



A Guide

**to the Berlin International College of Research
and Graduate Training (BIRT)**

SCRIPTS

CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE

Contestations of the Liberal Script

CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE “CONTESTATIONS OF THE LIBERAL SCRIPT – SCRIPTS”

SCRIPTS analyzes the contemporary controversies about liberal order from a historical, global, and comparative perspective. It connects the academic expertise in the social sciences and area studies, collaborates with research institutions in all world regions, and maintains cooperative ties with major political, cultural, and social institutions. Operating since 2019 and funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the SCRIPTS Cluster of Excellence unites eight major Berlin-based research institutions: Freie Universität Berlin, the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), as well as the Hertie School, the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), the Berlin branch of the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), and the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO).

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CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE “CONTESTATIONS OF THE LIBERAL SCRIPT – SCRIPTS”

The liberal script is under pressure – both externally and internally. Some of today’s most critical challenges to liberal democracy emanate from authoritarian states. At the same time, populist movements question core institutions of democracy from within. SCRIPTS is a social science research center and international research platform studying these contemporary contestations of the liberal script in a broader historical, global, and comparative perspective. It combines social sciences and area studies to produce new responses and insights to the most relevant issues in politics and society.

Established in November 2018, the Cluster of Excellence SCRIPTS brings together researchers from numerous academic disciplines and research institutions in the Berlin area to study the contestations of the liberal script. With its distinct research agenda and collaboration structures, SCRIPTS is not only the central hub for a global research network, but also a nexus of public debate on current crisis phenomena within liberal democracy.

SCRIPTS is funded by the [German Research Foundation – Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft \(DFG\)](#) through 2025. While the Cluster itself is located at the [Freie Universität \(FU\)](#), its research alliance is comprised of eight research partners in Berlin: [Humboldt-Universität \(HU\)](#), the [Berlin Social Science Center \(WZB\)](#), the [Centre for East European and International Studies \(ZOiS\)](#), the [German Institute for Economic Research \(DIW\)](#), the [German Institute of Global and Area Studies \(GIGA\)](#), the [Hertie School](#) and the [Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient \(ZMO\)](#). The Cluster also collaborates with international academic partners from Africa, Asia-Pacific, North America, Latin America, and the Middle East. For a list of international collaboration partners, visit the Cluster’s [website](#).

A more detailed picture of the project is presented in the SCRIPTS booklet. Alternatively, visit the [website](#).

BIRT: THE CLUSTER’S HUB FOR EARLY CAREER DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONALIZATION

SCRIPTS’ dedication to developing young researchers prompted them to establish the Berlin International College of Research and Graduate Training (BIRT) in 2019. Underneath a single roof, BIRT fosters international academic cooperation and provides early career development in research. Internationalization and networking with the Cluster’s partners are therefore of central importance to the project.

As a partnership between the [Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies](#) (BGTS) and the [International Research College](#) (IRC), BIRT combines graduate training with access to an inspiring research community composed of all doctoral researchers, IRC postdoctoral fellows, and visiting senior scholars from the Cluster’s international partners.

In these pages, future researchers can find detailed information on everything they need to know about BIRT and its two components.

THE STRUCTURE OF SCRIPTS

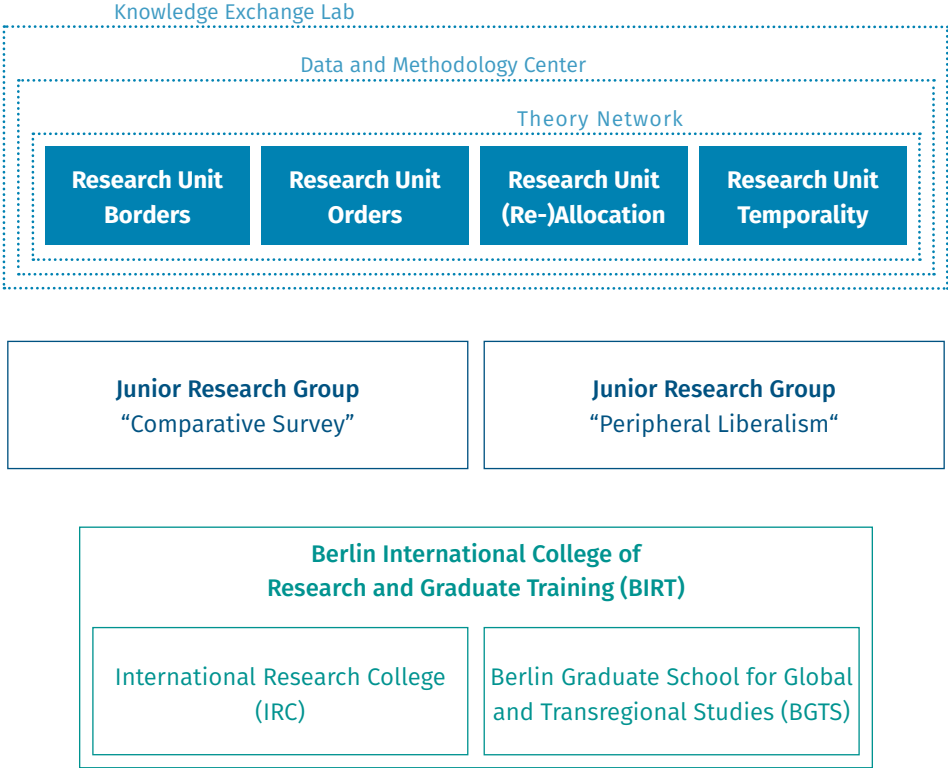


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1 BIRT: STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT & FINANCES

1.1 The Structure of BIRT

By establishing BIRT, the Cluster of Excellence SCRIPTS unites graduate students from BGTS with researchers from IRC under one roof, and aspires to break through the hierarchy separating doctoral, postdoctoral, and senior researchers by facilitating exchange and collaboration among them. This is achieved through joint events as well as physical proximity, as all fellows of BIRT sit in the same building with offices a safe distance apart but comfortable enough to enable easy interaction and encourage knowledge exchange. BIRT fellows include all doctoral and postdoctoral members of BIRT, and are also members of SCRIPTS, affiliated with the Cluster's Research Units (RUs) through their BGTS supervisor or mentor. Senior fellows are associated via the Cluster's Principal Investigators. All BIRT fellows are expected to be active in the Cluster's Research Units and to participate in activities such as Research Unit colloquia or workshops.

