEF library, one for the BIGS-DR for documentation purposes.

## **§ 22 - Quality control**

- (1) Program participants must report on their research progress in their doctoral research in oral or written form to their supervisors and tutors at least every six months. The progress report is used as a basis for discussion in the joint meetings of the program participants with their supervisors and tutors.
- (2) The ZEF Research Ethic Committee (Ethics Policy) shall review the research plans of program participants that include the collection of primary data (e.g. interviews, photos/videos, responses to e-mail surveys) or the use of non-directly collected secondary data that contain personal or confidential information (e.g. records of participants of a program) for ethical compliance in accordance with ZEF's Ethics Policy. The ethical harmlessness must be based on a questionnaire. The review according to sentence 1 does not apply, if an ethical review of the research is carried out by the faculty of the doctoral student.
- (3) The dissertation must be submitted to the Academic Coordination for the electronic plagiarism examination before it is submitted to the faculty. This check is not necessary, if it is carried out in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the respective faculty.
- (4) After completing their doctorate, doctoral students must keep the primary data of their research for 10 years on durable and secure media in the institution of the UB (BIGS-DR, Faculty) where they were created, in accordance with §5 of the Guidelines for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice at the UB. The rights of the

program participants to the data collected by them and to their doctoral thesis remain unaffected by this.

- (5) Program participants have the opportunity to make their data available for further use, e.g. for meta-analyses, in the ZEF Data Portal. This is done according to the ZEF data management guidelines.

### **§ 23 - Affiliation of non-permanent doctoral programs**

Non-permanent ZEF doctoral programs (such as third-party-funded graduate colleges) can be affiliated with BIGS-DR. The participants of these programs can participate in modules of the BIGS-DR. The right to attend modules of the BIGS-DR may be restricted, if proper training of the program participants of the BIGS-DR cannot be guaranteed without the restriction. The admission of external participants to the BIGS-DR requires the approval of the Executive Board.

**§ 24 - Entry into force**

These Regulations shall enter into force on the day following their publication in the promulgating publication of the University of Bonn.

R. Hüttemann The Chairman of the Senate  
of the University of Bonn  
University Professor Dr. Rainer Hüttemann

Issued on the basis of the decision of the Senate of xx.xx. 2018.

Bonn, xx.xx. 2019

M. Hoch  
The Rector  
of the University of Bonn  
University Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Michael Hoch

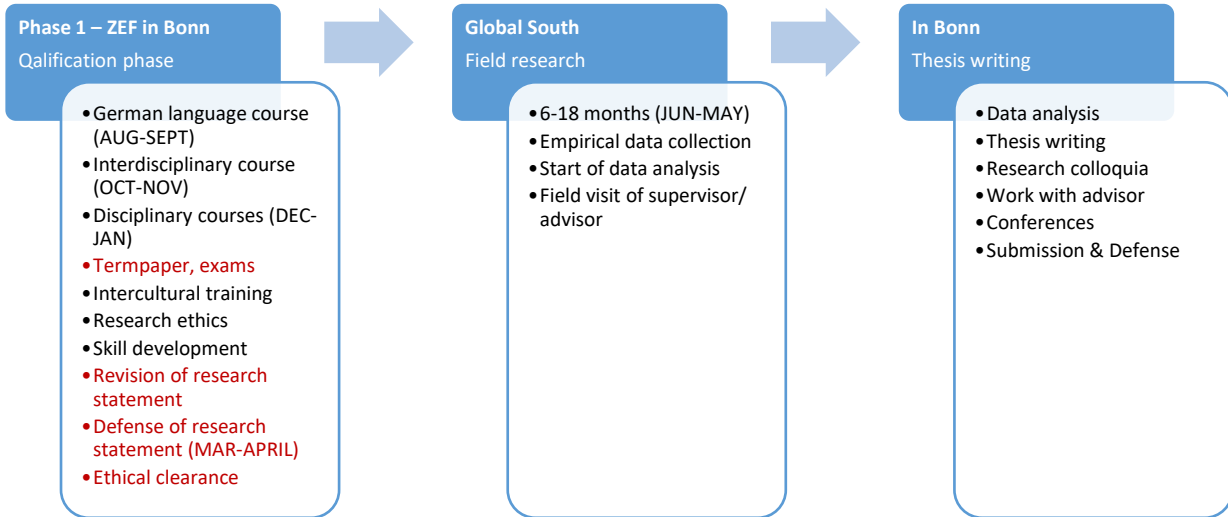
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**Annex 1**

**BIGS-DR curriculum**

Duration: 36 months



<b>Study Plan BIGS-DR</b>	36 months
<b>Phase 1: Qualification at ZEF</b>	6 months
<b>Module 1: Interdisciplinary Course, Term paper</b>	October - November
<b>Module 2: Disciplinary Courses</b>	December - March
	ZEFa: Sociology, Cultural Change and Development ZEFb: Economic Analysis of Development and Development Policy ZEFc: Ecology and Development
<b>Module 3: Specific courses and training at ZEF and laboratories of the Uni</b>	As required
<b>Special Courses</b>	Mathematics and Statistics, GIS & Remote Sensing, Modeling, Presentation and writing skills, Field research methods
<b>Workshops</b>	<b>Workshops</b> Intercultural Training, Leadership skills development, Ethics in development research
<b>Phase 2: Doctoral studies</b>	6 months
	<b>Field research in a developing country</b> 6-18 months
	<b>Data analysis, writing of the thesis</b> 12-18 months