

International  
Institute of  
Social Studies



International Institute of Social Studies  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

**PHD PROGRAMME  
IN  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

*Updated 11 January 2019*



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## 1. Introduction

The International Institute of Social Studies is a postgraduate school of policy-oriented social science whose diverse activities include teaching, interdisciplinary research and advisory work in the field of development studies. ISS offers a four-year programme leading to the internationally recognized degree of Doctor, issued by the Erasmus University.

The ISS PhD Programme is part of the Erasmus Graduate School of Social Sciences and the Humanities (EGSH) of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

This Academic Calendar for the PhD programme provides an overview of the PhD programme in Development Studies at ISS, leading to a doctorate degree of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

The Academic Calendar is published on the ISS website. Updates will be clearly announced to the PhD community.

## 2. Learning objectives of the ISS PhD-Programme

Researchers who have completed the ISS PhD programme:

- have demonstrated a systematic understanding of the interdisciplinary field of development studies and mastery of the skills and methods associated with this field;
- have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;
- have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national and international refereed publication;
- are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
- can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;
- have demonstrated the ability to cooperate with other researchers in a team;
- will promote, within academic and professional contexts, technical, social and cultural advancement in a knowledge-based society;
- will uphold the ethos of good scientific research and apply in all their scientific activities the principles of scrupulousness, reliability, verifiability, impartiality and independence.

## 3. Embedding in ISS Research groups

ISS has one overarching Research Programme: Global Development and Social Justice. Within this framework there are four research groups. The research groups function as an intellectual base for academic staff members and PhD candidates; they provide spaces where researchers can work out parts of the overall ISS research agenda in a collaborative way and maintain direct relationships with the PhD candidates working in the same sub-field. Inter-group collaboration is stimulated and takes place, including joint publishing.

The ISS also promotes collaborative work across groups and through cross-cutting themes. For that reason, some PhD candidates also work across research groups.

### **Civic Innovation**

Civic Innovation is a group of international scholar-activists committed to social justice. The objective of this group is to scale up, profile and synergise cutting-edge research on civic innovation. By combining expertise from different disciplines, they work towards progressive social change. Through published work and project partnerships, they aim to explore and generate social action. In their research, they are co-creating diverse forms of knowledges together with people and communities. This allows the group to continuously expand their expertise and ensures the societal relevance of their research.

### **Development Economics**

The major research concerns of this programme are the social, political and economic conditions required to make the transition to a higher level of economic and human development and, in turn, the effect of this transition on the global poor.

This theme is studied by integrating insights from microeconomic and macroeconomic research focused on high quality publications, a variety of theoretical perspectives and empirically tested with state-of-the-art econometric techniques.

## **Governance, Law and Social Justice**

This group aims to produce internationally leading, socially committed and societally relevant research outcomes on issues of governance from an explicitly social justice perspective. More concretely, research performed by members of the group studies how and to what extent particular governance arrangements help or hinder the achievement of goals of social justice.

The research group builds on the strong ISS tradition of research in the areas of politics, public administration, public policy and international law, but is committed to cutting across disciplinary boundaries. The research group relates organically with the third 'leg' of ISS' activities related to valorization of research, in particular through capacity development activities in the global South.

## **Political Ecology**

The Political Ecology research group investigates the ways in which resource scarcities are created and contested, particularly in contexts of unequal access, poverty and social exclusion. Within the framework of climate change and environmental, food and energy crises, the emergence of new hubs of global capital, and demographic transitions, the group pays particular attention to how agrarian, food and environmental policies shape the political economy of rural areas and their social policies, population and gender dynamics.

This translates to the group's interrelated concerns in:

- land, water, food, energy, biodiversity and extractive industries; processes of generational transition, in relation to children and youth;
- changing forms of poverty, vulnerability and exclusion (amongst others from a gender perspective) in the context of population transitions such as migration and urbanization; and
- recent initiatives around popular alternatives such as food sovereignty and agro-ecology.

