



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANNHEIM

GESS – Graduate School of  
Economic and Social Sciences

# CDSB Student Info Booklet 2024-2025

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## 1. General Overview

### 1.1. Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences (GESS)

The [GESS](#) is a central research institution of the [University of Mannheim](#). All GESS faculty is anchored at the department or school level of the university, making the professors full members of the respective departments or schools.

The GESS integrates the academic disciplines of business, economics and the social sciences into a coherent curriculum, making it one of the few graduate schools worldwide that foster the exchange of ideas, methods and research approaches across the boundaries of the economic and social sciences. The GESS comprises

- the [Center for Doctoral Studies in Business \(CDSB\)](#)
- the [Center for Doctoral Studies in Economics \(CDSE\)](#)
- the [Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and Behavioral Sciences \(CDSS\)](#)

The graduate school is characterized by a joint focus on empirical and quantitative methods and their applications in the respective disciplines.

Within this framework, the GESS has established an internationally competitive structured doctoral program contributing to the strong scientific reputation of the University of Mannheim. Former GESS students have taken up (assistant) professorships and post-doc positions at internationally leading academic institutions as well as positions in renowned international organizations and in the private sector.

The GESS is governed by the [GESS Board of Directors](#) and advised by a number of additional committees and boards.

### 1.2. Center for Doctoral Studies in Business (CDSB)

The Center for Doctoral Studies in Business (CDSB) provides the English-taught postgraduate training pillar of the [Business School](#) of the University of Mannheim, which is triple accredited by AACSB, EFMD (EQUIS) and AMBA. The CDSB is the first graduate school in Germany offering structured doctoral programs in all areas of business studies with a strong focus on empirical and quantitative methods.

#### **The CDSB in brief:**

- Specialized doctoral programs in business: Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Operations Management and Taxation
- Scholarships available for covering living expenses
- Excellent research environment
- Interdisciplinary exchange of ideas with CDSE and CDSS students
- International student body
- Excellent reputation of the participating Business School of the University of Mannheim
- Entire program in English

### 1.3. Financial support

The CDSB commits to funding first-year students for a period of twelve months (€1.365 per month). During the subsequent years, students are typically funded

- 1) by either a teaching and/or research assistantship (employment contract) at the University of Mannheim (or a different institution affiliated with the GESS),
- 2) through a continuation scholarship or
- 3) by external funding the doctoral student raised themselves (e.g., personal external scholarship).

The ongoing financial support depends on the successful completion of the first year and your academic performance in later semesters.

## 2. The program

The first year is dedicated largely to taking advanced courses and developing the dissertation proposal. Once you pass the required first-year courses and the dissertation proposal is accepted by the CDSB Admission and Assessment Committee (AAC), you are admitted as a doctoral candidate for further three years.

At the beginning of the first year, each student is assigned a member of the Business School as a mentor. The mentor's role is to advise the doctoral student in the first year of studies with respect to courses and the development of the dissertation project. The mentor is not necessarily the thesis supervisor who is chosen by the doctoral students during their first year, but sometimes the mentor will become the thesis supervisor.

At the beginning of your studies, you and your mentor will be asked to sign the doctoral advising agreement called 'PhD Milestones'. This is the official advising agreement as well as work schedule of the CDSB doctoral program. You will obtain a personalized version from the Center Manager that you are asked to keep through the course of the doctoral program.

Each track's program structure is listed in the appendix of the [study regulations](#) ('Studienordnung').

### 2.1. Acknowledgement of publications

All published research articles must have a funding acknowledgement in form of a sentence as follows:

*"This work was supported by the University of Mannheim's Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences."*

### 3. Course registration and course requirements

The course program for current semesters (plus an archive of past courses) can be found [here](#). Please check the website regularly for any changes.

#### 3.1. Course registration

You are automatically registered for the **core** courses of your program. For **elective** courses you can register online by using the registration form on the [CDSB Course Catalog](#) web page.

The registration deadline is **25 August** for the fall term and **31 January** for the spring term. During the first four weeks of the semester, students may still add and drop courses. After the first four weeks, de-registrations are no longer accepted, and students will be automatically registered for the exam in the respective course.

Furthermore, it is important that you **clearly indicate** if you only wish to audit a course i.e. take the class for self-enrichment with no need for grade or credit points when registering for a course.

To take [CDSE](#) or [CDSS](#) courses please register online via the respective center's course catalog. If you would like to take a course, which is not in the GESS course catalog, please contact your Center Manager.

#### 3.2. Course requirements

To successfully pass the program, 90 ECTS points have to be accomplished.