BIRT at a glance

| BIRT: Berlin International College of Research and Graduate Training | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| | BGTS: Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies | | | IRC: International Research College | |
| Title | Doctoral researchers | Doctoral researchers in Cluster projects | Visiting doctoral fellows | Postdoctoral fellows | Senior fellows |
| Length of program | 3 years | 3 years | Up to 6 months | 10 months | International guest researchers up to 12 months |
| Mode | Annual call | Recruited through SCRIPTS projects | Irregular calls (Cluster funded) / application (own funding) | Annual call | Nomination |

Detailed information about BIRT programs can be found in sections 2 and 3

The Cluster's main location is at Freie Universität Berlin (FU). BIRT is located at Boltzmannstraße 20, in Berlin-Dahlem, the site of the historical Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Physik, where Einstein started his research on the theory of relativity. The building has been undergoing renovations to become a shining light for the Cluster's junior and international fellows and is about a 20 minute walk from the Cluster's villa, at Edwin-Redslob-Straße 29. All fellows have a workspace at FU and credentials for FU library and IT services. As the Cluster has many partner institutions in Berlin, some fellows have more than one institutional affiliation, which also includes respective IT and library access. All BIRT administrative processes are coordinated centrally through the BIRT Management, which comprises the BIRT Coordinator, the BIRT Project Administration, student assistants, and the Cluster's IT support. For more information on logistics and IT, consult the welcome booklet and the SCRIPTS info booklet.

1.2 Governance

BIRT was founded in 2019 when the Cluster came into being and is funded through the Cluster, relying on the infrastructure and personnel of its hosting institution, Freie Universität Berlin. The BGTS builds on the experience and the expertise of the Berlin Graduate School for Transnational Studies (BTS), which is built on a cooperation between Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), and Hertie School, which has been integrated into the BGTS from January 2019 onwards. The IRC has been founded as an elaborate center for advanced studies to permit the Cluster to host international postdoctoral and senior visiting fellows, which bring their expertise to the Cluster and permit local researchers to involve and broaden their network. BIRT, like the Cluster, is a cooperation between several institutions, with the main advisory and infrastructural support coming from the three universities – Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and Hertie School – as well as the WZB.

1.2.1 BOARD OF DIRECTORS – BGTS AND IRC

The BGTS and the IRC are governed by two separate boards. Both are chaired by the BIRT Director and comprised of a representative from each Research Unit (RU) and one of the Directors of the Cluster. The BGTS Board also has an Early Career Ombudsperson as well as a doctoral representative for each cohort. Decisions regarding the program structure, finances, and governance are made by the respective boards. Both the BGTS and the IRC Board report to the SCRIPTS Executive Board, where BIRT is represented by the BIRT Director.

BGTS Board

| PROFESSORIAL MEMBERS | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse, BIRT Director | | | | |
| Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel Director SCRIPTS, Principal Investigator, RU (Re-)Allocation | Prof. Dr. Gülay Çağlar Principal Investigator, RU Borders | Prof. Dr. Jessica Gienow-Hecht Principal Investigator, RU Borders | Prof. Dr. Marcelo Caruso Principal Investigator, RU Orders | Prof. Dr. Mark Hallerberg Principal Investigator, RU (Re-)Allocation |
| Prof. Lora Anne Viola Ph.D., Ombudsperson | | | | |

Doctoral Fellow Representatives

Elected student representatives for individual cohorts also form part of the BGTS Board and the SCRIPTS board. They are further contact persons for all PhD matters. Every year, a new doctoral fellow representative is elected for the new cohort, for the duration of three years.

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Allison Koh Cohort 2020 | Andrea Miranda Avilés Cohort 2019 | Robert Benson Cohort 2018 |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|

IRC Board

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse , BIRT Director | | | |
| Prof. Dr. Michael Zürn SCRIPTS Director, Principal Investigator, RU Orders | Prof. Dr. Gülay Çağlar Principal Investigator, RU Borders | Prof. Dr. Andreas Eckert Principal Investigator, RU (Re-)Allocation | Prof. Dr. Dorothea Kübler Principal Investigator, RU Temporality |

1.2.2 BIRT MANAGEMENT & CONTACTS

The Management of the Berlin International College of Research and Graduate Training (BIRT) supports the BIRT director in coordinating and supervising the two educational entities that constitute BIRT: the Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies (BGTS) and the International Research College (IRC).

