

THE BONN GRADUATE CENTER'S YEAR 2025



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OVERVIEW

The Bonn Graduate Center (BGZ) serves as the central point of contact for doctoral students at the University of Bonn. This report highlights the BGZ's initiatives and contributions to the academic community, underscoring its commitment to nurturing the next generation of emerging leaders.

Within the [Argelander Program for Early-Career Researchers](#):

- ★ we offer personalized guidance, orientation, and information on qualification programs, funding opportunities, and career development;
- ★ our Doctorate Plus program equips doctoral students with essential academic and interdisciplinary skills, preparing them for diverse career paths both within and beyond academia;
- ★ additionally, we foster early academic independence through tailored support and resources to help young academics achieve their professional goals.

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NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Much of the BGZ's impact lies in our established, well-received offerings; these day-to-day operations form the essential backbone of our work and are outlined in the following chapters. Alongside this continuity, the past year also brought a number of noteworthy new developments which we would like to highlight:

1 Launch of the Argelander Programs's new LinkedIn channel:

To enhance our communication measures, we jointly started a [LinkedIn channel](#) with our colleagues from HR Development targeting early-career researchers, see page 8.

2 Pilot of the well-being peer group for doctoral students 'Thrive and Shine'

To complement our one-time workshop and e-training offers on mental health, we trialled a [well-being peer group for doctoral students](#) which was guided by professional coaches and lasted several weeks.

3 Expansion of our skills and training program Doctorate plus to Micro Credentials:

[Micro-Credentials](#) were introduced to systematically strengthen the acquisition of key future skills among our target groups and to make these competencies visible on their résumés. With a clear thematic focus, this new format complements our established career-oriented certificates, see page 10.

4 Redesign of our career offerings with the pilot of our three-day Career Days

In response to declining registrations for our half-day formats, we comprehensively redesigned our career event concept. Individual offerings were consolidated into the new three-day "[Career Days](#)," a modular format that enables participants to tailor the programme to their individual needs and interests, see page 6.

5 Applicants from the Medical Faculty within the Argelander Grant framework

To date, the [funding lines of the Argelander Program](#) and the BONFOR program offered by the Medical Faculty were largely detached due to the underlying source of financing. In 2025, the Argelander Grants for Postdocs were open to members of the Medical Faculty to test demand and explore potential collaboration the future, see page 12.

6 Expansion of the association of Bonn International Graduate School (BIGS)

The [Bonn International Graduate School association](#) welcomed two new members in 2025: The Bonn Graduate School for Biology and the Bonn Graduate School of Computer Science successfully applied.

OUR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

	Female			International			Structured Programs		
	2024	2023	↕↗	2024	2023	↕↗	2024	2023	↕↗
First and new registrations	496	398	↗	286	244	↗	279	223	↗
Active continuation	3.159	3.111	↗	1.591	1.535	↗	1.762	1.771	↘
End of doctoral studies	340	293	↗	177	139	↗	284	199	↗
University of Bonn (all)	4.028	3.872	↗	2.063	1.936	↗	2.331	2.216	↗

According to the [Federal Statistical Office](#), who published the statistics for the reporting year in the summer of 2025, around 212,400 people were enrolled in doctoral programs at German universities in 2024. This represents an increase of 4 percent over the previous year. 6,769 of these were pursuing their doctorates at the University of Bonn.

- ☆ More first-time registrations, fewer dropouts, and an increase in doctoral degrees compared to the previous year - these are the encouraging results of the University of Bonn's doctoral statistics. A total of **890** people began their doctoral studies here in 2024, representing an increase of **16 percent**. This upward trend shows that interest in further academic qualification remains high.
- ☆ Internationality is also on the rise: **27 percent** of doctoral candidates in 2024 were foreign nationals, which corresponds to around **1,870** people. Among those who began their doctoral studies in the same year, this proportion was as high as **31 percent**, which is 4 percent above the national average.
- ☆ As in previous years, women make up the majority of doctoral candidates at **54 percent**, which means that the University of Bonn is also above the national average of 49 percent. Particularly encouraging: for the first time since the introduction of the statistics 2017, more women than men successfully completed their doctorates (**50.5%**). Overall, the number of doctoral degrees awarded rose from 587 to **674**.
- ☆ A look at the distribution of subjects at the University of Bonn reveals clear differences in the distribution of doctoral students: most are registered in human medicine and health sciences, with **2,400** people (36%). This is followed by the mathematics and natural sciences with **1,700** (26%), the humanities and social sciences with **1,500** (23%), and agricultural, nutritional, and engineering sciences with **570** (8%).

