

Call for Applications

DFG-Research Training Group (RTG)

„Urban Future – managing transformations for a better health in blue cities“

10 doctoral research positions (all genders)

in the interdisciplinary field of urban health

The Research Training Group will start on 1 April 2027. Successful applicants will be offered a 4-year doctoral support contract with remuneration dependent on TV-L pay grade 13 (65%) according to the German public salary scale; employment will be either at the University of Bonn or the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. Degrees will be obtained from the medical, mathematical-natural science, philosophical or agricultural, nutritional and engineering sciences faculties or the Promotionskolleg NRW, respectively, depending on disciplinary background and research focus. All doctoral researchers will complete the structured doctoral program, which strongly emphasizes systems thinking and transdisciplinary approaches to build meta-competencies for urban health research. Next to overarching interdisciplinary courses, specific disciplinary courses and soft-skills training make up the foundation of the program.

The RTG „Urban Future“ investigates how urban transformations in “Blue Cities” – urban areas situated along rivers or coastlines where water is explicitly integrated into urban planning and holds a central place in societal identity – can be managed to improve public health, social equity, and ecological sustainability. The research focuses on the complex water-health-governance nexus, with a particular emphasis on cities in the Global South as living laboratories. The RTG is a joint initiative of the [University of Bonn](#) and the [Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences](#), in close cooperation with international partner institutions in Ghana ([KNUST](#), [UG](#), [UCC](#)), Togo ([UOL](#)), Cameroon ([UBUEA](#)), Brazil ([USP](#)) and Japan ([UTokyo](#)). While partner networks provide a strong international framework, applicants are free to propose research sites in any “Blue City” worldwide.

The RTG is structured around **four overarching Research Themes (RTs)**:

- A) Urban Health Resilience,
- B) Urban Disease Ecology,
- C) Governance and Institutional Change, and
- D) Adaptive Urban Ecosystems

Your tasks:

- Actively participate in the RTG training program and interdisciplinary seminars
- Conduct independent, RT-aligned doctoral research, including method development, data collection, analysis, and publication
- Contribute to the development of Blue City concepts and transdisciplinary knowledge exchange

Your profile:

- Completed Master's degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline (e.g., Agricultural and Food Systems, Climate and Earth Sciences, Development Studies, Ecology and Life Sciences, Economics and Management, Mathematics, Physics, Computer Science, Environmental and Health Sciences, Geography, Infectious Diseases, Hygiene/infection control, (Medical) Microbiology, Public Health, Urban and Regional Studies, and Social Sciences)
- Strong interdisciplinary mindset and clear interest in urban transformations, water-health nexus, or urban health
- Excellent written and oral English language skills

What we offer:

- A stimulating, international, and interdisciplinary doctoral environment with strong national and global research networks
- Structured supervision, clear progression criteria, and dedicated career development support
- Full funding for fieldwork, travel, and related research expenses
- Comprehensive training in systems thinking, transdisciplinary methods, and academic communication
- Committed to diversity and equal opportunity; certified as a family-friendly university

Application process & documents

The selection process is two-stage. Applications will be evaluated by the RTG Selection Committee, and only the most qualified candidates will be invited to a virtual interview.

- Curriculum vitae (tabular format)
- Higher education degree certificate(s) and full transcript(s) of records, including an explanation of the grading system of all previous studies.
- Motivation letter (max. 500 words)
- Research exposé (max. 1500 words)
- Interdisciplinary research statement (max. 500 words)
- One letter of recommendation
- English language proficiency certification (B2 level (CEFR, TOEFL or equivalent))

The institutions involved promote an open, respectful and non-discriminatory academic culture and are actively committed to equal opportunity and family friendliness. We aim to eliminate structural disadvantages and to strengthen diversity in research, teaching and administration. Therefore, we welcome all applications, regardless of ethnic or social background, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or age.

Applications from women and people with a documented severe disability (or equivalent status) will be given preferential consideration in accordance with the Gender Equality Act of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia ([Landesgleichstellungsgesetz NRW, LGG NRW](#)) and Book IX of the Social Code ([Sozialgesetzbuch IX, SGB IX](#)).

Please submit your complete application, also indicating the specific research theme you are applying for, via our online portal by 2nd November '26.

Apply via the application portal:

https://masterapplication.uni-bonn.de/movein/hosted/online/move/movein/portal/zef_portal.php

More details about the RTG Research Themes, can be found here:

<https://www.ukbonn.de/ihph/bereiche/urban-future/>