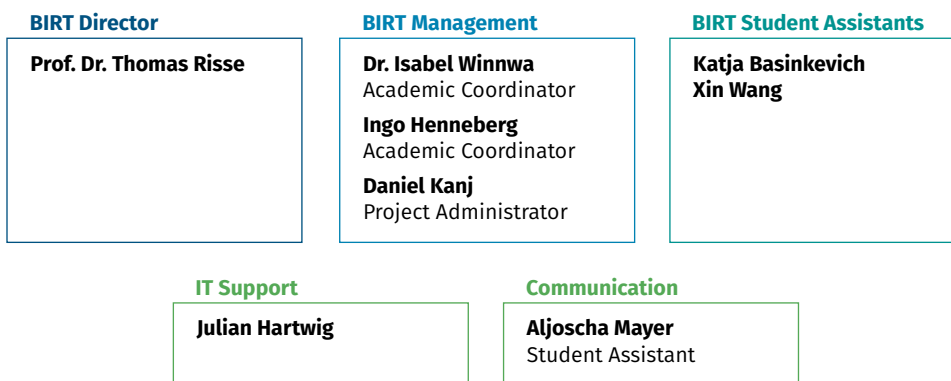
BIRT uses functional e-mail addresses for all three institutional units. Contact the team via the relevant address.

BIRT: birt@scripts-berlin.eu (general requests)

BGTS: bgts@scripts-berlin.eu (doctoral fellows)

IRC: irc@scripts-berlin.eu (postdoctoral and senior fellows)

Consult the Cluster's organisational chart for an overview of individual functions & responsibilities, management and governance structures, members of research and working units on [SCRIPTS Wiki](#) (FU-login required).



2 BGTS: THE BERLIN GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR GLOBAL AND TRANSREGIONAL STUDIES

The Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies (BGTS) is the full-time doctoral program of the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script – SCRIPTS” and serves as a bridge to the Cluster’s international partners all over the globe, e.g. through guest doctoral fellowships, which are advertised in particular to the Cluster’s partner institutions abroad. The program is carried out jointly by Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the Hertie School. This structure allows for double affiliation of PhD researchers between FU Berlin as SCRIPTS’ main institution and the other universities at which researchers are enrolled.

The BGTS doctoral program is a structured three-year period of full-time study and provides a **curriculum** with standardized elements for all researchers: theory, research design, methods, transferable skills classes, and workshops, as well as university didactics and English academic writing seminars. The rotating **colloquium** sessions give doctoral researchers the opportunity to present and discuss their own projects with their peers and postdoctoral fellows, in addition to different Principal Investigators and senior fellows. All **doctoral researchers** participate in selected courses and workshops at the graduate school.

The doctoral program focuses on contemporary controversies about liberal order from a historical, global, and comparative perspective. Research at the BGTS focuses on the structures, risks, and opportunities of cross-regional interaction at various levels. Dissertation topics engage with the contestations of the liberal world order from the mentioned perspectives while considering a number of research areas. Research areas include:

- Causes and consequences of contestations of the liberal script
- Alternatives to the liberal model
- Contemporary controversies about liberal order from historical, global, and comparative perspectives
- Implications of the contestations for politics, societies, and individuals in the 21st century

The goal of this doctoral program is to help researchers unravel the manifold contestations and transformations in economy, politics, and society, in national and international law, over the course of history and across various areas of the globe. Therefore, doctoral researchers may have a background in a variety of disciplines such as economics, history, law, political science, area studies, sociology, or philosophy. Different specialization tracks corresponding to the respective disciplinary and regional focus can be pursued either at the BGTS itself, at partner institutions, such as the Hertie School, or at the respective cooperating graduate schools, such as Berlin Graduate School of Muslim Cultures and Societies, the Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences, the Graduate School of East Asian Studies, and the Graduate School of North American Studies.

Many **alumni** of the predecessor school, the Berlin Graduate School for Transnational Studies (BTS), have successfully pursued a career in academia and work at numerous prestigious universities and think tanks. Other alumni hold positions in political and governmental institutions, in consulting, and in the civil society sector.

2.1 BGTS Doctoral Fellowships

The BGTS distinguishes between **regular** and **affiliate doctoral researchers**. Regular doctoral researchers are recruited directly through the BGTS annual call for applications. Affiliated doctoral researchers are either doctoral researchers in Cluster projects or in external projects run by Cluster Principal Investigators. They apply separately for admission to the BGTS. Additionally, the Cluster offers opportunities for outstanding doctoral researchers from international partner institutions to conduct a part of their research in Berlin. These international **doctoral guest researchers** are awarded travel allowances and scholarships to come to Berlin. Moreover, they can participate in the projects and the training and workshops offered by the graduate schools for a duration of up to one year.

Application for a regular doctoral researcher position at BGTS is open between early December and late January each year through the application portal on the BGTS website as well as in the call for applications. Note that the application procedure differs for applicants from China. Consult the [website](#) for more specific information, contact details, and up-to-date application information.

2.1.1 BGTS PROGRAM DETAILS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Eligibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed master's degree* in the social sciences, history, economics, law, or area studies Open to applicants of all nationalities; no preference for EU citizens |
| Places available | 4 per year |
| Program duration | Three-year full-time |
| Start date | September each year |
| Expectations | <p>During their stay at SCRIPTS, doctoral fellows are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate regularly and actively in BGTS and Cluster research activities and meetings Engage in knowledge exchange activities and events Contribute to the Cluster's research outlet through Think Pieces, blog posts, and other SCRIPTS outlets |

* usually comprising a total of 300 European Credit Transfer System [ECTS] credits including the bachelor's degree

SUPERVISORS

Applicants should familiarize themselves with the research interests of the BGTS faculty and indicate the supervisor(s) of their choice. **Faculty members should not be contacted prior to applying and research proposals should not be sent to a faculty member for comments.** The BGTS has strict regulations which do not allow any comments on research proposals by faculty members to ensure fairness in the selection process. Faculty members are prohibited from reviewing candidate proposals.