## **4. Structure of the PhD Programme**

The ISS PhD programme has a nominal duration of four years<sup>1</sup> and usually follows four distinct phases:

### 1. Laying the groundwork

The programme begins with the preparation of a Training and Supervisory Plan (TSP). This plan describes the supervisory team, the necessary coursework, deadlines for monitoring seminars, the envisaged supervision schedule and arrangements. The first important milestone is the Dissertation Design Seminar, which is normally held within nine to twelve months after the registration date. On the basis of the seminar the researcher's capabilities are assessed and a decision is taken about continuing the programme. PhD candidates who have completed the Dissertation Design Seminar successfully may start with phase 2.

### 2. Collecting data and/or developing the theoretical argument or narrative

During this phase researchers collect their data and/or further develop their theoretical argument or narrative. This (fieldwork) period takes between nine months and one year. This phase is finalized with a Mid-Term Seminar.

### 3. Producing results

After completing the fieldwork, and/or developing the theoretical argument or narrative, the PhD candidate returns to ISS and continues work with intensive thinking and writing in consultation with the supervisors. This phase normally takes one and a half years, and results in a Full Draft Dissertation Seminar. If this seminar is completed successfully, the RDC approves the final manuscript and the PhD candidate can proceed to the next phase.

### 4. Getting the PhD

The PhD Dissertation is assessed by, first, the Doctoral Sub-Committee and next, the Full Doctoral Committee during the final four to six months of the programme. On approval by the Doctoral Sub-Committee, the candidate is given permission to defend the thesis during a public ceremony in front of the Full Doctoral Committee. After a successful public defence, the EUR-ISS PhD Degree is awarded.

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<sup>1</sup> It is also possible to do the PhD part time. In the part time option PhD candidates should spend minimally 26 hours/week; the nominal duration is 6 years.

In common practice the phasing of the ISS PhD programme is more or less according to the following schedule. This is, however, an indication and not a rule.

*Structure of the PhD programme*

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Laying the groundwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory Programme</li> <li>• Training and Supervisory Plan</li> <li>• Coursework (ISS, CERES Research School and/or EGSH Graduate School)</li> <li>• Dissertation Design Seminar</li> </ul>			
	Collecting data (e.g. during fieldwork) and/or developing the theoretical argument or narrative		
		Producing Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysing results</li> <li>• Mid-Term Seminar</li> <li>• Contribution as referent in PhD seminars</li> </ul>	
			Getting the PhD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing the Dissertation</li> <li>• Full Draft Dissertation Seminar</li> <li>• Public Defence</li> </ul>

### PhD Curriculum: 240 EC

To be able to monitor the progress ISS has divided the whole PhD programme in a programme of 240 EC<sup>2</sup>. All milestones and relevant coursework on offer has been "translated" into a "course" in Osiris, with a specific code and a specific weight.

All PhDs are enrolled in our PhD in Development Studies, but we have two slightly different Exam Programmes:

- for "regular" PhD candidates
- for PhDs with a fellowship in the framework of the "*Experiment Promotiestudent*".

Phase	What	# EC for PhD Researchers	# EC for Experiment PhD students
1	Training and supervisory plan	2	2
	Obligatory Skills Courses	5.5	5.5
	Skills courses – choice	2.5	2.5
	Research courses - choice	16	16
	Content courses – choice	8	8
	Career preparation courses	-	8
	Dissertation Design Seminar	26	18
2	Collecting data/ developing narrative/ fieldwork	60	60
3	Midterm seminar	20	20
	Referent in Monitoring Seminars	5	5
4	Full Draft Seminar	75	75
	Thesis Submission	20	20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>240</b>

There is a separate [Annex](#) with Rules and Regulations regulating the ISS PhD programme.

<sup>2</sup> An EC is a measure for time spent by students. 1 EC represents 28 hours of student activity. A good student would need to invest 60 EC per year to succeed.

