IRI THESys Graduate Program

Regulations

The THESys Graduate Program is an interdisciplinary cross-faculty doctoral degree programme offered by the Integrative Research Institute on Transformations of Human-Environment Systems (IRI THESys) of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU). The THESys Graduate Program is aimed at doctoral candidates from all HU departments involved in IRI THESys, and regional non-university IRI THESys partners, who intend to pursue a doctoral degree in the fields of research represented by IRI THESys.

§ 1 Objectives and measures of the doctoral degree programme:

(1) The overarching, academic objective of the THESys Graduate Program is the supervision and qualification of young researchers who are to earn their doctoral degree within a period of no more than four years. The structured education that is both subject-specific and interdisciplinary, consistent involvement in research at institutions, and the mandatory supervision framework offered by this program create an excellent environment for doctoral candidates and lead to the implementation of a new culture of doctoral education at Humboldt-Universität.

(2) In terms of interdisciplinary research, which is essential to the research topics covered at IRI THESys, there is yet another objective: educating graduates from the humanities and social/natural sciences together in an interdisciplinary structured doctoral degree programme according to the objectives of the "Transformation of Human-Environment Systems" (THESys).

(3) The research training program provided by the IRI THESys Graduate Program should enable all doctoral candidates to complete an excellent doctoral thesis that sets itself apart from others through specialisation on an internationally competitive level with simultaneous, interdisciplinary integration of the research topic. This specialisation should make it possible for the achieved research results to be published internationally during the doctoral study period. In order to guarantee internationally competitive, disciplinary research with simultaneous, interdisciplinary integration of the research topic, the following qualification activities are offered in the research training program:

- A mandatory foundation module where students are taught, through various types of courses, core content and concepts of the research conducted at IRI THESys, in particular, regarding aspects of interdisciplinary research in the field of human-environment systems;
- Elective modules that allow for more in-depth specialisation and go beyond the level of master's degree programmes; as well as modules from related disciplines, most of which originate from existing master's degree programmes;
- Training in aspects of interdisciplinary education.

Together with their supervisors, doctoral candidates decide on the individual structure of their degree programme, based on the specific requirements of their research project as well as their individual interests and needs.

(4) The objective of successfully integrating the doctoral candidates into the institutional research of IRI THESys or one of its partner institutes can be best achieved by, among other things, taking the following measures:

- joint academic activities (e.g. preparing a summer school) with researchers from IRI THESys, non-university research institutes as well as foreign collaborating partners,
- encounters with leading researchers in the IRI THESys fields of research through series of lectures, workshops and conferences (summer schools) at IRI THESys,
- establishing contacts through supervisors' working groups,

- support for conference attendance and visits abroad.

§ 2 Membership of the THESys Graduate Program

§ 2.1 Program members

Program members are (1) doctoral candidates at an HU faculty who have successfully applied to the THESys Graduate Program and are actively pursuing a doctoral degree; and (2) THESys members supervising at least one doctoral candidate in the THESys Graduate Program.

§ 2.2 Applications for and duration of program membership for doctoral candidates

(1) Applications for membership may be submitted by students who have been accepted for doctoral study at an HU faculty (usually a faculty from which there is already at least one IRI THESys member) and who have demonstrated in their application that they have a relevant research concept in regard to IRI THESys research. The application for membership has to be supported by at least one IRI THESys member acting as supervisor. If none of their supervisors is an IRI THESys member, then the application may be approved by a THESys member working in a related field. The following documents must be handed over to the program coordination as part of the application for membership:

a) official application form of the THESys Graduate Program,

b) tabular curriculum vitae,

c) copy of the official letter of admission as a doctoral student, issued by the admitting HU faculty,

d) letter of support, issued by an IRI THESys member acting as supervisor,

e) supervision agreement between the doctoral candidate and two supervisors. If, due to certain circumstances, no second supervisor has yet been determined at the time of the application, said supervisor must be named no later than one year after admission to the program and the agreement must be amended accordingly. The supervision agreement is amended to meet the individual needs of the doctoral candidate and/or the field of research and regulates the scale and time frame of the doctoral project and its sub-steps, consultation schedule, the duties of the doctoral candidate and supervisors, course of action in the event of conflict and contains an exposé as an annex.

f) individual training and work plan outlining training elements (modules of Research Training Program A-D, language training, career development measures) and other educational elements (research visits, teaching activities, organisation or management of conferences and workshops) as well as the financing and scheduling thereof.

