



BIGSAS Codex of Doctoral Studies and Mentorship

The *BIGSAS Codex of Doctoral Studies and Mentorship* provides a concise statement of the academic rights and responsibilities of BIGSAS doctoral researchers – the Junior Fellows – and their individual mentoring groups. For each admitted doctoral researcher the mentoring group consists of one assigned supervisor and two mentors. The *Codex* lays particular emphasis on the Junior Fellow-mentoring group relationship and aims to ensure excellent training, mentoring and supervision within BIGSAS.

The *BIGSAS Codex of Doctoral Studies and Mentorship* is based on eight principles:

1) *Early clarification and specification of dissertation topics*

When applying for admission to BIGSAS, prospective doctoral researchers are required to outline their intended dissertation project in a maximum of ten pages. The topic of the project is to be fixed in agreement with the doctoral researcher's supervisor as soon as possible after the beginning of the doctoral period. The specific dissertation topic forms the basis of the Individual Research and Training Plan (IRTP) that is to be developed and presented to the Executive Committee by the Junior Fellow and his or her supervisor within three months of admission into BIGSAS, as stated in the BIGSAS doctoral regulations. This IRTP can only be changed with the agreement of the supervisor. It has to be regularly evaluated and if necessary adjusted (see point 2 below).

The aim of the IRTP is to guarantee a focused dissertation topic and realistic research plan so that one can count on steady progress.

2) *Regular evaluation of academic performance and dissertation progress*

BIGSAS combines the advantages of individual supervision with those of team supervision. Upon admission into BIGSAS, Junior Fellows are assigned a supervisor by the Steering Committee, provided that there is an agreement of both the Junior Fellow and the assigned supervisor. The Steering Committee assures a field of research at the University of Bayreuth that corresponds best to the planned dissertation project of the Junior Fellow. Cotutelle or joint supervision with external supervisors may be arranged upon individual request. Besides their personal supervisors, all doctoral researchers are assigned in agreement with the Junior Fellow two further mentors, preferably from a different academic discipline. The supervisor and the two mentors form the mentoring group. They agree to provide intensive counselling on all matters enabling the doctoral researcher to successfully complete the dissertation project in proper time. The supervisor meets the Junior Fellow regularly to discuss the progress of and problems connected with the dissertation. The whole mentoring group should meet the Junior Fellow at least once per semester to discuss and promote the advancement and quality of the dissertation project and of the integration of the Junior Fellow into the international academic community. In terms of funding and training possibilities, the members of the mentoring group provide advice and support as best as they can (see also point 4 below).

In turn, doctoral researchers are expected to actively seek contact with their supervisors and mentors and to arrange for at least one personal meeting with their mentoring group per semester. The overall dissertation-related outcome of the meeting is to be added to the IRTP and handed in by the supervisor in writing to the administration office. If for whatever reason



this required meeting cannot take place during the semester, the doctoral researchers are requested to report this to the administration office in writing. In all communication with their supervisors and mentors, the Junior Fellows have the right to reasonable confidentiality.

3) *Comprehensive financial support regarding a) publication of academic papers, b) participation in conferences and summer schools, and c) conduct of fieldwork*

In accordance with the BIGSAS doctoral regulations, doctoral researchers must present a number of requirements in order to be admitted to the doctoral examination procedure.

In all of these endeavours, the Junior Fellows may expect reasonable financial support from BIGSAS.

When applying for financial support to the Steering or Executive Committee, the doctoral researchers have to provide a statement of support written by their supervisor.

Externally funded doctoral researchers whose funding institution provides for a) financial support for publication, b) financial support for conference participation, or c) field research funding are obliged to first apply for funds from the respective funding institution. In case of a negative response they have to forward it to the BIGSAS administration.

4) *Diverse training and enhanced qualification opportunities*

The Junior Fellows are encouraged to participate in further training and enhanced qualification measures offered within or – in individual cases – outside BIGSAS. BIGSAS offers a wide range of interdisciplinary academic and employment-oriented training opportunities, the contents of which may be inspired by doctoral researchers' suggestions or may simply be proposed by the Junior Fellows. In addition, doctoral researchers are encouraged to initiate independent work groups. The supervisors undertake to ensure that their mentees have access to and make the best use of all the training and enhancement measures according to their specific interests and needs. The courses, Work Groups, etc. that have been or are planned to be attended by the doctoral researchers are to be documented in the IRTP.

5) *Healthy and inspiring work environment*

Beyond its numerous academic training and research opportunities, BIGSAS strives to offer its doctoral researchers a healthy and stimulating work environment in very practical terms, i.e. by providing workstations all equipped with a desktop computer and printer connection. Primarily in the final phase of their dissertation writing process, doctoral researchers may apply to the administration office for one of the individual workstations located in offices. These can be booked for a period of three months with a possibility of prolongation.

6) *Prompt assessment of completed and submitted dissertations*

The reviewers agree to promptly assess the dissertation within two months upon receipt in order to ensure fast completion of the final procedures including the defence of the dissertation.

7) *Collegial and respectful behaviour*



BIGSAS strives to facilitate a respectful work environment for all its faculty, administration staff and doctoral researchers. Given this fundamental aim, the Junior Fellows have the right to study and work in an environment free of exploitation, intimidation, harassment and discrimination based on characteristics such as gender, race, religion, age, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, or political beliefs and affiliations.

In turn, the Junior Fellows have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner befitting an academic colleague. They also have the responsibility to provide accurate and honest reporting of their findings and dissertation progress and to uphold ethical norms in interpersonal communication, research methodology and academic writing. Finally, they have the responsibility to take the initiative in asking questions that promote their understanding of the academic requirements and financial funding particularities of BIGSAS.

8) *Grievance procedures*

The Junior Fellows have the right to be judged by supervisors and other teaching and research staff in accordance with fair procedures solely on the basis of their professional qualifications and professional conduct.

Disagreements should be solved, wherever possible, consensually and informally.

Major disagreements that cannot be solved informally require a more formal grievance resolution procedure, including the support of an independent external professional mediator. In the course of the process, both parties are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and not let the situation have a negative impact on the wider academic and administrative environment of BIGSAS.