



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANNHEIM

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GESS – Graduate School of  
Economic and Social Sciences

Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and  
Behavioral Sciences

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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 are 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 disciplines of business, economics and social sciences into a coherent curriculum, making it one of the few graduate schools worldwide that fosters the exchange of ideas, methods and research-approaches across the boundaries of the economic and social sciences. It 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 Social and Behavioral Sciences (CDSS)

The CDSS is providing an English-taught doctoral program in political science, psychology, social data science and sociology.

The CDSS collaborates with several research institutions:

- The [Mannheim Center for European Social Research](#) (MZES) - as the university's largest research institute, the MZES is dedicated to the study of European societies and political systems,
- The [Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences](#) (GESIS) and the [Central Institute of Mental Health](#) (ZI).

### 1.3. Financial support

The CDSS guarantees funding for three years. CDSS students usually obtain a GESS scholarship during the first year. During the subsequent two 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) or
- (2) by a personal external scholarship.

The ongoing financial support depends on the successful completion of the first year.

An annual research & travel budget of €300 (subject to change without prior notice) is foreseen for the duration of the program. The CDSS encourages students to present their work at top international conferences. However, participation at congresses, workshops, summer schools, research stays, and some research activities such as e.g. incentives for participants in interviews or experiments can be reimbursed as well, if in doubt check with the Center Manager.

In addition to the CDSS travel support, the University of Mannheim also offers several travel grants to international conferences, summer schools and for research stays and we encourage you to actively seek support from other sources as well. Check out the university's [going abroad](#) support options as well as a [travel allowance](#) specifically for attending conferences in Germany.

## 2. The program

The first year is dedicated largely to taking advanced courses and developing your dissertation proposal. Once you pass the required first year core courses and the dissertation proposal gets accepted by the CDSS Admission and Assessment Committee ([AAC](#)), you are admitted as a doctoral candidate for a further two years.

At the beginning of the first year, each student is assigned a member of the School of Social Sciences (or affiliated institutes) as a mentor. The mentor's role is to advise the student in the first year of studies with respect to courses and the development of the dissertation project. In most cases the first-year mentor will become the thesis supervisor. Sometimes a thesis supervisor leaves the university before completion of the dissertation. Please get in contact with the Center Manager or the respective program director to discuss any questions that might arise out of this situation.

At the beginning of the first year, 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 three-year CDSS doctoral program. You will obtain a personalized version from the Center Manager.

The complete study regulations document is [available online](#).

### 2.1 Publications

Make sure to enter your publications (articles, working papers, conference presentations) into the university library's online repository [MADOC](#) and **tag** your **Center** and the **GESS** so that your publications are displayed on your student profile.

### 2.2 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. Courses requirements and course recognition

#### 3.1. Course and exam registration

Register via [Portal2](#) for all mandatory and elective courses as well as the corresponding exams. Please refer to the [FAQs](#) for Portal 2 as well as the general introduction to the [study planer](#) for more information. The study planer is currently only available in German and should be available soon. Please use e.g. the Mozilla Firefox's translation tool in the meantime.

#### 3.2. Course requirements

To successfully pass the program, 180 ECTS points must be accomplished, of which 90 ECTS points are allocated for submission and defense of the doctoral thesis.

A detailed list of ECTS credit points required and assigned to courses/modules as well as grade tables is set out in the appendix of the applicable [study regulations](#).

##### **Bridge course**

Choose a course offered by CDSB and CDSE or from a different CDSS discipline. Please discuss your choice with your mentor first and inform the Center Manger accordingly. At its best a bridge course should offer a new methodological and/or theoretical input in reference to the chosen research topic.

##### **English Academic Writing course**

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

#### 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 CDSS curriculum. The evaluations are anonymous.

#### 3.4. Dissertation

After the successful completion of the course program and the thesis defense you will be awarded the degree *doctor rerum socialium* (Dr. rer. soc.).

Details about the thesis submission and defense process are set out in the [regulations and procedures governing the doctoral dissertation](#).

#### 3.5. Studying abroad

After the completion of the course program students have the possibility to do part of their research abroad either at one of the partner universities of the School of Social Sciences or through contacts established by their supervisor.