The templates for items a), d), e) and f) are resolved and modified by the THESys Graduate Program Board and made available by the program coordinator in their currently valid version. For item e), existing supervision agreements of the faculties and/or

departments may substitute that of IRI THESys. The supervision agreement standards of IRI THESys must, where required, be guaranteed in an annex.

(2) Acceptance as a program member pursuing a doctoral degree is decided by the THESys Graduate Program Board in a transparent procedure according to the following criteria: (a) academic excellence, usually proven by an outstanding university degree (b) the level of innovation and adaptability of the doctoral project with regard to the the IRI THESys fields of research, (c) pre-existing skills or exceptional motivation, which bode well for successful completion of doctoral studies and (d) very good knowledge of English.

(3) Program membership initially lasts for a maximum of three years. Upon request, membership may be extended by one year to a total of four years, particularly in the case of interdisciplinary research topics. This requires

- a brief justification,
- an up-dated training and work plan, and
- a statement from the first supervisor as per the applicable doctoral degree regulations.

Membership may be interrupted at any time, e.g. for parental leave or care periods, and requires proof that said interruption was also reported to the faculty.

Should the first supervisor, as per the applicable doctoral degree regulations, leave Humboldt-Universität, participation in the program may be continued, provided that admission as a doctoral student by the faculty is valid and fulfilment of the supervision agreement with two supervisors is ensured.

§ 2.3 Successful completion of the program and end of membership for doctoral students

(1) The program is deemed completed successfully, if

a. mandatory and elective modules of the research training program were successfully accomplished within the agreed time frame,

b. research stays and fieldwork abroad as well as the attendance of conferences as stated in the training and work plan were successfully completed,

c. doctoral studies were completed at Humboldt-Universität.

For this, the time of doctoral study and the related thesis defence are not dependent on the agreed program duration.

If all requirements according to the present Regulations have been met, a certificate and a transcript shall be issued about the successful completion of the doctoral degree programme.

(2) Program membership ends

a. with the successful completion of the program,

b. upon expiration of membership or extended membership without completion of the requirements of para. 1 a, b,

c. disqualification of the doctoral candidate by the faculty concerned,

d. if the doctoral candidate fails to meet the obligations of the present Regulations.

(3) In the event that a thesis deadline longer than the maximum length of membership is granted by the faculty concerned, there is the possibility – even if para. 3 b applies – to participate in free offers of the Graduate Program that are conducive to the successful completion of doctoral studies. It is not possible to collect credits that lead to the completion of the doctoral degree programme.

§ 2.4 Duration of program membership for supervisors

Supervisors of doctoral candidates who have successfully applied for admission to the THESys Graduate Program, automatically become program members of the THESys Graduate Program, particularly if they are IRI THESys members as per the IRI THESys Statutes (cf. University Gazette AMB 21/2013 of HU Berlin). Program membership ends when there are no doctoral candidates in the program being supervised by the program member.

§ 2.5 Rights and duties of program members

(1) The duties of the program members, including the supervisors, derive from the supervision agreement and the individual training and work plan.

(2) Program members pursuing a doctoral degree will be advised and supported by the program coordinator during all stages of the doctoral degree procedure and with regard to participation in the research training program. At the same time, the program coordinator monitors the progress of the doctoral project according to the supervision agreement and the trainings and work plan in regular intervals.