##### *a) Core and Core Elective Courses:*

In the first year, students attend the mandatory core and core elective courses of the respective course program. In case less than three quarters of these courses are completed with the grade 4.0 ("fair") or better, the student cannot continue in the program. Please find the details for your respective program in the Appendix of the Study Regulations.

##### *b) Elective Courses:*

The choice of the electives is to be made after consultation with the mentor or supervisor. The electives may be chosen from other CDSB programs or other centers of doctoral studies of the Graduate School (CDSE, CDSS).

##### *c) Bridge Course:*

A course of another center (CDSE or CDSS) of the GESS or the course "Interdisciplinary Research in the Economic and Social Sciences (Bridge Course)" shall be completed.

##### *d) Area Seminar:*

For each semester of the doctoral program, participation in the Area Seminar of the respective program is mandatory – until the student hands in the dissertation.

*e) English Academic Writing course:*

This course focuses on academic writing and is mandatory for all – native or non-native English speakers.

*f) Dissertation Proposal:*

At the beginning of the third semester (deadline: 31 August), a written dissertation proposal shall be submitted to the admission and examination committee. The mentor or prospective supervisor of the dissertation comments on the proposal before the committee. The admission and examination committee consents to the continuation of the doctoral program by accepting the dissertation proposal and recognizing the successful coursework of the first year of study. The Guidelines for the preparation of the Dissertation Proposal can be found [here](#).

*g) CDSB Milestones:*

After each semester, the successful course of study shall be confirmed by the mentor and/or supervisor in the CDSB-Milestones form, that shall be forwarded to the Center Manager once a year at the beginning of the fall semester.

### 3.3. Evaluation

We are committed to improving our program and ask all students to carry out evaluations of courses attended. This is not only important as personal feedback to the lecturer, but also for the development of the CDSB curriculum. The evaluation is anonymous.

### 3.4. Grades and ECTS points

The following grade scheme is used in the graduate school:

1.0	excellent
1.3	
1.7	
2.0	good
2.3	
2.7	
3.0	satisfactory
3.3	
3.7	
4.0	fair/pass
5.0	fail

For a detailed list of ECTS credit points required and assigned to the courses/modules, please consult the [CDSB study regulations](#).

### 3.5. Dissertation

After the successful completion of the course program and the thesis defense you will be awarded the degree “Dr. rer. pol.”.

Details about the thesis defense process are set out in the [doctoral degree regulations in Business](#) ('Promotionsordnung').

### 3.6. Studying abroad

The CDSB offers students the opportunity to do part of their research abroad after the completion of the course program at Mannheim. In most cases the supervisor has contact to professors at other universities who can be of special help to support the research during the stay abroad.

### 3.7. Travel support

Students are encouraged to present their work at international conferences. If their papers are accepted, the CDSB grants financial support for the participation of students at top international conferences (subject to change without prior notice). The amount reimbursed depends on the importance of the conference visited. Please note that travel reimbursement is only available for scholarship holders.

Further information and documents regarding travel reimbursement can be found on the [GESS intranet](#) titled "for active students" (once you are enrolled, you can access this section of the GESS website).

## 4. Working at the GESS

### 4.1. Office space

All CDSB doctoral students are provided with a shared office space. Your office space is equipped with a desk and cabinet, a whiteboard, a phone, and a laptop with the following software:

- Windows 10
- Microsoft Office
- Adobe Reader
- LaTeX

### 4.2. Office supplies

The GESS provides some office materials, which can be obtained from the team assistant [Marion Lehnert](#) during office hours. Books for personal use cannot be financed by the GESS.

### 4.3. IT- Support

For IT related question or to install free-of-charge software on your laptop, please contact our IT administrator [Patrick Schmitt](#) (☎ extension -2235). Further information is available in the [GESS intranet](#).<sup>1</sup>

### 4.4. Making phone calls

To make an in-house call (within the university), just dial the respective 4-digit number (e.g. -2034 for the GESS team assistant). These calls are free of charge. For external calls please dial:

- ‘0’ for work related calls and ‘81’ for private calls

A monthly invoice for your private calls will be issued by central administration. All official calls are sent to the GESS on a monthly itemized invoice stating all numbers called.

### 4.5. Sending and receiving mail

- **Internal mail:** Please use the brown paper envelopes available from the GESS office or at the university’s post office.
- **External mail (for work related mail only):** Please contact the GESS office.

Mail for CDSB students will be delivered by the university’s postal service. Always include “Universität Mannheim, GESS” in the address field.

