

Doctoral Program - Schedule

Year 1	Onboarding	Course Work	Monitoring • Individual Meetings • Project Description + Supervisor Statement	Supervision	Participation in BCDSS Events & Activities
Year 2	Working on Dissertation	Acquiring Additional Skills	Monitoring • Individual Meetings • Written Proof of Progress + Supervisor Statement • Research Colloquium		
Year 3			Monitoring • Individual Meetings • Research Colloquium • Supervisor Statement		
Year 4	Finalizing Dissertation	Submission, Oral Examination, Preparation for Publication	Monitoring • Individual Meetings • Mock Oral Examination (Opt.)		

Onboarding

The Doctoral Program starts in **October**. During the first month, the new PhD researchers will be welcomed at the BCDSS, introduced to the research environment and infrastructure (both of the BCDSS and the University of Bonn), and learn about the German academic system and doing a PhD at the BCDSS and the University of Bonn. Socializing events to meet with other members of the BCDSS and organized activities to get to know the city of Bonn complete the program of these first four weeks.

Course Work

The Doctoral Program includes mandatory course work **from October to January of the first year**, including:

Foundation Courses

- Slavery and Other Forms of SADs
- Phenomena of SADs
- Introduction to the BCDSS's Five Research Areas
- Introduction to Key Concepts for the Study of SADs
- Introduction to the BCDSS Methods Lab

Principles of Academic Work

- Good Academic Practice
- Academic Writing
- Research Ethics
- Presentation Training
- Introduction to Science Communication & Knowledge Transfer

Monitoring

Our monitoring system ensures that progress is made during these years, and that support is available wherever and whenever it is needed. The monitoring system comprises:

Individual Meetings

- The Doctoral Program Management (Head of Research and Study + PhD Coordinator) meet regularly (**twice a year, in March and September**) with the PhD researcher. The meetings last 30 minutes and are intended as a platform for discussing the research topic and the candidates' progress. They also provide an opportunity for PhD researchers to raise any requests for further support, questions, or concerns.

- For the September meetings, PhD researchers are asked to provide a short overview of their activities (participation in and attendance of conferences, workshops, JCMMLs, Research Seminars, Outreach Activities, Teaching, ...) over the past year, as well as a list of meeting dates with their supervisor.

Project Description

- Mid-Term Presentation: In **June of the first year**, the PhD candidate gives a short 20-minute mid-term presentation to the supervisor, the Doctoral Program Management (Head of Research and Study + PhD Coordinator), and colleagues of their choice, working in the same or other relevant fields, displaying the current status of their project description report. A project outline for discussion will be circulated to all participants in advance.
- Report: The written version of the finalized project description, including preliminary structure of dissertation, sketch of sources, preliminary bibliography, research question(s), description of methods and theory, should be sent to the supervisor and to the Doctoral Program Management (Head of Research and Study + PhD Coordinator) **by 31 August of the first year**. The report should be between 25–30 pages. A possible standard template is provided by the BCDSS.
- Final Presentation: The finalized project description has to be presented to a small committee consisting of the Board of the BCDSS, the Doctoral Program Management, and the supervisor(s) of the respective candidate. A 30-minute project presentation by the PhD researcher (main research question(s), state of research, main sources and/or data, theory and methodology) is followed by 30 minutes of discussion. The presentation takes place **a couple of weeks after the submission of the written project description report, i.e., in late September**.

Written Proof of Progress

- **By 31 August of the second year**, each PhD researcher needs to submit a written proof of progress of their project. In consultation with the respective supervisor(s), this proof should reflect the substantial progress of two years of work. The Written Proof of Progress should be sent to the supervisor(s).
- **By 30 September of the second year**, the first supervisor is asked to submit a written assessment (about 1 page) of the PhD researcher's Written Proof of Progress to the Doctoral Program Management. The statement should cover the following aspects: quality and quantity of the submitted text, adherence to/adjustment of PhD researchers schedule (especially whether source analysis and/or data collection and analysis have been completed by the end of year two/the beginning of year three), next steps/goals, rough roadmap for the following two years, and a brief assessment of the supervision relationship.

Research Colloquium

- In the colloquia **during years two and three**, PhD researchers present their individual projects and discuss their research questions and challenges to receive useful and constructive feedback from the Cluster community.
- Second-Year Presentation: The candidates are supposed to discuss substantial aspects (i.e. chapter, case study) of their thesis. The 60-minute discussion is based on pre-circulated excerpts/text the PhD researcher is preparing for the Written Proof of Progress due at the end of the same year.
- Third-Year Presentation: The candidates are supposed to present their progress compared to their second year presentation, i.e. their advanced analysis. A presentation of 20 to 30 minutes' duration is followed by 30 to 40 minutes of discussion and questions.

