

# DRAFT CURRICULUM

of the International Doctorate Program “Business and Human Rights: Governance Challenges in a Complex World (B&HR\_Governance)”

funded by the Elite Network of Bavaria

subject to further planning

## 1 Curriculum

### 1.1 Content and teaching formats of the curriculum accompanying the doctorate

The IDP distinguishes between different competencies necessary to enable the doctoral researchers to take a multi-perspective, holistic view on their research project. To this end, the IDP will offer a comprehensive curriculum aimed at the required skills and knowledge, including ethical considerations. The core curriculum is divided into four modules covering five semesters. Unless stated otherwise, participation in the events and activities of Module 1–4 is compulsory for all doctoral researchers. The sessions will allow for digital participation, but the physical presence of the participants is preferred. Semesters six to eight are mainly reserved for completing the doctoral thesis supported by peer-coaching and the individual supervisors.

#### ***Continuous event formats: monthly jour fixe and regular research retreats***

To create a learning space that provides continuity in form and flexibility in content, the curriculum builds upon a *monthly jour fixe* and regular *research retreats*.

The monthly jour fixe comprises two parts: the *IDP research event* and the IDP social event. The former focuses on scientific issues and evolves from an initially PI-led form to a platform mainly shaped by the doctoral researchers in terms of content, guests, and moderation. In particular, it may provide a forum for presenting draft papers, practicing conference presentations, or discussing reviewer comments. In contrast, the *IDP social event* as the second part of the monthly jour fixe will bring the members of the IDP – doctoral researchers and PIs – together in a more informal setting, enabling team building, social networking, and exchange about (scientific and daily life) problems and challenges.

At the end of semesters 1, 2, 3 and 5 (and on demand in semesters 6 and 7), an end-of-term *research retreat* will take place off-campus, preferably at the facilities of one of the three partner universities. It will provide a space for reflecting on personal progress, focused work sessions, and social interaction.

These recurring formats will provide a supportive environment to the doctoral students while leaving them enough space for developing their projects, fostering a climate of participation and ownership. In addition, specific *focus courses* provide specialized content for four modules that focus on specific competence fields. As visualized by Figure 1 (see below), however, all four competence dimensions are relevant throughout the entire course of the IDP programme.