The selection committee recommends a team of supervisors for the research project based on the research focus and faculty availability. After admission, this decision is discussed with the newly admitted doctoral researcher.

DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN GOVERNANCE AT THE HERTIE SCHOOL

Cluster partner Hertie School also offers doctoral fellowships for researchers focusing on contemporary social, political, legal, and economic challenges. The Hertie program requires a separate application through their [online portal](#).

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AT BGTS

Once enrolled, the PhD student should arrange a personal meeting with the supervisor to discuss the curriculum, the classes the PhD student would like to take, and the research objectives. Outcomes of the supervisor meeting should be communicated to the BIRT coordinator.

TEACHING AT THE CLUSTER

PhD students at BGTS are required to teach at least one seminar over the course of their studies, or, alternatively, to participate in an external research project. While teaching is possible only on a bachelor level, there are various ways to approach this curriculum requirement:

- Teach a seminar alone or with another PhD student with similar research interests
- Take on the role of teaching assistant for a Principal Investigator

PhD students can teach at any SCRIPTS partner institution. To help prepare for a teaching position, BGTS offers courses on higher education didactics. The doctoral fellows at BGTS should contact the BIRT Coordination Office as soon as they decide to teach a seminar. The office provides necessary contact details at the respective departments and supports in the preparation process.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

PhD students have the option of earning academic credit by participating in a collaborative research project. To find a project, get in touch with SCRIPTS Principal Investigators with related research interests. This possibility is also available through the Cluster's international partners in connection with a research stay abroad. Contact the BIRT Coordination Office for details.

It is possible to apply to and be affiliated with both programs in parallel.

2.1.2 FUNDING AT BGTS

The BGTS has a no tuition policy. However, at Freie Universität as well as the other universities in the Cluster, enrolled doctoral fellows are required to pay an enrollment fee every semester which covers a transportation pass and a contribution to the student union and student support services. Students typically need about EUR 1,000–1,200 per month for living expenses in Berlin, including

housing, meals and personal expenses. Note that the structured doctoral researcher program is designed to be a full-time, on-site program, and cannot be taken alongside other doctoral studies.

MAIN FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

BGTS offers a number of **funding opportunities** through the Cluster and cooperating programs, including:

| | Within SCRIPTS | | | Outside of SCRIPTS |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Type of funding | Doctoral researcher positions | Doctoral researcher positions in SCRIPTS projects | Scholarships from partner institutions | Scholarships from external funding bodies |
| Amount and details | 65% to 100% of a full-time post (TV-L E13). Ca. EUR 1,500 | | e.g. Hertie School EUR 1,250 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). • Private foundations* • Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) |

*A list of private foundations in Germany having funding opportunities can be provided by the BIRT Coordination Office upon request

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN SCRIPTS

- Doctoral researchers: the relevant collective bargaining agreement for public employees in Germany allots remuneration for these posts at 65% to 100% of a full-time TV-L E13 standard post. Consult the document “[BGTS Doctoral Fellows SCRIPTS Guidelines](#)” on [SCRIPTS Wiki](#) for more information.
- Doctoral researchers in SCRIPTS projects: candidates recruited through SCRIPTS research projects divide their time between their dissertation and the SCRIPTS project. This position is for three years and offers remuneration at 65% of a full-time of TV-L E13 standard post. Consult the document “[BGTS Doctoral Formats and Program](#)” on [SCRIPTS Wiki](#).
- Scholarships from partner institutions: the Hertie School and its research institutes offer scholarships of their own. In general, the Hertie School offers 12 three-year scholarships of EUR 1,250 per month, including EUR 100 for research and travelling. A completion grant to finalize the thesis during a fourth year is possible within this scheme, the criteria are defined by Hertie School.

For a comprehensive list of funding opportunities at BGTS, regulations on financing travel and training, as well as grants for workshops and fieldwork, consult the SCRIPTS website (for prospective candidates) or further documents on [SCRIPTS Wiki](#) (FU-login required).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE OF SCRIPTS

- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): the DAAD is the world’s largest funding organization dispersing federal funding from various ministries, primarily the German Federal Foreign Office, but also from the European Union and a number of enterprises, organizations and foreign governments.
- Private foundations: there are other foundations in Germany and abroad that have

funding opportunities. A list of private foundations in Germany having funding opportunities can be provided by the BIRT Coordination Office upon request

- Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC): the BGTS has been cooperating with the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC). This external funding option is available to Chinese applicants, though not mandatory.

GENERAL NOTES ON FUNDING

- There are other funding opportunities, not managed by BGTS directly, through which a PhD researcher at BGTS can be funded; however, the application process is separate. Successful applicants can then apply to the BGTS with this funding.
- Candidates for both Hertie and CSC scholarships go through the regular BGTS selection process and will automatically be considered for BGTS membership if their application for a scholarship is successful.
- Candidates with none of the above funding or scholarships can be admitted to the program if they secure their own external funding. BGTS strongly encourages candidates to apply to other sponsors and foundations while applying to the BGTS. To support that process, BGTS can provide documentation when necessary. The BGTS can also provide a (non-exhaustive) list of German foundations that provide funding for doctoral candidates. Note that most foundations in Germany require applicants to have a minimum level of proficiency in German to apply for a scholarship.
- Consult the [website of DAAD](#) (The German Academic Exchange Service) for a general overview of funding opportunities in Germany.