(3) Participation in the THESys Graduate Program entitles doctoral candidates to participate in the research training program and to apply for scholarships to finance qualification activities.

(4) The supervisors agree to open, where possible, their own courses for doctoral candidates, e.g. as an interdisciplinary integration module, and to contribute to the conception and implementation of new offers made especially for doctoral candidates.

(5) The program members agree to name IRI THESys in publications as the second department, if the content of these publication is related to the doctoral studies.

(6) If the doctoral candidate fails to meet the obligations resulting from the Statutes, the Program Board may resolve to exclude the doctoral candidate, following consultation with the latter.

§ 3   Research training Program

§ 3.1   Structure

The research training program is completed in parallel with independent research work: It contains project-related and interdisciplinary, academic components as well as interdisciplinary offers for academically relevant key competences.

§ 3.2 Teaching and learning formats

(1) The project-related and interdisciplinary research training program is structured as follows:

    a) Module A - Developing interdisciplinary competencies: compulsory module consisting of different forms of courses on the IRI THESys research objectives and the members of the THESys Graduate Program.

    b) Module B - Deepening disciplinary specialisation: elective module with courses offering a deepening of disciplinary knowledge regarding both content and methodology, e.g. building on master-level courses.

    c) Module C - Discovering new disciplines: elective module consisting of bachelor/master level courses or courses specially designed to teach content from different fields to doctoral students.

    d) Module D - Training of soft skills/entrepreneurial skills: courses offered by Humboldt Graduate School (HGS) or equivalent offers in the field of academically relevant key skills, including one course on the topic of good scientific practice.

(2) The structure of the research training program offers is stipulated, upon consultation between the supervisors and the doctoral candidate, in the training and work plan of the the supervision agreement. Courses of other graduate schools, including foreign ones, research training groups of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), and as part of collaborations or other research institutions and doctoral degree programmes offered by national and international institutes of higher education with the right to award doctorates as well as by non-university institutions, may be included in the research training program, if the requirements and procedures of each allow for the achievement of equivalent credits.

(3) All courses in the context of the research training program pursuant to para. 1 require regular and active participation.

§ 4 Organisation and bodies

§ 4.1 General Assembly

(1) The General Assembly is convened at least once a year by the chairperson of the Program Board and led by said chairperson, with invitations being issued 14 days beforehand.
The General Assembly consists of:

    a. all program members,

    b. other members of IRI THESys (pursuant to University Gazette AMB 21/2013 of HU Berlin) who, during the past two years, were involved in the educational offers or the supervision within the Graduate Program,

    c. academic staff members holding a doctoral degree who are employed at IRI THESys and who, during the past two years, were involved in the educational offers or the supervision within the Graduate Program,

d. the coordinator of the Graduate Program (not entitled to vote in elections of the Graduate Program Board).

Members of the IRI Board and the IRI THESys managing director may participate in the General Assembly with the right to speak.

The General Assembly has a quorum if at least three members of the Graduate Program Board and at least one fourth of the program members pursuing a doctoral degree are present.

(2) The General Assembly has the following duties:

a. election of the Graduate Program Board (cf. § 4.2 (4)),

b. discussion and approval of progress reports,

c. discussion of the research training program developed by the Board.

(3) The General Assembly is subject to the rules of procedure applicable to IRI THESys member assemblies.

§ 4.2 Graduate Program Board

(1) The THESys Graduate Program Board consists of the members of three status groups: (1) <u>three</u> professors or researchers holding a post-doctoral qualification who are members of IRI THESys and the THESys Graduate Program, (2) one academic staff member of the IRI THESys holding a doctoral degree, (3) one representative of the program members pursuing a doctoral degree. The coordinator of the THESys Graduate Program and the managing director of IRI THESys participate in Program Board meetings in an advisory capacity.

(2) The Graduate Program Board is elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years. Should individual members of the Program Board withdraw prematurely, they may be replaced before the end of the term through an election at the next General Assembly.

