

## 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 the BIGSSS/RTG SELF PhD 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 for the BIGSSS/RTG SELF PhD Program?](#)
9. [How do I know which project line/supervisor to choose?](#)
10. [Can I use one of the exemplary research questions in my application?](#)
11. [Should I choose a supervisor before applying?](#)
12. [Do I have to speak German in order to be eligible for the program?](#)
13. [My TOEFL/IELTS scores will not arrive before the deadline. May I send them after the deadline?](#)
14. [How can my referees send their letters of reference?](#)
15. [When do I have to be in Bremen if admitted to the program?](#)
16. [I am not an EU-citizen. If I am admitted the program, how early should I start applying for my visa?](#)

### **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/RTG SELF 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.

Candidates interested in becoming an Affiliated fellow at BIGSSS should contact our Admissions Officer at [admissions-officer@bigsss-bremen.de](mailto:admissions-officer@bigsss-bremen.de)

### **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: 100 internet-based test, 250 computer-based, 600 paper-based

IELTS: Band 7.5

Scores should be no older than two years.

We also accept the CAE and CPE (Cambridge exams)

### **5. My Master’s Degree was not in the social sciences. Can I still apply for the BIGSSS/RTG SELF PhD 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 RTG’s project lines.

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

Applicants interested in the BIGSSS/RTG SELF PhD Program must have finished their Master’s degrees by May 31<sup>st</sup> of the year of the program start.

**7. Can Non-EU citizens apply?**

Yes, all nationalities are welcome to apply.

**8. Is there an age limit for the BIGSSS/RTG SELF PhD Program?**

No.

**9. How do I know which project line/supervisor to choose?**

On our website you can visit the webpages of each project line in order to find out more about it and in which your research proposal would best fit, as well as some guidance concerning potential supervisors.

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

The exemplary research questions on our website are intended to give you an idea of potential research projects that could fit within the individual project lines. In your application, you can follow the exemplary research question more or less closely, or propose another research question which fits within the project line(s) indicated in your application.

**11. Should I choose a supervisor before applying?**

You should indicate at least one (max. three) potential supervisor(s) from the RTG faculty 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.

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

No, the language of instruction at BIGSSS and of the RTG/BIGSSS SELF PhD Program is English.

**13. 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. We cannot, however, guarantee that your application will be considered.

**14. 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](mailto: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.

**15. 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.

**16. 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.

Do you still have questions about the admissions process? Please contact our Admissions Officer at [admissions-officer@bigsss-bremen.de](mailto:admissions-officer@bigsss-bremen.de)