2.1.3 BGTS APPLICATION PROCESS

All applicants to the BGTS are required to apply **online**. Applicants from China who wish to apply for a CSC scholarship must submit their application via the Beijing Office of the Freie Universität Berlin by 4 January of each year. Chinese applicants who do not want to be considered for a CSC scholarship and are willing to look for other sources of funding instead may apply using the online platform. Note that candidates selected for a nomination for a CSC scholarship have to submit another application to the respective funding organization, which makes the final decision.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Applications Open | 1 December of each year |
| Application Deadline | 31 January of each year (4 January for Chinese CSC applicants) |
| Admission Decision | Early May of each year |
| Submission | BGTS online portal |
| Required Documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree qualifying for PhD studies in the social sciences, history, economics, law, or area studies • Evidence of C1-level English language skills or equivalent • Current Curriculum Vitae • Motivation letter (600 words maximum) • Research proposal (5,000 words maximum) • Two letters of reference |

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

The required level of English proficiency is C1 or better according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Evidence includes the statement of results or certificate of the Cambridge Assessment or the following minimum test scores:

- IELTS: 8.0
- TOEFL PBT: 603/677
- TOEFL CBT: 263/300
- TOEFL IBT: 110/120
- TOEIC: 785

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A research proposal is an outline of the research project that will be the focus of the doctoral thesis. The research proposal is the core of the application and should offer a presentation of the applicant's academic perspective and creativity. Successful proposals include:

- Research questions that align with the Cluster's areas of research
- Research focus that relates to the research interests of at least one BGTS faculty member
- Timetable indicating key milestones and periods for research, analysis, and writing
- Maximum 5,000 words (without reference list)

See the [website](#) for more information.

MOTIVATION LETTER

The motivation letter should provide and clarify:

- A strong argument supporting the reason for applying to the PhD program and how it fits into overall career plans
- Which supervisor of the BGTS core faculty best fits the research project, and why
- Funding plans, if not through a BGTS scholarship, specifying alternative plans, and indicating all scholarships for which the candidate has applied

REFERENCE LETTERS

It is strongly recommended that the reference letters be written by faculty members at the home university who are able to comment on academic performance in detail. If there is no longer an affiliation with a university nor continued contact with any faculty members, a senior supervisor from a workplace may also write a reference letter for the applicant.

A reference letter should contain a short description of academic performance and discuss qualifications and interest in the PhD program at the BGTS – research interests, background, etc. A professor's report on a master's thesis cannot serve as a reference letter.

2.2 BGTS Curriculum

The BGTS provides a comprehensive curriculum with standardized elements for all doctoral researchers encompassing theory, research design, methods, transferable skills classes and workshops, as well as university didactics and English academic writing seminars. The rotating colloquium sessions give doctoral researchers the opportunity to present and discuss their own projects with their peers and postdoctoral fellows, in addition to discussions with Principal Investigators. Different specialization tracks corresponding to the respective disciplinary and regional focus can be pursued either at the BGTS itself or at cooperating graduate schools. The Cluster aims to reflect the diverse nature of doctoral research in the German academic system through its doctoral researchers. Therefore, one group of doctoral researchers is closely linked to specific research projects of the Cluster's Research Units, and another group is free to choose their own research topic within the realm of SCRIPTS' research program.

The BGTS program comprises a three-year program of 180 ECTS which balances independent research with a structured curriculum, which starts each year in September. Students have the opportunity to take part in content-oriented courses, research methods training and research colloquia, as well as tailored transferable skills workshops. The majority of the workload is dedicated to independent thesis research. Participation in certain activities and courses, such as the SCRIPTS course (an overview of the Cluster research topics), tailored methods courses, research design, research colloquia, as well as a set of transferable skills courses is required of all students, with the aim of training them as researchers and enabling them to complete their thesis research within the allotted timeframe. Students will also have the opportunity to present their original doctoral research in internal research colloquia and at academic conferences. In cooperation with the Cluster's Data and Methodology Center, the BGTS ensures that there is a curriculum of standard and advanced courses offered in Berlin so that young researchers can have rigorous and state-of-the-art training on methods available in their fields.

An overview of the course program, a list of workshops, and offers at the Dahlem Research School can be found [here](#).

A team of two supervisors and one professorial advisor in a mentoring role support the doctoral candidate during their studies. Supervisors are either members of the BGTS faculty or from national or international partner institutions of the Cluster.

2.3 BGTS Three-Year Program Structure

For full-time doctoral fellows, the BGTS provides a clear step-by-step outline of doctoral studies and closely monitors the process to ensure that doctoral candidates receive the support needed to complete their dissertation within three years. The outline will be provided to each doctoral fellow upon arrival and can be found on the Cluster Wiki.

For a comprehensive description of the doctoral program, see the document "[BGTS Doctoral Program](#)" on [SCRIPTS Wiki](#) (FU-Login required).

2.3.1 REQUIREMENTS: CURRICULAR PLANNING

- FIRST YEAR**
- SCRIPTS course
 - Research design and research colloquium
 - Statistics or equivalent course in qualitative methods
 - Methods workshops
 - Transferable skills workshops (during 1st and 2nd year)
 - Independent thesis research
- SECOND YEAR**
- Research colloquium
 - Independent thesis research
 - Teaching or project work (cooperation with SCRIPTS RUs, projects or SCRIPTS partner institutions) (during 2nd or 3rd year)
 - Transferable skills workshops (during 1st and 2nd year)
- THIRD YEAR**
- Research colloquium
 - Independent thesis research
 - Teaching or project work (cooperation with SCRIPTS RUs, projects or SCRIPTS partner institutions) (during 2nd or 3rd year)

2.3.2 MONITORING: MILESTONES & THE JUNE PAPER

All PhD candidates must submit a “June Paper” on the 30th of June every year, followed by progress review meetings with supervisors. In this meeting, the progress of the research project, the work plan, and the supervision situation are discussed. The progress report form is a guideline for the discussion and should be completed during the meeting. This report helps record the outcome of the meeting and enable BGTS to keep track of progress. A copy of the completed progress report should be sent via e-mail to the BIRT Coordination Office by the 1st of August.