ORIENTATION

Individual Consultation

We offer [one-to-one consultation](#) on any overarching aspects of doctorates and doctoral studies. Appointments can be booked via our online tool and are held in German or English.

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Consultation
Appointments

The main thematic concerns were (in order of frequency)

- General questions: 45
- Financing of the doctorate: 9
- Discontinuation of doctoral studies: 3
- Supervision: 2
- Structured Doctoral Programs: 2
- Other: 4

Research Areas: Humanities and Cultural Studies (18), Natural Sciences (16), Social and Economic Sciences (9), Medicine and Life Sciences (7), Agricultural and Food Sciences (7), Computer Science (5), Law (3).

Online Coaching

[Online Coaching](#) is offered for doctoral students in German or English with professional external coaches. The sessions can be booked online on predefined dates.

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Coaching
Sessions

The most common thematic concerns in the coaching sessions were

- Supervision
- Time Management
- Career Planning
- Work–life balance

„Es war von Anfang an eine sehr vertraute Gesprächsatmosphäre und ich konnte wertvolle neue Ideen gewinnen, wie ich weiter vorgehen will. Es hat mir sehr weitergeholfen. Vielen herzlichen Dank für diese tolle Möglichkeit!“

Coachee

Orientation Events

Career Days (June 25, 26 and 27, 2025)

Three-day event offered in-person and online with a modular concept. Participants engaged in workshops, role model talks and individual coaching sessions to explore career paths within and beyond academia, develop skills and plan their professional transition. The event also fostered networking and exchange with peers and professionals, supporting informed career decision-making.

Keynote by Prof. Dr. Christiane Woopen | 65
Participants | 3 Role Models | 13 Workshops | 26
Competence and CV Checks | 100% positive evaluation
(excellent/good)



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„Overall, I really enjoyed the Career Days event. It was a valuable and unique opportunity to learn about different career paths, connect with experts, and reflect on my professional development.“

Participant feedback



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„The games and activities, such as singing together, were a great first talking point with other doctoral students.“

Participant feedback

Welcome Event (November 27)

The Welcome Event is a joint initiative of the Bonn Graduate Center and the International Office and is designed to facilitate the start of new doctoral students at the University of Bonn. As a networking event, it promotes exchange among doctoral students while also providing an overview of support structures for early-career researchers. Its aim is to build a strong network and support integration into the university community.

Greeting note from Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Ilona Grunwald | 76 Participants | 100% positive evaluation (excellent/good)



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Job Talks

One Hour – One Job – One Perspective

Online talks by doctoral degree holders on their careers beyond academia – offered jointly by the Academic Career Development, the Bonn Graduate Center and the Alumni Network.

- Head of the Regional Representation of the European Commission | Dr. Stefan Lock | February 5
- Vorstandsreferent bei der DFG | Dr. Sascha Simons | March 26
- Director of Data, Analytics and AI | Dr. Alberto Doria | April 9
- Editorial Head of the Science Section of DIE ZEIT | Dr. Sibylle Anderl | May 14
- Abteilungsleiterin Nachhaltigkeit | Dr. Kathrin Manthei | September 25



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Argelander Career Talks

A Roadmap to an International Academic Career

- Prof. Dr. Daniel Petersen | Rosalind Franklin University, USA | Neuroscience | August 28
- Prof. Dr. Sammy Bedoui | The University of Melbourne, Australia | Immunology | December 9

Communication Measures

Bonn Doctoral Bulletin

Monthly digital newsletter with news about doctoral studies, our skills training program Doctorate Plus, current support and funding opportunities: www.bgznewsletter.uni-bonn.de

12 digital issues | 2 printed issues | 799 new subscriptions | 7,600 total subscribers

LinkedIn Channel

Launch of the Argelander Programs LinkedIn channel on March 26, 2025: www.linkedin.com/company/argelander-program.

