

## Quality assurance concept

### Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies

#### Principles

The BGTS aims to form an excellent and internationally visible group of early-career researchers in global and transregional studies in Berlin. In line with this aim, BGTS has defined high quality standards regarding the selection and hosting of doctoral researchers to provide them with the best possible support in their professional development, to enhance their research productivity and to expand their individual skills. Following international standards of research and graduate training, the BGTS promotes outstanding potential of early career researchers by combining structuring elements and individual mentoring in the doctoral process. The structural integration of BGTS into the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)” and a close content orientation towards SCRIPTS’ research provides doctoral scholars with an inspiring international research environment.

#### Measures

- **Multi-stage selection procedure**  
We employ a multi-stage selection procedure to ensure a strong cohort of motivated and capable individuals. In the application process, at least three SCRIPTS PIs will look at the most promising candidates.  
The selection is carried out on the basis of the SCRIPTS Diversity Rules & Guidelines.
- **Supervision agreements**  
A supervision agreement is signed by the doctoral candidate, the first supervisor and the BGTS director at the beginning of the dissertation project. A second and sometimes a third supervisor can be included at later stages, at latest at the end of the second year. The agreement is based on the regulations for the BGTS PhD programme and lays out the ground rules for the project and the interactions of candidate and supervisor as well as the standards of good academic practices to adhere by.
- **Mentoring (beyond supervision) and buddy/tandem program**  
To support the doctoral researchers on a different level, the BGTS invites the SCRIPTS Postdoctoral researchers and visiting fellows, to act as mentor for the younger generation. Each new member of the BGTS is assigned a buddy from an older cohort at their start of the programme.  
In case of problems in the supervision constellation, the SCRIPTS ombudsperson can be approached and act as an intermediary.
- **Welcome Week**  
The new cohorts start their time at the BGTS with an intensive week, in which they get to know the different institutions involved with the BGTS (FU Berlin, HU Berlin, Hertie School, WZB), learn

about the details of the curriculum and how to enroll in methods and transferable skills courses, get an introduction to administrative processes, are introduced to different SCRIPTS outlets for their research and develop a sense of community. The latter is enhanced by a cohort retreat early in the first year.

- Curriculum

The BGTS curriculum is designed to support the young researchers on the way to their PhD as best as possible. Courses on research design and on the particularities of the SCRIPTS research build the backbone of the first year. Additionally, methods training in statistics and transferable skills courses on good academic practice, on ethics in data management and in academic English provide a solid foundation before the PhD researchers enter the second year of their project.

In the second year, BGTS researchers can choose how to fulfill a practice-oriented module: by teaching, by participating in a third-party research project or by interning in a co-operating think tank.

Regular research colloquia ensure that the BGTS researchers learn to present and discuss their projects with their peers and with SCRIPTS PIs of different backgrounds. The presentations are closely linked with the June Paper, which all doctoral researchers hand in at the end of each June and which is an update on the initial research proposal (end of first year), a sample chapter (end of second year) and, ideally, a first draft of the complete dissertation (end of third year). The June Papers then lead to yearly progress reports.

- Feedback interviews

The progress reports are a structured way of holding doctoral researchers and their supervisors accountable. The supervisor and a second reader give extensive feedback on the June Papers and sit down with the candidate afterwards to discuss the progress made during the past year, plan the upcoming year and identify methodological needs to be tackled.

- Rules of good academic practice

The BGTS researchers adhere to FU Berlin's "Statute for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice" (*Satzung zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis (GWP-Satzung)*) and receive a training in good academic practice at the beginning of their studies and at regular intervals thereafter.

- Financial support for publications, research stays abroad, conferences, invitation of international guests

The BGTS can offer its members financial support in various scenarios like travelling for fieldwork, participating in methods schools, presenting their work at conferences or supporting publications of their PhD projects.

- Offer of interdisciplinary qualification courses (key competences, personality development)

Part of the curriculum is a set amount of ECTS for methods and transferable skills courses. Doctoral researchers are relatively free in choosing the most relevant courses for their research project. The Dahlem Research School and the Berlin University Alliance Graduate Studies Support Program offer a wide range of courses (online and on-site) for academic and transferable key competences and also in the area of personality development.

- Coaching

Working on a PhD can be a strenuous time in one's life. The BGTS supports its doctoral researchers by offering individual counseling sessions with qualified coaches. The researchers are free to choose whether they want to concentrate on academic support, e.g. writing training, time and self-management, etc., or if they need psychological help e.g. with adjusting to the new life situation.

- Doctoral researcher survey

As a means of regular feedback, the BGTS holds an annual survey amongst its doctoral researchers. The results are used to discuss changes in procedures and regulations.

- Career building and Offboarding

PhD researchers are alerted early on about issues regarding the end of their time at the BGTS and are supported in planning for their career afterwards, be it in academia or beyond. BGTS supports its members with taking soft skills courses at the Dahlem Research School or FU Berlin's Continuing Education Center (*Weiterbildungszentrum*). As part of the curriculum, BGTS doctoral researchers have the chance of interning with different think tanks.