FIRST YEAR The June Paper is an advanced research proposal, which reflects the work during the first year at the BGTS. An early version of the June Paper should be presented in the 1st year colloquium in the summer term.

SECOND YEAR The equivalent of a June Paper is developed consisting of either chapters of the dissertation or papers. The mode of dissertation writing (monograph or cumulative) and format of the June Paper should be defined by the student with the supervisor.

THIRD YEAR In the best possible scenario, the equivalent of the June Paper is the final draft of the thesis. In case this is not possible, there are two options:

- Agree with the first supervisor on a submission date of the final draft, to be no later than the 30th of August. The first supervisor informs the BIRT Coordination Office of the new deadline via e-mail indicating the date of

the progress report as well. This e-mail must reach the BIRT Coordination Office by the 30th of June.

- Submit the work-in-progress as an equivalent of the June Paper following the normal submission procedure (by the 30th of June), making sure to hold the progress review meeting and submit the corresponding report (by the 1st of August). The progress review should then include an explanation of delay as well as a statement about the further proceedings and agreements made with the supervisor.

2.4 SCRIPTS Admission & Enrollment

Upon acceptance as a doctoral candidate at BGTS, the admission and enrollment process takes place through the respective Graduate Studies Office (“Promotionsbüro”) at the institution where the main supervisor is based. PhD students should start the enrollment process as soon as possible. Enrollment is an important step towards getting a PhD, as it requires consulting with the supervisor about the research topic, creating a work plan, and a supervision agreement. For updated information on enrollment, consult the website of the respective institution. Listed below are all the relevant enrollment departments, depending on the institution of the supervisor.

For questions or assistance with the enrollment process, contact the student assistants at the BIRT Coordination Office, Xin Wang, and Katja Basinkevich: bgts@scripts-berlin.eu

Relevant Departments

Successful doctoral candidates are assigned to one of the three partner institutions that issue doctoral degrees (Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the Hertie School), depending on the institutional affiliation of their first supervisor. Candidates undertake their PhD studies at their registered institution; however, they may participate in workshops organized by partner institutions. Since FU Berlin is the central managing institution of SCRIPTS and BGTS, all PhD students are provided with a workspace at FU Berlin and credentials to access the FU Berlin IT infrastructure as well as a “second desk” and credentials at their registered institution if different. Below is a list of all departments that form a part of SCRIPTS.

2.4.1 ENROLLMENT AT FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

Doctoral fellows can enroll online within one month of admission to the doctoral program [here](#); click “online” in the first sentence (“Enrollment into...”) and follow the instructions.

Subsequently, a request for enrollment must be submitted by post and requires the documents listed on the website linked above.

| Department of Philosophy and Humanities | Department of History and Cultural Studies | Department of Political and Social Sciences |
|--|--|--|
| Ina Müller Doctoral Office for Latin America Studies Habelschwerdter Allee 45, JK 29/104 +49 30 838 53268 muei@campus.fu-berlin.de | Irina Golubko Doctoral Office Fabeckstraße 23-25, 1.0010 +49 30 838 53398 promotionsbuero@geschkult.fu-berlin.de | Daphne Stelter Doctoral and Postdoctoral Examinations Ihnestraße 21, 201 +49 30 838 52337 nachwuchsfoerderung@polsoz.fu-berlin.de |

2.4.2 ENROLLMENT AT HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN

Doctoral fellows are enrolled independently of the regular deadlines; enrollment can take place at any time during the semester. Doctoral fellows must enroll within one month after the notification of admission to doctoral studies by the faculty.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Kerstin Ludwig | Doctoral Office, Department of Social Sciences
 Georgenstr. 47, 1.32
 +49 30 2093 66153
k.ludwig@cms.hu-berlin.de

2.4.3 ENROLLMENT AT HERTIE SCHOOL

Doctoral fellows must enroll through the Hertie School. To begin the process, contact:

| | |
|--|--|
| Dr. Annika Zorn Director of PhD Programmes and Digital Learning Friedrichstraße 180, 3.50 +49 30 259 219 314 a.zorn@hertie-school.org | Bernadette Boddin Associate for PhD Affairs Friedrichstraße 180, 1.64 +49 30 259 219 334 boddin@hertie-school.org |
|--|--|

3 IRC: THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLEGE

The IRC is the main vehicle for fostering cooperation between SCRIPTS and its international partners. It has built an enriching research community for postdoctoral fellows and international visiting scholars to exchange views, produce knowledge related to the Cluster's research lines, and develop their own projects. Through the IRC's international network, SCRIPTS promotes mobility for researchers at any stage of their career.

The IRC offers two programs catering to researchers with a range of experience: the postdoctoral fellowship for recent doctoral graduates, and the senior fellowship catering to established scholars.

For specific guidelines, refer to documents on [SCRIPTS Wiki](#) (FU-login required).

3.1 IRC Postdoctoral Fellowships

Postdoctoral fellows at the IRC have the opportunity to exchange knowledge with a community of excellent researchers from various fields. Apart from its highly interdisciplinary nature, SCRIPTS also offers a vast international network, high-level research, and knowledge exchange activities and events.

The IRC issues an annual call for four postdoctoral fellowships. Successful candidates spend their fellowship at the Cluster, working closely with the research team and participating in research activities. Postdoctoral fellows are integrated into the Cluster's activities through the different Research Units. Consult the website for contact details and more information about the Research Units. Each postdoctoral fellow at the Cluster will be assigned a Principal Investigator (PI) of the Cluster who will work closely with them and provide mentoring as well as advice and assistance with their postdoctoral project and career planning.