(3) The election of the Program Board is held pursuant to the election regulations in Annex 1 of the present Regulations.

(4) The Program Board is convened by the program coordinator as needed, but at least once a year. The Board decides on its members with simple majority. In the event of the absence of one or more members, their votes must be obtained.

(5) The Board makes decision on important affairs regarding the program that are not the responsibility of other HU bodies. In particular, these include:

a. awarding scholarships/fellowships i.e. assuming course fees using doctoral degree programme funds according to set procedures and criteria,

b. admission and exclusion of program members,

c. the overall planning of the program and finances,

d. the development of the research training program.

§ 4.3 Program coordination

(1) The Graduate Program Board appoints a person for the purpose of program coordination. Should no one be appointed as coordinator of the doctoral degree programme, the managing director of IRI THESys shall take on this role.

(2) The program coordinator handles the everyday affairs of the program. These include, in particular, activities relating to the admission of new program members and the coordination of the research training program.

(3) The program coordinator develops proposals for the allocation of program funds for the Program Board and administrates the funds according to the resolutions taken by the Program Board.

(4) The coordinator of the THESys Graduate Program develops and implements measures, in cooperation with the managing director of IRI THESys, in order to ensure equal opportunities and to enforce family-friendly standards. In this respect, the THESys Graduate Program agrees to be mindful of compatibility with family responsibilities when scheduling programmes.

§ 5 Quality assurance

Quality assurance measures are embedded at two different and closely linked levels in the THESys Graduate Program.

(1) Research activities of doctoral students during the program

The supervision agreement and the training and supervision plan constitute a significant basis of quality assurance. They both stipulate in detail collaborations between doctoral students and supervisors. These must be checked by the program coordinator at least once a year. Thanks to the combination of the supervision agreement and the training and work plan, the detailed "monitoring" of the work progress by the coordinator of the THESys Graduate Program is made possible. For instance, the active participation and individual presentations at the THESys doctoral colloquia and in disciplinary, subject-specific colloquia or visits abroad and the financing thereof are stipulated in the training and work plan.

(2) Structure and further development of the program

The THESys Graduate Program is organised similarly to a graduate school and follows the cross-status-group approach. In addition to the organisation of the doctoral degree programme and the relevant offers, the Program Board draws up a yearly report on the further development of the program for the purposes of success monitoring as well as documentation and evaluation of relevant data and processes, e.g. internationalisation. This report is submitted to the Humboldt Graduate School for evaluation. All decision processes of the Program Board, e.g. applications for membership, travel funds or courses subject to fees, are based on standardised forms and centrally agreed guidelines accessible to all participants.

§ 6 Commencement

The present Regulations shall become effective on the day after approval by the General Assembly of the THESys Graduate Program on 4 June 2016.

Annex 1: THESys Graduate Program Board election regulations

(1) First, the present participants nominate an election administrator. The individual concerned may not be nominated.

(2) Before the election, the election administrator asks participants of the General Assembly entitled to vote for nominations. Absent program members as well as researchers invited to the General Assembly may also be nominated. Nominations can also be submitted in advance to the Program Board in text form.

(3) All program members as well as researchers entitled to vote at the General Assembly are electable.

(4) Once nominations have been collected, the list is finalised by the election administrator. The nominees must consent to their candidacy. Absent candidates may give their consent in advance to the Program Board in written form.

(5) The election takes place in status groups. The maximum number of votes to be cast is based on the number of status group representatives to be elected. An accumulation of votes is not admissible.

(6) If more than one position for a status group is vacant on the Program Board, the status group concerned shall vote in a secret ballot. Otherwise, the status group may resolve this matter by a show of hands.

(7) Vacant positions on the Program Board shall be occupied according to the ranking of candidates following the evaluation of valid votes. The nomination of an individual requires at least one valid vote. In the event of a tied vote, the outcome shall be decided by lot.

(8) Upon inquiry, the nominees must declare whether or not they accept the nomination. If necessary, a second election will be held.