- 610 Follower in 2025

Highlights

Daten für 1.2.2025 bis 31.12.2025

73.978

Impressions

1.106

Reaktionen

14

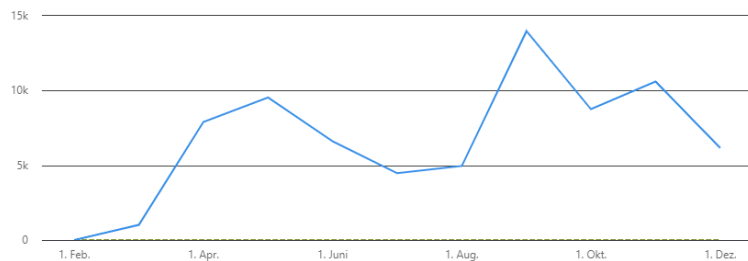
Kommentare

39

Direkt geteilte Beiträge

Kennzahlen

Impressions ▾

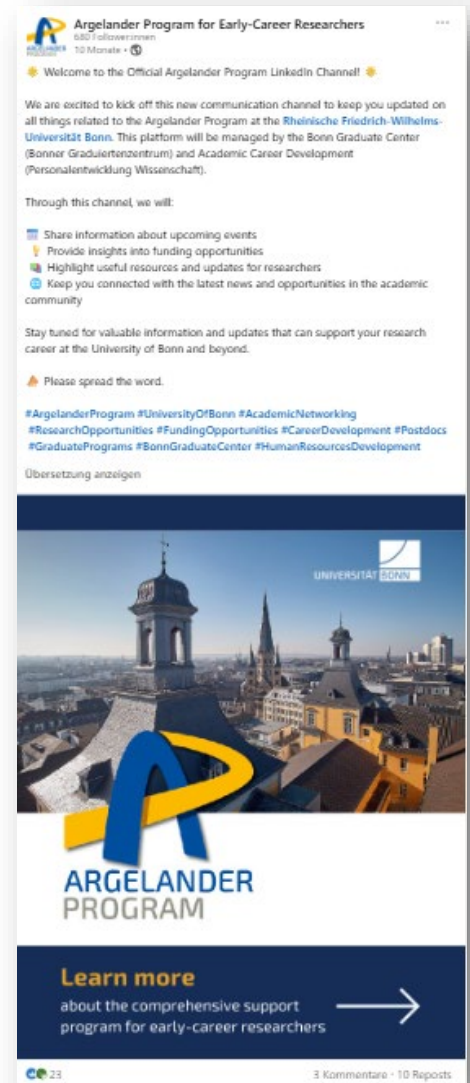


✓ Organisch

73.978

✓ Gesponsert

0



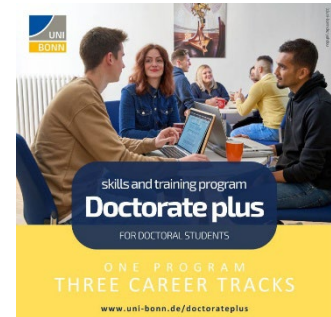
Talks and Presentations at Events

- ☆ Consulting booth at Postdoc Day 2025 organized by HR Development (April 3)
- ☆ Presentation at German Research Fair Japan organized by DAAD (April 10)
- ☆ Talk at Early-Career Researcher Event organized by TRA 4 and 6 (May 5)
- ☆ Consulting booth at the Bergfest organized by Division 9 (June 5)
- ☆ Workshop on Research Management at Career Days for Doctoral Students (June 25)
- ☆ Presentation at the BIGS Clinical and Population Science Kick-Off (September 18)
- ☆ Online booth at the digital FEMTECH Fair (September 19)
- ☆ Talk and Input at Next Career Step Winter School organized by Division 6 (Sep 22-24)
- ☆ Presentation at the BGSE Welcome Week BGSE (October 7)
- ☆ Presentation at the HCM-Early-Career Researcher Event (October 8)
- ☆ Presentation at the YAM Network Meeting organized by the Hausdorff Center for Mathematics (December 9)