3.1.1 IRC PROGRAM DETAILS

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Eligibility: | Completed PhD by September 30th of the application year |
| Places available | Four postdoctoral fellowships annually |
| Award duration | Ten-months with optional two-month extension |
| Start date | October each year |
| Expectations | <p>During their stay at SCRIPTS, postdoctoral fellows are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Working Paper related to the Cluster's research agenda to be published in the SCRIPTS Working Paper Series • Present their Working Paper at the Cluster's Jour Fixe • Participate regularly and actively in IRC and Cluster activities • Engage proactively with SCRIPTS Principal Investigators (especially the assigned PI), and the postdoctoral and doctoral researchers of the Cluster |

3.1.2 IRC FUNDING

IRC offers the following funding arrangement:

- A monthly stipend of EUR 2,500 (excluding health insurance)
- A one-time lump sum of EUR 1,500 for travel, fieldwork, and other related expenses
- Office space and IT equipment to be used during the fellowship
- Mentoring by a SCRIPTS Principal Investigator
- Possible additional funding for organizing and hosting an event (workshop, lecture series, etc.) involving the SCRIPTS community and network

3.1.3 IRC APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Admission decisions are based on academic achievement, motivation, and alignment with research lines of the Cluster's Research Units as indicated by transcripts, recommendations, and the research project proposal. All completed applications are evaluated on a competitive basis. Note the application deadlines and check the [website](#) for up-to-date application information.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Applications Open | January of each year | | |
| Application Deadline | 30 March of each year | | |
| Admission Decision | Early May of each year | | |
| Submission | Send the completed application to: <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>Via e-mail: irc@scripts-berlin.eu Attention: Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse, IRC Director</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>Via post: Freie Universität Berlin Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script – SCRIPTS" International Research College Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse Ihnestr. 26, D-14195 Berlin Germany</p> </td> </tr> </table> | <p>Via e-mail: irc@scripts-berlin.eu Attention: Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse, IRC Director</p> | <p>Via post: Freie Universität Berlin Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script – SCRIPTS" International Research College Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse Ihnestr. 26, D-14195 Berlin Germany</p> |
| <p>Via e-mail: irc@scripts-berlin.eu Attention: Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse, IRC Director</p> | <p>Via post: Freie Universität Berlin Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script – SCRIPTS" International Research College Prof. Dr. Thomas Risse Ihnestr. 26, D-14195 Berlin Germany</p> | | |
| Required Documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Vitae, including a complete list of publications • Transcripts of degrees and other relevant material • Two letters of reference from a current or former supervisor or professor who can comment on academic performance • Proposal for a postdoctoral project (max. 5,000 words) aligned with one of the following research themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Variations of the liberal script in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, as well as historical perspectives from these regions - Contestations of the liberal script within and outside liberal democracies: from European right-wing populism to African communitarianism to the Chinese economic system - Global challenges the world faces in the 21st century, such as migration, the crisis of democracy, growing inequality, and sustainability as well as debates on social and political order | | |

3.2 IRC Senior Fellowships

The IRC invites established scholars from all over the world to spend six months to a year at the Cluster. In cooperation with the Cluster's Research Units, the IRC specifically encourages international partners of the Cluster and scholars from the Global South to visit, contribute to the Cluster's research activities, and actively network with fellows at the Cluster.

Senior fellowships are typically six to twelve months with a monthly stipend of up to EUR 5,000 to cover living expenses in Berlin. There are no open calls for senior fellowships, instead SCRIPTS Principal Investigators nominate candidates for the role and the IRC Board reviews nominations. The selection decision is based on funding availability and alignment with research objectives of the respective Research Units.

While at IRC, senior fellows focus on their research and contribute to group discussions in their respective Research Unit. Senior fellows are expected to participate regularly in the Cluster's seminars, contribute one Working Paper to be published in the Cluster's series, and present their Working Paper during the Cluster's Jour Fixe.

4 ARRIVAL AT BIRT

4.1 Before Arrival: Immigration Process

Non-EU citizens typically need a visa to enter, stay, or study in Germany. This depends on your country of residence and your citizenship(s). For detailed information on entry and visa issues, visit the [website of the Berlin Immigration Office](#) (Landesamt für Einwanderung).

The website is only partly in English. Check the German diplomatic representation in your country of residence for further information, questions, and concerns.

The German authorities usually require the following for a visa:

- Valid passport/ID (documents must be valid for at least 90 days after your arrival, so check the expiration date)
- Several passport-sized photos corresponding to biometric standards
- Confirmation from a health insurance provider confirming coverage in Germany
- If applicable, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
- Vaccination certificate, internationally valid if possible

Note that visa requirements may vary depending on your country of origin.

Keep in mind that Human Resources can only send an employment contract after they received proof of a visa. Therefore, start organizing your entry and stay in Germany as soon as possible. The visa application process can take several months.

It is imperative that the fellow ensure that they have a valid visa, or, for stays of more than 90 days, a residence permit. Renewal of the visa has to be done in time as appointments at the Berlin Immigration Office have to be made at least 2–3 months before expiry to avoid delays. If you plan to stay longer than 90 days, you must apply for the required residence permit (“Aufenthaltsgenehmigung” or “Aufenthaltstitel”) as soon as possible after arrival (see the section “Upon Arrival” below). For information on health insurance, accommodation, and family matters, see the SCRIPTS welcome booklet. Contact the BIRT Coordination Office in case of questions or problems: birt@scripts-berlin.eu

4.2 Upon Arrival: Registration, Residence Permit

Registration as a Berlin Resident

For a stay of more than two months, registration with one of the residents' administration offices (Bürgeramt) in Berlin is required (for exceptions, check the website linked below). **The registration must take place within two weeks after** officially moving into the registered address as indicated by the starting date of the rental contract. Registration is by appointment only and places are limited; therefore, make the appointment ahead of time. To make an appointment, [click here](#). Currently, this part of the website is only available in German. If in need of assistance, contact the BIRT or Quality Management and Equal Opportunities team. For general information on arrival in Germany in English, go to the [official website of Berlin](#).