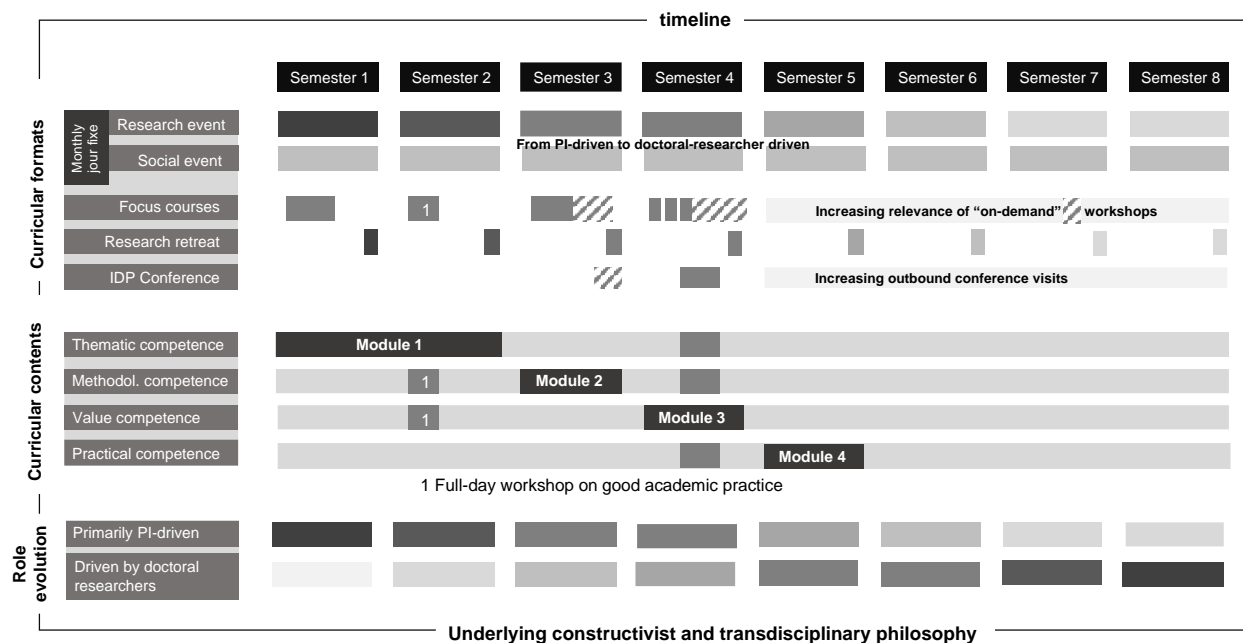


Figure 1: Curricular design in terms of structure, content, and philosophy

**Module 1 (semester 1 + semester 2): Thematic competence**

Giving special consideration to B&HR as a thematic field, Module 1 introduces the key concepts and ideas as well as the history, and theories relevant to the themes of the IDP. It will also cover basic research approaches in law, social science, and management. In Module 1, the PIs, in their function as scientific experts, will be mainly responsible for the presentation of contents and the moderation of discussions. Module 1 comprises the following elements:

Intensive focus course “The complex research field of B&HR Governance”

In a three-day-intensive course at the beginning of the first semester, the doctoral researchers will receive an introduction to key topics of the IDP to be sensitised for the complexity of the research field. This includes questions related to business and human rights, concepts, and theories of corporate and global governance as well as foundations of business ethics and CSR. A short overview of research methods and approaches will facilitate the start of self-directed research activities pursued by the doctoral researchers. The course will be designed by the PIs together with other, preferably international experts.

A full-day workshop on standards of good academic practice

This workshop takes place in semester 2 to give them a sound understanding of good academic research practices and show them the relevance for and ways of implementation in their research project. It will be held by experts on good academic practice from the participating universities.

Monthly jour fixe: research event in the form of an expert lecture (and IDP social event)

In the research event, *expert lectures* will shed light on specific aspects of the IDP's thematic fields and create a space for critical discussion. The lectures will be held by the PIs or invited experts

from academia, business, and political/legal practice. Videoconferencing and other digital formats such as online seminars will “open the door” for interacting with external experts and their specific perspective on the topics at hand.

### Research retreats

The doctoral researchers will present and critically reflect the contents covered so far and give a presentation on their projects, including the key research question they want to tackle, the scientific gap they want to fill, and the research approach they wish to adopt.

### ***Module 2 (semester 3): Methodological competence***

Focussing on methodological questions, Module 2 will centre on the actual process of conducting research and writing a doctoral thesis. It will acquaint researchers with a deeper understanding of the different research approaches, legal and social science methods, and data analysis. The main objective is to raise awareness for the various facets and concepts of disciplinary, inter- and transdisciplinary research. Module 2 is composed of the following specific elements:

#### Intensive focus course “Research approaches to B&HR Governance”

Module 2 will also start with a three-day-intensive course providing more in-depth insights into disciplinary methods and interdisciplinary approaches. This includes, in particular, a juxtaposition of hermeneutical research as the main method of legal research and empirical (quantitative and qualitative) research methods common in the social sciences. PIs and invited experts will showcase the practical application of different methods, their contributions, and challenges. Doctoral researchers will present and discuss the research methods they intend to apply in their projects.

#### Voluntary “on demand” intensive workshops (to be continued throughout the IDP programme)

As both the methodologies and academic writing and communication skills will differ among the doctoral researchers, intensive “on demand” workshops will be offered to provide problem-tailored support. To avoid a “one size fits all”-approach, the doctoral researchers will organise themselves in small groups, define their particular support needs, and invite suitable experts. The “on demand” workshops are thus researcher-driven, target specific skills, and bring together candidates with intersecting research issues.

