



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



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# Doctorate



## BIGS for Development Research (BIGS-DR)

University of Bonn • Bonn

### Overview

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Degree                                   | Dr agr, Dr rer nat, Dr phil, Dr oec, Dr pol                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Teaching language                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>English</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Languages                                | Courses, exams, written assignments, and the thesis are in English.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Full-time / part-time                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>full-time</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Programme duration                       | 7 semesters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Beginning                                | Winter semester                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Application deadline                     | <p>The deadline for the <a href="#">DAAD EPOS scholarship via BIGS-DR</a> is 31 August for the following academic year.</p> <p>For applicants with secured funding, the deadline is 1 May for a start in October of the same year.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Tuition fees per semester in EUR         | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Combined Master's degree / PhD programme | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Joint degree / double degree programme   | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Description/content                      | <p>The Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research (BIGS-DR) is a structured doctoral programme at the Center for Development Research (ZEF). This programme is part of a group of international graduate schools at the University of Bonn that maintains the highest level of academic quality. ZEF is led by three renowned professors in the areas of social sciences, economics, and ecology: Prof Dr Matin Qaim (economics), Prof Dr Christian Borgemeister (ecology) and PD Dr Eva Youkhana (social sciences).</p> <p>BIGS-DR is an excellent choice as a stepping stone for your international career in the field of development research or policy. Our mission is to attract talented young scientists from all over the world to pursue their development research interests. At ZEF, students are exposed to an international community guided by a challenging research environment.</p> <p>The interdisciplinary research agenda of ZEF tackles issues relevant to the Global South such as climate change, poverty reduction, food security, migration, and risk management.</p> <p>BIGS-DR offers a broad, interdisciplinary coursework to development research and sound training</p> |

in theories and methods of selected disciplines. Doctoral students conduct research to collect primary data. Combining theories, methods, and practical experience in the areas of social, economic, and ecological change enables students to explore new fields and be competitive in an international job market.

## Course Details

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Course organisation</b>                                  | <p>BIGS-DR is a full-time programme with a duration of three and a half years. Doctoral students will participate in coursework, conduct field research, and complete their theses within this time frame. In addition, students take part in soft skills workshops that train them in academic writing, working interculturally, leadership skills, and ethical considerations.</p> <p>On average, it takes three to four years for BIGS-DR students to complete their dissertations and obtain their doctoral degrees. During this time frame, they participate in a tailor-made course programme, conduct field research, analyse data, write academic papers, and present their results at international conferences. Furthermore, students improve their career prospects by attending workshops on academic writing, intercultural training, and research ethics.</p> <p>As a structured doctoral programme, BIGS-DR provides intensive supervision and tutorship. Doctoral students are supported and guided by a team of experts consisting of their supervisors and senior researchers at ZEF.</p> <p>Upon successfully defending their dissertation, students are awarded a doctoral degree from one of the faculties of the University of Bonn (agriculture, natural sciences, social sciences, economics, etc.).</p> <p><a href="#">» PDF Download</a></p> |
| <b>A Diploma supplement will be issued</b>                  | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>International elements</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International guest lecturers</li> <li>• Integrated study abroad unit(s)</li> <li>• Training in intercultural skills</li> <li>• Study trips</li> <li>• Courses are led with foreign partners</li> <li>• Projects with partners in Germany and abroad</li> <li>• International comparisons and thematic reference to the international context</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Integrated study abroad unit(s)</b>                      | Research stay                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Special promotion / funding of the programme</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAAD development-related postgraduate course</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Course-specific, integrated German language courses</b>  | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Course-specific, integrated English language courses</b> | No                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## Costs / Funding

Tuition fees per semester in EUR

None

**Semester contribution**

The University of Bonn is a public university, meaning that it does not charge tuition fees. However, all students must pay the so-called social contribution (= semester fee) of about 330 EUR per semester. It includes among other things a student transit pass for public transport and a statutory accident insurance.

**Costs of living**

The cost of living for students in Bonn is around 1,200 EUR, with rent accounting for the largest share. The funds you need to secure for your research will vary from project to project, but they usually range from 5,000 to 20,000 EUR.

**Funding opportunities within the university**

No

## Requirements / Registration

**Academic admission requirements**

- An excellent Master's or equivalent degree: GPA higher than 3.0 in the American system or a grade higher than 2.0 in the German system or equivalent
- Relevant work experience (min. two years)
- An excellent and innovative research proposal
- Certified proficiency in English
- The last MA degree should have been obtained less than six years ago.

**Language requirements**

- IELTS certificate (band 6)
- TOEFL (550 paper-based, 213 computer-based, 80 Internet-based)
- University waiver that indicates the language of instruction was in English

**Application deadline**

The deadline for the [DAAD EPOS scholarship via BIGS-DR](#) is 31 August for the following academic year.

For applicants with secured funding, the deadline is 1 May for a start in October of the same year.

**Submit application to**

[Online application](#)

## Services

**Accommodation**

Students of the University of Bonn can apply for a room in a dormitory of the Studierendenwerk Bonn (further information: <https://www.studierendenwerk-bonn.de/en/accommodation/>).

For further information on housing in Bonn, please visit our website: [www.uni-bonn.de/en/university/university-life/living-in-bonn](http://www.uni-bonn.de/en/university/university-life/living-in-bonn).

International applicants who are admitted to the programme can apply for a dorm room through the programme coordinator. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that all students will be allotted a room, as these are in short supply.

|                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Structured research and supervision</b>                                             | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Research training / discussion</b>                                                  | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Career advisory service</b>                                                         | The University of Bonn has a central Career Service which provides advice and support about choosing a career and applying for jobs. Moreover, international students can join the iStart career programme which teaches participants tangible knowledge and valuable skills that will enable them to write successful applications for jobs in Germany. The programme is geared toward giving students a successful career path both during and after their studies and thus making it easier for them to enter the job market.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Support for international students and doctoral candidates</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome event</li> <li>• Cultural and linguistic preparation</li> <li>• Visa matters</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>General services and support for international students and doctoral candidates</b> | <p>The University of Bonn offers a range of different support programmes for international students. The Welcome Days before the start of every semester are an opportunity for new students from abroad to gather information on the most important issues, such as enrolment, registration with the local authorities, and opening a bank account. Getting to know fellow international and German students during recreational activities is another benefit of the Welcome Days.</p> <p>The Study Buddy programme matches newly-arrived international students (mentees) with a University of Bonn student (buddy) who helps them as they start their studies and adjust to life in Bonn. The buddies give tips, advice and assistance that make it easier for their mentees to become familiar with the university and get settled in Bonn.</p> |

## Contact

### University of Bonn

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🌐 Course website: <https://www.zef.de/doctoral-program/studies/courses.html>

📘 <https://www.facebook.com/zefunibonn>

🐦 <https://twitter.com/ZEFbonn>

🌐 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/zefbonn>

📷 <https://www.instagram.com/zefbonn/>

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# International Programmes in Germany - Database

[www.daad.de/international-programmes](http://www.daad.de/international-programmes)  
[www.daad.de/sommerkurse](http://www.daad.de/sommerkurse)

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## GATE-Germany

Consortium for International Higher Education Marketing  
[www.gate-germany.de](http://www.gate-germany.de)

## Disclaimer

The data used for this database was collected and analysed in good faith and with due diligence. The DAAD and the Content5 AG accept no liability for the correctness of the data contained in the "International Programmes in Germany" and "Language and Short Courses in Germany".

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Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research