### 4.6. Libraries

Also known as “UB” (short for ‘Universitätsbibliothek’), the Mannheim University Library system consists of different libraries:

Library	Specialty	Loan period for registered GESS students
Schneckenhof (South entry)	InfoCenter for library, IT and ecUM; Learning Center	Laptops: 7 days Tablets, e-book readers: 14 days (renewals may be possible)
Schneckenhof (South entry)	Business Studies	One semester (renewals may be possible)
Ehrenhof	Economics, Accounting & Taxation, Law, History, Geography; Training classroom	One semester (renewals may be possible)
A3	Psychology, Psychological tests, Multimedia collection, Languages	One semester (renewals may be possible)

<sup>1</sup> You can access this subpage of the GESS website once you are enrolled.



A5	Sociology, Political Science, Mathematics, Computer Science	One semester (renewals may be possible)
Ehrenhof West (Central Lending Library)	Textbooks for all disciplines, pick up desk for books from the closed stacks and inter-library loans	28 days (no renewals!)

Please check the [UB's](#) web page for the current opening hours. All books, journals and databases of the libraries can be searched in the [library catalog](#).

The UB offers introductory sessions for GESS students and courses on citation management tools, authorship workshops, etc. Furthermore, you can use the publication platforms of the library:

- MADOC for (working) papers, articles, and your doctoral thesis and
- MADATA for your research data.

Subject librarian for Business Studies is [Lorena Steeb](#).

#### 4.7. Research Data Service Center

The goal of the research data service center is to support researchers at the University of Mannheim in generating, preparing, and using data for empirical research. The center provides technical consulting and support for all aspects of research data acquisition, management, analysis, and archiving. The thematic focus is on business and social sciences. The services of the center, however, can be used by all employees of the university. [Check their homepage](#).

## 5. Studying in Mannheim for International Students – Before your arrival

### 5.1. International students: visa and entry requirements for Germany

A visa may be required to enter Germany. Please check the homepage of the [Federal Foreign Office](#) for all further information. If you require a visa, you must apply for it in person while still in your home country (or your country of residence).

Please make an appointment at the embassy as early as possible and keep in mind that it can take weeks to get one. It may then take another 6-8 weeks to get the visa, so please apply for it as soon as possible. The [Welcome Center](#) web page contains all relevant information. The Center Manager will provide you with a visa support letter and other complementary documents.

### 5.2. International students: Welcome Center of the University of Mannheim

The [Welcome Center](#) is the central consultation and service point for international researchers at the University of Mannheim. In cooperation with the Center Managers of the GESS, they are happy to assist you in organizing your arrival in Mannheim. They will send you a 'check-in questionnaire' in preparation for the Orientation Days, exact dates to be announced closer to the time.

## 6. Studying in Mannheim – After your arrival

### 6.1. Enrollment

All doctoral candidates **must** enroll at the University of Mannheim\* **and** the Dean's office of the Business School.

Your Center Manager will provide you with all the necessary documents before the start of the term.

**Registration** as a doctoral candidate at the Business School is mandatory. Detailed information is available on the [website](#).

\*) Doctoral candidates employed by the University of Mannheim on work contracts of 50% or more (based on a full-time position and according to the Collective Agreement for Public Service Employees of the German Länder (TV-L)) have the option to choose whether to enroll or be exempted from enrollment.

### 6.2. ecUM

The ecUM (electronic card of the University of Mannheim) is your uni ID card. It can be charged for payment in the e.g. cafeteria, will give you access to the GESS offices and other university buildings out of hours and will serve as your public transport ticket. Please note that from autumn 2024 onwards, the Semesterticket is no longer offered (negotiations for a new Semesterticket valid in all of Germany are still ongoing). Alternatively, students up to 27 can buy the D-Ticket JugendBW (currently 365€/year). If you're not under 27 anymore, the Deutschlandticket (currently 49€/month) might be an option worth considering. Both allow using local transportation (local trains, busses, metro) in all of Germany.

The ecUM will be issued by the Info Center (at library Schneckenhof). Do not forget to bring your passport and letter of acceptance as a GESS doctoral student when picking it up.

For more information on how to obtain and activate the ecUM, please refer to this [website](#).

## 7. Living in Mannheim

### 7.1. Flat hunting

You will find in depth information about the Mannheim housing market on the web page of the [Welcome Center](#).

The following neighborhoods are particularly popular among international researchers given their proximity to the university:

- Innenstadt (Inner City)/Quadrat/City
- Schwetzingen Vorstadt
- Lindenhof
- Neckarstadt-Ost
- Oststadt

However, due to their central locations, rent in these neighborhoods will be more expensive. Neighborhoods such as e.g. Almenhof, Neckarau, Neuostheim, Feudenheim, Waldhof, Käfertal are well connected via public transport and worth considering as well.