QUALIFICATION

Doctorate plus Skills and Training

The [Doctorate plus training program](#) offers doctoral students at the University of Bonn a structured opportunity to expand both academic and transferable skills alongside their research. Delivered by the BGZ in cooperation with selected partners, the program comprises workshops across three career tracks, thereby supporting diverse career paths within and beyond academia.



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workshops offered
by BGZ

- New topics offered in Doctorate plus (excerpt):
 - ★ “LinkedIn Posting with AI: Boost Your Visibility in Academia and Beyond”
 - ★ “Using Generative AI Tools for Science Communication”
 - ★ “Resilience and Well-Being in Academia”
- Participants: 1,502
- Registrations: 3,035
- Overall evaluation: 92% very good or good

Number of Doctorate plus certificates issued:

- Research Track: 34
- Business and Organizations Track: 22
- Research Management Track: 16
- General Certificate: 3

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Career Track
Certificates issued

"Research management is often much less classic administration than I would have expected and offers the opportunity to work in a solution-oriented, creative way and to apply one's own experience from research beyond the classic technical expertise."

Job Shadowing Participant

Number of Doctorate plus Add-ons acquired after obtaining a certificate:

- Career Coachings (Research Track): 4
- Job Shadowing (Research Management Track): 2
- Career Coachings (Business and Organizations Track): 2

Micro-Credentials

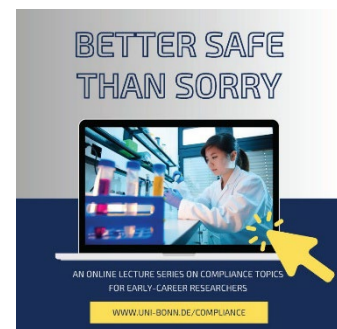
With a clear thematic focus, [Micro-Credentials](#) were introduced within the Doctorate plus framework to systematically strengthen the acquisition of key future skills among our target groups. The aim of the Micro Credentials is to allow a low-threshold acquisition of a skill bundle and to make these competencies easily visible on their résumés. At the same time, the thematic Micro Credentials help doctoral students navigate the wide selection of over 100 Doctorate plus workshop offered per semester. The four Micro Credentials piloted are:

- ★ Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- ★ Leadership & Management
- ★ Research Ethics & Integrity
- ★ Resilience & Well-Being

Compliance Lecture Series

Online Lecture Series “[Better Safe than Sorry](#) - How Early-Career Researchers Overcome Risks and Avoid Pitfalls when Submitting Applications and Performing Research” offered in the winter term

- Number of Lectures: 8
- Participants: 135
- New topics introduced in 2025:
 - ★ Strengthening Your Personal IT Security in Research
 - ★ Sicherheitsinteressen vs. Forschungsfreiheit? Was die vielzitierte Zeitenwende für mich als Wissenschaftler*in bedeutet
 - ★ Doing Research with AI? Opportunities and Ethical Challenges in Academia



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E-Trainings

The established e-training offers, PINKTUM which is tailored to the non-academic sector and TwentyOne Skills which is designed to support academic career development, were expanded by two additional online offerings in 2025:

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Completed Online Courses

- **Good Research Practice during Doctoral Studies**, addresses key aspects of responsible conduct in research, including sound project planning, relevant legal considerations such as labor and intellectual property law, adherence to ethical standards, and appropriate handling of scientific misconduct.
- The second new addition, **Understanding Research Ethics in Tech**, provides modular learning content aimed at deepening participants’ understanding of research ethics and integrity in the context of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and genome editing.