Required documents for registration:

- Valid passport/ID and civil status documents (such as marriage or birth certificates) for all persons registering including partners or family
- Completed registration form ("Anmeldeformular")
- Confirmation of occupancy ("Einzugsbestätigung des Wohnungsgebers/Vermieter") signed by the landlord

Both forms are available for download on the [Berlin residents' administration office website](#). A confirmation of registration ("Meldebestätigung") is issued free of charge at the appointment.

*Note that in Germany, a driver's license is **not** accepted as an official identification document. Copies of a passport are not accepted as an official document either. To use a copy of a passport as a means of identification, it must be notarized.*

Note: Staff members at the residents' registration office (Bürgeramt) frequently speak little to no English. It is recommended that foreign guests be accompanied by someone who speaks German if they do not speak German themselves. If in need of assistance, let the BIRT team know, and we can arrange one of the student assistants from BIRT or the Quality Management and Equal Opportunities unit to accompany you.

Residence Permit

For stays of more than 90 days, non-EU citizens are typically required to apply to the Berlin Immigration Office (Landesamt für Einwanderung) for a residence permit after entering the country. To apply for a permit, the following documents are required:

- Valid passport with visa
- One current biometric photo
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of financing (grant letter, employment contract, other documentation)

- Application form (“Antrag auf einen befristeten Aufenthaltstitel”), which can be downloaded [here](#) (website in German only).
- Confirmation of registration (see the section “Registration as A Berlin Resident” above)

For **family members** who are also listed on the application form, a passport, photo, and proof of health insurance are required for each person.

The most straightforward way to apply for a residence permit is to [make an appointment](#) directly and as soon as possible at the Berlin Immigration Office and submit all the documents in person. For detailed information from the Berlin Immigration Office, click [here](#).

Alternatively, you can go through the passport service of Freie Universität Berlin (“[FU Pass Service](#)”, which can apply for a residence permit on your behalf. To use this service, you provide them with all necessary documents and, after six to eight weeks, you can pick up your passport, complete with your new residence permit, directly from the FU Pass Service. Please be aware that you will not be able to travel outside of Germany during the time your application is in process. For more detailed information or advice, contact pass-service@fu-berlin.de directly.

BIRT offers a service similar to FU Pass for processing the application for a residence permit on behalf of its fellows. Contact the BIRT Coordination Office to use this service.

Before the residence permit expires, an appointment for **extension** should be made at the Berlin Immigration Office, or at FU Pass, **four to six weeks before the expiration date**. To ensure a smooth and successful extension, contact the BIRT Coordination Office *ahead of time* if there are any concerns or issues about the process, in particular if any documents concerning funding are required for the extension.

5 SCRIPTS: HOW TO GET INVOLVED

5.1 SCRIPTS Activities & Outlets

SCRIPTS has regular activities, most notably the Cluster Jour Fixe, which takes place every Tuesday during the semester. All BIRT fellows participate, displaying current work of the Cluster's RUs, projects, Junior Research Groups, and crosscutting work units. In addition, the Research Units hold regular **meetings** and **colloquia**, organize **workshops**, **lecture series**, and **small conferences**. The Cluster itself hosts a series of large conferences and workshops which involve different units and all SCRIPTS researchers.

SCRIPTS has two platforms for **publication**: the [SCRIPTS Working Paper Series](#) and the [SCRIPTS blog](#).

It is *mandatory* for IRC postdoctoral fellows as well as senior fellows to develop a Working Paper during their stay at SCRIPTS, publish it in the SCRIPTS Working Paper series, and present it at the Cluster's Jour Fixe. The theme of the Working Paper should closely relate to the Cluster's research agenda. Contributions to the blog are not required, however provide another avenue for knowledge and idea exchange. Any fellow can submit a blog post or short article for publication on the SCRIPTS blog to the editorial team.

Consult the SCRIPTS info booklet for further information about SCRIPTS research outlets and publications. All current activities and events appear on the SCRIPTS website and in the SCRIPTS Calendar.

5.2 BIRT Activities & Outlets

BIRT fellows participate in all Cluster activities. Additionally, BIRT offers its own activities and a publication outlet specifically dedicated to junior and international researchers.

The [BIRT Think Pieces](#) platform is an informal research outlet dedicated to SCRIPTS junior researchers, doctoral researchers, and postdoctoral researchers. Whereas the SCRIPTS blog is curated, Think Pieces are non-curated content addressing a wider range of subjects. Following the model of opinion pieces, Think Pieces are well-argued short essays that are not written in a rigid academic format. They enable doctoral and postdoctoral fellows to publish a short text of about 800 words (max. 1,500 words). The topics should be relevant to the broader subject matter of SCRIPTS or be related to research interests of the Cluster's researchers.

SCRIPTS and the Cluster's partner institutions offer a number of opportunities to organize and participate in workshops and events. To participate, check the Cluster website and the Wiki Calendar regularly and stay in touch with the RU's Academic Coordinators as well as with the Cluster's Knowledge Exchange Lab about current events in the Cluster and its units.



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