

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. I cannot find an application form. How do I apply?
2. What are the options for sending my application?
3. My Master's program was in English. Do I still have to pass the TOEFL exam or an equivalent exam?
4. What score do I have to reach on the English proficiency test?
5. My Master's Degree was not in the social sciences. Can I still apply for the BIGSSS/DAAD-GSSP Program?
6. When do I have to finish my Master's degree in order to be eligible?
7. Can Non-EU citizens apply?
8. Is there an age limit when applying for the BIGSSS/DAAD-GSSP Program?
9. Am I eligible if I already have a PhD-degree?
10. How do I know which supervisor to choose?
11. Can I use one of the exemplary research questions in my application?
12. Should I choose a supervisor before applying?
13. Do I have to speak German in order to be eligible for the program?
14. My TOEFL/IELTS scores will not arrive before the deadline. May I send them after the deadline?
15. How can my referees send their letters of reference?
16. When do I have to be in Bremen if admitted to the program?
17. I am not an EU-citizen. If I am admitted to the program, how early should I start applying for my visa?
18. What does the two-tier application process of the program mean? Is it possible my application will get rejected in the second stage?
19. Who will provide for my funding?
20. How does the current COVID-crisis affect my application? What happens if I can't commute to Bremen due to travel restrictions this summer/autumn?

1. I cannot find an application form. How do I apply?

All of the necessary admissions information and application instructions can be found on the BIGSSS/DAAD-GSSP homepage. Be sure to read the whole page carefully, including all documents provided for download.

2. What are the options for sending my application?

The only way to apply for this program is via the CampusNet admissions website. You can do this by visiting <https://campusnet.jacobs-university.de/> and creating an account.

3. My Master's program was in English. Do I still have to pass the TOEFL exam or an equivalent exam?

You are exempt from taking the TOEFL, or another test equivalent if:

- a) You are a native speaker of English
- b) You have received your A-levels at an institution where the language of instruction is English
- c) You have earned a higher-educational degree at an institution where the language of instruction is English

4. What score do I have to reach on the English proficiency test?

- TOEFL: paper-based 600, computer-based 250, internet-based 100
- IELTS: Band 7.5
- Cambridge Certificate: pass CAE

Scores should be no older than two years.

5. My Master's Degree was not in the social sciences. Can I still apply for the BIGSSS/DAAD-GSSP Program?

We accept all social science and humanities degrees. All others are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All applicants must submit a dissertation proposal/research plan which has a social scientific topic. This topic should also relate to one of the research topics or questions from the Principal Investigators involved in the program.

6. When do I have to finish my Master's degree in order to be eligible?

Applicants interested in the BIGSSS/DAAD-GSSP Program must have finished their Master's degrees by May 15th of the year of the program start.

7. Can Non-EU citizens apply?

Yes, all international candidates are welcome to apply and we particularly encourage applications from the Global South. However, when applying you must not have resided in Germany any time after February 15, 2021.

8. Is there an age limit when applying for the BIGSSS/DAAD-GSSP Program?

No.

9. Am I eligible if I already have a PhD-degree?

The DAAD Graduate School Scholarship Program is directed towards early career researchers which means we cannot consider applications of researcher who already have a PhD degree.

10. How do I know which supervisor to choose?

On our website you can see a list of Principal Investigators each stating one or multiple research interest(s) in the focus of the GSSP program. Your project proposal needs to be compatible with one (or several) of these research interests. Please refer to the section "Faculty and Research" on the GSSP website-section to find out more about the research program and your potential supervisors.

11. Can I use one of the exemplary research questions in my application?

The exemplary research questions as provided by our faculty are intended to give you an idea of potential research projects that could fit within the individual research interest of the Principal Investigators. In your application, you can follow the exemplary research question more or less closely or propose another research question, which fits within the research interests of the Principal Investigator indicated in your application.

12. Should I choose a supervisor before applying?

You should indicate one potential supervisor from the Principal Investigators of the program list that you would be interested in working with in your application and in your statement of purpose.

You should NOT, however, contact the supervisor personally. We will review your choice(s) during the application process.

13. Do I have to speak German in order to be eligible for the program?

No, the language of instruction at BIGSSS and of the DAAD-GSSP Program is English. The DAAD-GSSP funding foresees a German language course in Bremen.

14. My TOEFL/IELTS scores will not arrive before the deadline. May I send them after the deadline?

We encourage you to submit all other application materials by the deadline. Send us your scores as soon as you get them. However, we cannot guarantee that your application will be considered.

15. How can my referees send their letters of reference?

Applicants should upload the letters of recommendation from their referees directly into the admissions system. Alternatively, referees can choose to send references directly to the admissions officer via email (admissions-officer@bigsss-bremen.de) or post. If this is the case, please upload a placeholder document in your application stating this.

BIGSSS reserves the right to ask for hardcopies of all letters and to contact referees directly if an applicant is shortlisted.

16. When do I have to be in Bremen if admitted to the program?

PhD fellows must be in Bremen by the start date of the program. Please consult our website or contact the Admissions Officer for more information.

17. I am not an EU-citizen. If I am admitted to the program, how early should I start applying for my visa?

You should start as soon as you are accepted to the program as the visa process can be quite lengthy. BIGSSS will try to support you in this process, but it is ultimately your responsibility to obtain the necessary visa in time for the September 1st starting date.

18. What does the two-tier application process of the program mean? Is it possible my application will get rejected in the second stage?

Upon submitting your documents to BIGSSS, we will evaluate all aspects concerning your eligibility

to the program. At the end of the review process, the selected applicants are asked to apply again with the DAAD (more info provided by the Admissions Officer in due time). This second tier is a non-academic review, which is fully independent from BIGSSS and therefore we cannot guarantee the overall acceptance, however the chances for a rejection are very low.

19. Who will provide for my funding?

Once an applicant is granted access to the BIGSSS-GSSP program, s/he will have to register with the DAAD. All financial support will be directly provided by the DAAD, including additional allowances and the funding for the language course. All office supplies, office space, IT hardware and general working materials will be provided by BIGSSS. Additional courses and fees resulting e.g. from a stay abroad do need a separate application with the DAAD. Upon arriving at Bremen, there will be a detailed introduction to funding processes of the program with the BIGSSS administration.

20. How does the current COVID-crisis affect my application? What happens if I can't commute to Bremen due to travel restrictions this summer/autumn?

For the time being, the application process is organized virtually and takes place online.

However, the working mode will change as soon as applicants are accepted into the program. We expect our PhD students to actively participate in the life of our graduate school and therefore to be present in Bremen for the entire duration of the GloWel program (except for fieldwork and research stays, of course). However, BIGSSS and the University of Bremen also have a responsible COVID policy that allows for multiple options for remote work and digital teaching if necessary.

Currently, we operate under the assumption that the situation around COVID will ease again next year in summer and that travelling in July or August will be possible under no or very little restrictions (e.g. quarantine). Please inform yourself whether quarantine regulations apply to you when entering Germany and consider them when planning your travel.

Do you still have questions about the admissions process? Please contact our Admissions Officer at admissions-officer@bigsss-bremen.de