Supervisor Statements

- **By 30 September of the first year**, the first supervisor is asked to confirm that:
 - 1) the project description report submitted by the PhD candidate has been approved,
 - 2) they have informed the PhD candidate of the relevant faculty or institute's requirements for the storage of research data,
 - 3) they have approved of the PhD candidates ethical clearance form.

The BCDSS will provide the supervisor with a document to confirm these points.
- **By 30 September of the second year**, the first supervisor is asked to submit a written assessment (about 1 page) of the PhD researcher's Written Proof of Progress to the Doctoral Program Management. The statement should cover the following aspects: quality and quantity of the submitted text, adherence to/adjustment of PhD researchers schedule (especially whether source analysis and/or data collection and analysis have been completed by the end of year two/the beginning of year three), next steps/goals, rough roadmap for the following two years, and a brief assessment of the supervision relationship (see also 'Written Proof of Progress').
- **By 30 September of the third year**, the first supervisor is asked to submit another written assessment (about 1 page) of the PhD researcher's progress to the Doctoral Program Management. The statement may cover the following aspects: quality and quantity of the text produced so far, adherence to/adjustment of PhD researcher's schedule (and if so, why), next steps/goals, ...

Mock Oral Examination (Optional)

- A presentation to a group of individually selected researchers **towards the end of year four** serves as mock examination in preparation for the actual oral examination.

Supervision

Regular meetings with the supervisor(s) involved are highly recommended in order to agree on a binding project plan (i.e., theoretical and methodological approaches, schedule, etc.) and to assess progress, receive feedback, and discuss difficulties arising during the writing process.

Positive and collaborative interactions between PhD researchers and their supervisors increase the likelihood of successful project outcomes. Both the supervisor(s) and the PhD researcher can contribute to this relationship by interacting in a manner that is based on **mutual respect, confidentiality, courtesy, accessibility, clear communication, and a willingness to put in the necessary effort**. Therefore, a **common ground and strategy** should be defined as early as possible.

Regarding the matter of a **second supervisor**, please discuss this with your first supervisor at the outset. Please note that some supervisors advocate for the prompt introduction of a second supervisor, while others do not favour this course of action. It is therefore important that you make this decision in close consultation with your first supervisor.

Participation in BCDSS Events & Activities

As full members of the BCDSS research community, our PhD researchers are invited to participate in all research **throughout the entire four years**. They participate in all forums for exchanging research, such as Research Areas, Working Groups, and conferences. Furthermore, they are encouraged to initiate and organize new forums for exchange.

Working on and Finalizing Dissertation

Following an intensive first year in which the groundwork is laid, PhD researchers are given the freedom to work on their theses **during years two to four**. Required **field or archival work** should be completed **by the beginning of year three**.

Acquiring Additional Skills

During years two and three, PhD researchers are encouraged to acquire additional skills through training provided by the BCDSS and the University of Bonn, e.g. the Bonn Graduate Center, Career Service, or Human Resource Development.

Submission, Oral Examination, Preparation for Publication

For a detailed overview of the submission and oral examination processes, please refer to your faculty's doctoral regulations. The BCDSS will also offer an info event on this topic in due course.

Submission

- Once the dissertation has been completed and approved by the supervisor(s), it is ready to be submitted to the relevant PhD Office.
- The PhD researcher should check **several weeks in advance** which forms and documents need to be submitted with the dissertation as it can take several weeks for some official documents (e.g., certified copies, certificate of good conduct) to be issued.
- The Doctoral Program Management must be notified when the dissertation is submitted.

Oral Examination

- After the review and grading process (deadlines may differ from faculty to faculty), the PhD researcher is contacted by the examination committee to find a date for the oral examination.
- Depending on the faculty, the PhD researcher has the choice of completing the oral examination in the doctoral discipline as a doctoral viva (Rigorosum) or as a doctoral defence (Disputation). The decision on which format to take must be made when the dissertation is submitted.
- The Doctoral Program Management must be informed of the date of the oral examination.

Preparation for Publication

- The doctoral thesis must be printed in the form accepted by the doctoral board and made accessible to the academic public in an appropriate manner. There are different options to publish the dissertation.
- Please note: Both the **Doctoral Certificate** and the **degree of 'Dr.'** are only issued **after the publication of the dissertation**.

BCDSS PhD Certificate

- In addition to your Doctoral Certificate from the University of Bonn, you will also receive a BCDSS PhD Certificate, **confirming** that you have **completed the required course work and attended the information sessions** during the onboarding phase.
- The BCDSS PhD Certificate also lists workshops and conferences attended, publications, organization of workshops and conferences, teaching activities, field and archival research, voluntary responsibilities and activities, acquired third-party funding, and other activities you would like to have mentioned.