## Milestones and pre-conditions

The milestones and pre-conditions are:

- Training and Supervisory Plan;  
This plan contains agreements on:
  - course work of the PhD candidate,
  - deadlines for the monitoring seminars, Fieldwork, and the Public Defence,
  - the supervision time-line,
  - the division of labour of the supervisory team,
  - the scientific Integrity workshop, including the signing of the [Declaration of Scientific Integrity](#).The form for the Training and Supervisory Plan (TSP-Form) is added as Annex 1.
- Three important milestones, the Monitoring Seminars:
  - [Dissertation Design Seminar](#) (DDS);
  - [Midterm seminar](#) (MTS);
  - [Full Draft Seminar](#) (FDS);
- Participating as referent in monitoring seminars.
- Fieldwork (data collection) or development of a theoretical argument or narrative;
- Thesis submission.

## PhD Coursework

The coursework is divided in categories:

- Skills courses:
  - Obligatory skills courses
  - Skills courses – free choice
- Research courses
- Career preparation courses
- Content courses.

Courses can be selected from the course offerings at ISS, [CERES](#) (development research across the Netherlands) and [EGSH](#) (the Erasmus University graduate school of social sciences and humanities). More details are specified in the TSP form (added as Annex).

## Onboarding

In the first week after the registration in the ISS PhD programme, the candidate should contact the PhD Support Team. They will provide all necessary information. An introduction to ISS is organized, preferably in a small group; otherwise individualized.

- General briefing on the PhD programme;
- First contact with the Supervisory Team and preparation of the [Training and Supervisory Plan](#) (TSP)
- Practical information about life at ISS and in The Hague, the Welfare Office, medical doctors, sports activities, emergency and safety procedures at ISS;
- Introductions to Library Services, and the ISS registration and support systems;
- Information on the Academic Integrity policy;
- Information on courses; including registration.

After the start the Training and Supervisory Plan is the guide for the PHD candidate for the whole programme. Any changes have to be discussed with the supervisors. The PhD Support Team has to be kept informed of all changes.

## Public Defence

The final phase in the PhD trajectory is the Public Defence. The defence will be organized in The Hague, but the regulations in the [EUR Promotion protocol](#) prevail. The degree (in Latin) will state that it is an Erasmus University doctorate and will have the logo of ISS on the document. An English translation will be added.

## Cooperation Agreements

For double and joint PhD degrees ISS always has to provide a specific collaboration contract and/or cotutelle agreement

## **5. Contribution to Policy and strategy of ISS by PhD representatives**

PhD candidates are represented in official committees like the Research Degrees Committee (RDC), the Research Committee (RC) and the Institute Council (IC).

### **Institute Council**

The IC is the representative body of the Institute's staff and students. It has the right of approval, advice and other rights on matters specifically related to the Institute and to competences delegated to the Rector, including matters provided for under the Dutch Law on Higher Education and the Erasmus University Rotterdam Rules & Regulations. The Institute Council consists of 10 members, 6 staff members (at least 2 of which are support staff and 2 faculty), 2 MA students and 2 PhD candidates.

Staff members are elected for a period of 3 years starting at 1 September. Student members and PhD candidates are elected for a period of one year (1 December - 30 November), which for the PhD candidates is renewable for one period.

### **Research Degrees Committee**

RDC is responsible for the PhD programme at ISS. It takes care of admitting PhD students, assigning supervisory teams, offering training courses through CERES and ISS, monitoring the progress that PhD students make through three monitoring seminars over a period of three years, and quality assessment of the dissertation before it is admitted to the PhD defense procedure of Erasmus University.

There are also general meeting of the whole PhD community. More information can be found via the PhD communication platform.

### **Research Committee**

The RC is an advisory committee to the Institute Board on all matters pertaining to research. The Deputy Rector Research is the chair of the Research Committee (RC). The RC consists of a representative from each Research group, the Chair RDC and a representative of the PhD candidates (appointed by the Rector for a period of one year). The policy advisor Research has a standing invitation.

## **6. Annexes**

Specific information is added in Annexes:

### **Rules & Regulations PhD Programme in Development Studies**

### **Training and Supervisory Plan form**

### **Declaration of Scientific Integrity**

### **Declaration of Co-authorship**

### **List of ISS professors**

The latest version of these annexes is available via the ISS internet.