Alternatively, [ENGAGE.EU](#) offers various (block) courses at several universities across Europe. [Erasmus+ grants](#) are an option to fund these short-term stays (5-30 days).

### 3.6. Course recognition

Courses completed during your master's can be recognized against elective and some mandatory CDSS course requirements. What is expected in each program is set out in the subject specific attachments of the [CDSS study regulations](#). For this purpose, please make sure to bring course descriptions/syllabi of the Master courses you would like recognized. Courses that serve the preparation of the master's thesis as well as master foundation courses will not be considered.

## 4. Working at the GESS

### 4.1. Office space

All CDSS doctoral students are provided with shared office space be it in the GESS building or at the chair. Your office space is equipped with a desk and cabinet, a whiteboard, a phone and a laptop with the following software:

- Windows 11
- Office 365
- Adobe Reader

### 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 questions or to install free-of-charge software on your laptop, please contact our IT administrator [Patrick Schmitt](#) (☎ extension -2235).

### 4.4. Sending and receiving snail 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 see the GESS team assistant.

Mail for CDSS students will be delivered by the university's postal service. Always include "University of Mannheim, GESS" in the address field.

## 4.5. Libraries

Also known as “UB” (“Universitätsbibliothek”). The Mannheim University library system consists of different libraries:

Library	Specialty	Loan period for registered GESS students
Schneckenhof (South entry)	InfoCenter (issues uni ID card), Learning Center, Borrowing Mobile Devices	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)
A5	Sociology, Political Science, Mathematics, Informatics	One semester (renewals may be possible)
Westflügel (Central Lending Library)	Literature on all disciplines, pick up desk for books from the closed stacks and inter-library loans	28 days (renewals may be possible)

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 and your Doctoral thesis and MADATA for your research data.

Subject librarian for all three programs is [Dr. Hendrik Platte](#).

## 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.

## 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. Registration as a doctoral candidate and enrollment

**Registration as a doctoral candidate** at the School of Social Sciences is mandatory. The CDSS Center Manager will assist you with the process and send all relevant information before the start of the term.

All doctoral candidates must enroll at the University of Mannheim.

BUT 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 possibility 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 and will give you access to university buildings out of office hours. The ecUM will be issued by the Info Center (at library Schneckenhof). Don't 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](#).

### 7.2. Getting around Mannheim and Germany

Students up to the age of 27 can buy the [D-Ticket JugendBW](#) (currently 540€/year). For everybody else the 'Deutschlandticket' (currently 63€/month) might be an option worth considering. Both allow the use of local transport (local trains, buses, tram, metro) in all of Germany. Once you're on a university work contract the '[Deutschlandticket Job](#)' is an option.

### 7.3. Health insurance

Please refer to the Welcome Center for all [information](#). Full information will be provided during the orientation program offered by the Welcome Center before the semester starts.

### 7.4. 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.

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

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

Non-EU students must register with German authorities ('Ausländerbehörde'/Foreigners Office) to get a residence permit. The Foreigner's Office is in K7 (☎ +49-621-293-3221). Non-EU students must obtain a residence permit within 90 days of arrival, even if they have a valid visa.

#### **Please note that it is your responsibility to:**

- Keep track of your residence permit and apply for an extension well in advance of its expiry date.
- Inform the Welcome Center of any changes to your contract.
- Notify the Welcome Center promptly of any changes to your status, such as the successful defence of your thesis.

### 7.6. 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').

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

To receive your scholarship/salary and pay your bills, you will need to open a [German bank account](#).

## 8. Miscellaneous

### 8.1. Gender & 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 [Department of Equal Opportunity and 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 & 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 offers a [parent-child-office](#) as well as a [nursing room](#) (both in B6, 30-32).

### 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.

## 9. Get in contact

- Marion Lehnert GESS team assistant (gess.office@uni-mannheim.de; ext. 2034; B6, 30-32 – room 253)
- Stefanie Thye & Milanka Stojković CDSS Center Managers (cdss.gess@uni-mannheim.de; ext. 2053; B6, 30-32 – room 252)