The GESS has reserved a limited number of rooms in shared student accommodation for international doctoral students. Please contact the Center Manager if you are interested in one of these. You have the possibility to apply directly for student accommodation [online](#) in case all of the GESS rooms are allocated already.

Should you arrive in Mannheim before you can move into your apartment, the youth hostel offers (shared) rooms at a reasonable price:

[Jugendherberge](#)

Rheinpromenade 21

68163 Mannheim

☎ +49-621-822718

Fax: +49-621-824073

## 7.2. Health insurance

Germany has a complex social security system. Yet, as a scholarship holder, you are excluded from enrollment in the social insurance system. However, doctoral students must get their own (private) health insurance and insure themselves “voluntarily” if they receive a scholarship. They cannot be insured as regular students. Some insurance companies have special offers for doctoral students. In order to enroll in private health insurance, you will need to have a German Bank Account first (see 7.7).

International students may also refer to the Welcome Center for [further information on the topic Health Insurance](#). Full information will be provided during the orientation program offered by the Welcome Center before the semester start.

International students please note: Health insurance coverage is required from your first day in Germany. However, insurance coverage associated with a doctoral program begins only on your first day of enrollment. Consequently, for the time between your arrival and the first day of enrollment, we recommend enrolling in a travel health insurance, which you can obtain in your home country.

## 7.3. Personal liability insurance (Haftpflichtversicherung)

The GESS strongly recommends that all doctoral students take out personal liability insurance. In Germany, anyone can be held responsible for accidental damages inflicted upon a third party.

More [information on personal liability insurance](#) is provided by the Welcome Center.

#### 7.4. To Do for non-EU International Students I – Residence Permit from Foreigners' Office

The Welcome Center Team will assist new doctoral students with obtaining a residence permit during the orientation meeting before classes start in September. You will find all necessary information [here](#).

Non-EU students need to register with the German authorities ('Ausländerbehörde'/Foreigners Office) to get a residence permit. The Foreigner's Office is located in K7 (☎ +49-621-293-3221). Please note that non-EU students need to get a residence permit within 90 days of arrival – even if they have a visa!

- Do not allow your residence permit to expire and apply for an extension well in advance (8 weeks).
- The Welcome Center will help you whenever you need to go to the Foreigners Office.

#### 7.5. To Do for International Students II – Registration with City Authorities

Within the first week of your arrival in Mannheim, you must register your address with the authorities ('Meldepflicht'). You will find all necessary information [here](#).

#### 7.6. To Do for International Students III – Open Bank Account

In order to receive your scholarship/salary and pay your bills, you will need to open a German bank account. Follow the [link](#) provided by the Welcome Center to learn more about banking in Germany.

### 8. Miscellaneous

#### 8.1. Gender and Diversity

At the GESS we celebrate the diverse backgrounds and ideas of our students and believe that these are the key to taking full advantage of human potential in all its facets. We closely cooperate with the University Department of Gender Equality and Social Diversity to create, embed, and continually develop sustainable equal opportunity structures.

The Gender and Diversity Committee is accompanying and monitoring our efforts to ensure that the GESS remains sensitive to matters relating to gender and diversity.

Further details as well as a list of committee members can be found on the web page of the [Gender and Diversity Committee](#).

#### 8.2. Parents and children

The university has been certified as a family-friendly work and study environment ('Familiengerechte Hochschule').

Childcare services provided by the University are:

- The 'Kinderhaus' is part of the 'Studierendenwerk Mannheim' and currently offers 84 places for children between the ages of 1 and 6.
- The University of Mannheim and the Collaborative Research Center 884 offer a parent-child-office (in B6, 30-32), which can be used for self-organized caretaking.

### 8.3 Welcome Center German Language Courses

Every semester, the Welcome Center, in cooperation with the Service- und Marketing GmbH - DaF, offers German language courses exclusively for international scholars. Classes take place twice a week during the semester.

Consult the following [website](#) for up-to-date information on German language courses.

## 9. Get in contact

Your contact persons for academic questions are your mentor (assigned at beginning of the program), your supervisor (after the second year) and the Academic Director of the CDSB.

In case of questions or problems on the administrative side, please contact either the

- CDSB Center Manager Dr. Sophia Sonja Guthier  
[cdsb.gess@uni-mannheim.de](mailto:cdsb.gess@uni-mannheim.de); Tel: 2033; B6, 30-32, room 243

or

- GESS team assistant Marion Lehnert  
[gess.office@uni-mannheim.de](mailto:gess.office@uni-mannheim.de); ext. 2034; B6, 30-32, room 253

Make sure to also subscribe to the newsletter for doctoral students of the Business School of the University of Mannheim and receive offers for workshops, professional trainings, and events. Register [here](#).