#### Monthly jour fixe

To strengthen the academic presentation skills and independence of the doctoral candidates, the monthly lecture of Module 1 will be replaced by a *research colloquium* mainly self-organised and moderated by the doctoral researchers. In the course of the colloquium, every doctoral researcher will present their project once. The supervisors of the respective researchers participate in the presentation to give individual feedback on the research progress and their presentation skills. Again, digital forms of exchange may facilitate the virtual integration of experts from abroad.

### ***Module 3 (semester 4): Value competence***

Module 3 exposes the doctoral researchers to the political, ethical, and societal debates relevant to their research projects and invites them to critically reflect their role as researchers. In addition to the monthly Jour fixe and the research retreat, it will include three all-day training sessions on a) research ethics, b) intercultural competence, and c) gender and diversity competence. External trainers will offer the sessions. Doctoral researchers will participate in at least two sessions.

Semester 4 ends with an international multi-disciplinary conference of two days mainly organised by the doctoral researchers. They may invite international scholars and experts in the areas of the respective projects and act as commentators or discussion leaders. As appropriate, they may have the chance to present preliminary results of the doctoral projects to a wider audience using social media and methods of science-to-public presentation. To increase international visibility and lower participation barriers, the conference will blend on-site and virtual elements.

### ***Module 4 (semester 5): Practical competence***

Given the IDP's transdisciplinary dimension, Module 4 is dedicated to the self-directed cooperation with practice partners and a reflection on the practical relevance of the research. At a time when the doctoral researchers have already made some progress in their research, Module 4 encourages them also to gain some practical experience and to create networks with partners from legal, political, and business practice. Module 4 has three functions: Firstly, it allows doctoral candidates to reflect on their preliminary research results in terms of their relevance and viability in practice. Secondly, it stimulates the transfer of knowledge into practice and acquaints them with the challenges of research communication. Finally, it creates an opportunity to explore possible career options outside of academia and to establish relevant contacts.

In addition to the IDP Jour fixe and research retreat, Module 4 focuses on *practical experiences*. Depending on their preferences and academic/professional interests, the doctoral researchers can choose between different formats for developing practical competences. One way of gaining practical experience is to join one of the innovative practice-led human rights teaching formats at FAU such as the FAU Human Rights Talks and the FAU Human Rights Clinic.

### ***Semesters 6 to 8: Finalisation of the doctoral project***

The last three semesters will be used by the doctoral researchers to finalise the writing process of their doctoral thesis in the time frame agreed with their supervisors. The Jour fixe will continue to provide on-demand support and provide a social and research forum. While acknowledging different disciplinary cultures, e.g., in terms of publication forms (monography, cumulative), all doctoral researchers are expected to finalise their project until the end of the fourth year. Support and guidance will be offered to achieve this goal. However, earlier completion is also possible. At the end of the fourth year, the IDP will host a second international conference allowing its doctoral researchers to present their final results and inviting international experts as commentators.

#### **1.2 Voluntary teaching formats**

The doctoral researchers will also be invited to join and organise guest lectures, thematic workshops and training sessions, excursions, practical trainings as well as summer or winter schools on a voluntary basis.

#### **1.3 National and international academic networking**

The academic network building combines in-bound and out-bound activities. In terms of in-bound networking, the IDP will invite three visiting researchers per year for up to three months to participate in research colloquia, give guest lectures, and engage in an intense exchange with the doctoral researchers. Furthermore, modules 1-4 of the curriculum include different opportunities for the doctoral researchers to get in touch with relevant experts and to build national and international networks in academia and practice. The doctoral researchers of the IDP will play a key role in selecting and inviting the visiting researcher as well as speakers and participants for the monthly research event and the IDP conference. For the conference and the monthly lecture, both on-site and virtual formats will be an option.

In terms of out-bound networking, the IDP will facilitate and encourage research stays for its doctoral researchers at cooperating international institutions. Depending on their research topic, doctoral candidates will be explicitly encouraged to consider and establish contacts with partners in the Global South. In addition, the IDP will support researchers in presenting their research at international conferences. Out-bound networking will help doctoral researchers in broadening their perspective, fostering independence, and enhancing their professional visibility.