SUPPORT

54%

A total of 193 applications were received for the internal funding lines for doctoral students and postdocs within the responsibility of the BGZ in 2025. Of these, 105 applications were approved, corresponding to a funding rate of 54.40 percent.

Overall Funding Quota

Funding Lines for Doctoral Students

The [funding lines](#) are designed to support the academic career development of early-career researchers and to provide doctoral students with opportunities to enhance their academic profiles – particularly in an international context – and to establish networks that are vital for their future academic careers.

In 2025, **116 applications** were received under the University of Bonn's internal funding lines for doctoral students (see table below). Of these, 59 applications were funded, meaning that the funding rate for 2025 was **50.86 percent**. The majority of applications came from the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

Approximately **97 percent** of the applications submitted were for the “International Conference Grants” and “Santander International Exchange Grants” funding programs. In the most popular funding line, the Conference Grants, the approval rate was just **over 50 percent** (approx. 53.54 percent), while for Santander Grants (category “outgoing”) it was only **30.77 percent**.

Funding by faculty and funding line (applications submitted/approved) in 2025

Faculty	Conference Grants		Doctoral Workshops with International Visiting Scholars		Invitation of International Second Supervisors		Santander International Exchange Grants (Outgoing) ¹	
Faculty of Catholic Theology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty of Protestant Theology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty of Arts	33	14	1	1	2	0	3	1
Faculty of Law and Economics	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1
Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences	34	21	1	1	0	0	3	0
Faculty of Agricultural, Nutritional and Engineering Sciences	18	8	0	0	0	0	5	2
Faculty of Medicine	11	7	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	99	53	2	2	2	0	13	4

¹ Applications from doctoral students from abroad who have applied for funding for a research stay at the University of Bonn (category “incoming”) are not included in the table. The numbers of applications received and approved therefore refer only to applications from doctoral students at the University of Bonn who have applied for funding for a research stay in the countries listed under the Santander Grants funding line (category “outgoing”).

Argelander Grants for Postdocs

In 2025, the Bonn Graduate Center received a total of **76 applications** for postdoctoral funding ([Argelander Grants](#)). The majority of these were for conference grants (44), with an approval rate of 70%. Among the applications for project funding, the Argelander Starter Kit B instrument was the most popular with 17 applications. Here, slightly less than half of the applications were selected for funding, with a **funding rate of 41%**.

Funding by faculty and funding line (applications submitted/approved) in 2025

“The grant was extremely helpful in covering all the expenses related to attending the conference. Moreover, it provided a great opportunity to increase the international visibility of my work and to initiate collaborations with colleagues from around the world.”

Argelander Grantee

Faculty	Argelander Conference Grants		Argelander Starter-Kit Grants A		Argelander Starter-Kit Grants B		Argelander Mobility Grants	
Faculty of Catholic Theology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty of Protestant Theology	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Faculty of Arts	16	12	1	1	2	2	3	3
Faculty of Law and Economics	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences	7	3	2	1	4	1	2	0
Faculty of Agricultural, Nutritional and Engineering Sciences	5	4	3	1	3	1	2	0
Faculty of Medicine	14	11	2	1	5	1	1	1
Total	44	31	8	4	17	7	8	4

OUTLOOK AND GOALS

For the upcoming year our goals are to further develop our current offerings within the Argelander Program with a specific focus on the goals defined in the outlook of the Excellence University Report:

- ★ Expansion of the Micro Credentials to include all workshops within the Doctorate plus framework,
- ★ Further development of our internal funding lines in a university-wide comparison project to ensure compatibility and consistency,
- ★ Establishment of the Argelander Advisory Board,
- ★ Implementation of the evaluation process for the Bonn International Graduate Schools (BIGS) which was decided in the new government statute of the BIGS association in 2025,
- ★ Kick-off for the project to introduce university-wide doctoral regulations with a central framework to further enhance quality assurance of doctoral studies at the University of Bonn.