

The University of Potsdam,  
Research Training Group on  
**“Wicked Problems, Contested Administrations:  
Knowledge, Coordination, Strategy” (WIPCAD)**  
calls for applications for:

**2 Doctoral Fellowships**  
funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

**Application Deadline: 5 April 2017**

## 1. The Group:

The **Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Potsdam** calls for applications for its Research Training Group on **“Wicked Problems, Contested Administrations: Knowledge, Coordination, Strategy” (WIPCAD)**. Wicked problems create conditions of high complexity, uncertainty, and ambiguity to which public organizations need to respond. The tensions emerging in this context can destabilize organizational structures and routines, and call traditional methods of administration into question. Contestation occurs in various areas of organizational activity, from knowledge use and transfer to internal and external coordination and strategy building. The Research Training Group carries out studies of the interrelationships between wicked policy problems and the contested development of administrative practices and organizational structures, both within public organizations and between civil society and the private sector.

The **WIPCAD research program** is based on systematic interdisciplinary cooperation between political and administrative sciences, organization studies, sociology and public management. It is underpinned by a qualification and gender equality concept that encourages junior scholars from both Germany and abroad to engage with neighboring disciplines, conduct theory-based research, acquire the necessary research skills, gain international experience, and prepare them for future careers in academia and in the public sector.

## 2. The scholarships:

All doctoral fellowships will start on October 1, 2017. Scholarship holders will receive a monthly stipend from the “Graduate School Scholarship Programme 17”. The scholarship award comprises:

- a monthly stipend of EUR 1,000
- a travel allowance based on your country of origin

- a combined health, accident and liability insurance
- a study and research allowance of EUR 460 per year
- a rent and/or family allowance, if applicable

In addition, **grants for material costs** of EUR 1,000 per year are possible. The scholarship will be for up to a three-year period, contingent upon the successful completion of each year. Extension to a fourth year will be possible only in exceptional and very well-founded cases.

DAAD scholarship holders will be identified by a **two-step procedure**. In step one, appropriate candidates are nominated for a DAAD scholarship by WIPCAD as the hosting program. In step two, the nominees (2 for each place) submit an online application with supporting documentation via the DAAD portal and the DAAD selection board takes the decision.

### 3. Topics:

#### **Topic 1: “Local Public Sector Reforms, Leadership and Coordination – Coping locally with Contestation and Wicked Problems”**

**Description:** Local governments all over Europe are in a period of intense reform activity, because in some countries they are under severe contestation triggered by the global financial crisis, austerity policies and cutback measures. At the same time, there are increasing demands for improved territorial coordination, better service delivery, more strategic and knowledge-based steering, and enhanced local leadership in order to cope with wicked policy problems at grass roots level and in the broader intergovernmental setting. Local leaders, councils and administrations are thus simultaneously faced with a variety of partly contradictory reform pressures, often aimed at conflicting objectives (e.g. efficiency, effectiveness, participation). Successful candidates are expected to have a keen research interest in comparative local government / local public sector reforms / local leadership / coordination of wicked local policies and a good knowledge of applying social science research methods. Candidates are requested to outline a research proposal focusing on (one or more of) the above-mentioned topics, preferably from a cross-country comparative perspective. We welcome quantitative, qualitative or (ideally) mixed-methods approaches.

**Potential supervisors:** Prof. Dr. Sabine Kuhlmann, Prof. Dr. Isabella Proeller

#### **Topic 2: “International, National and Subnational Carbon Governance Arrangements – Moving Ahead with the Paris Agreement”**

**Description:** In recent years, governments and public administrations have started to design effective mitigation and adaptation policies, and have come up with a series of action plans and NDCs. While national governments and international organizations have led these efforts in the past, nowadays city governments and local policy makers are becoming increasingly engaged. Jointly with local constituencies and the private sector, some cities have started mobilizing resources for low-carbon transitions and measures towards local adaptation, with a series of innovations in local governance. It remains to be seen, however, whether such arrangements at the local level become regarded effective and legitimate, and/or what kind of subnational-national-international frameworks would need to be in place for sustained action and for moving ahead with the Paris agreement.

Successful candidates are expected to have (i) a keen research interest in international, national and subnational public administrations, with a focus on climate governance and low-carbon transitions; and (ii) a good knowledge of applying social science research methods. Candidates are requested to outline a research proposal focusing on (one or more of) the above-mentioned topics from an IR or comparative perspective. We welcome quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches.

**Potential supervisors:** Prof. Dr. Harald Fuhr, Prof. Dr. Kristine Kern, Prof. Dr. Detlef Sprinz

#### 4. Admission requirements:

**Applicants** must hold a Diploma or a Master's degree in political and administrative sciences, sociology or (public) management. Familiarity with organizational research is a plus. In exceptional cases, graduates with degrees from related fields may be considered.

**Key selection criteria** are the quality of the PhD proposal, how well it falls in with the overall thematic agenda of the Research Training Group, its innovative potential, and its likely contribution to existing knowledge in public organizations and administration.

**International students** with a non-German citizenship are strongly encouraged to apply. The Faculty strives to increase the proportion of women in the university and hence strongly encourages women to apply. Applicants with disabilities who are equally qualified will be favored.

Scholarship recipients will participate in seminars of the Faculty and write their own dissertation in English. **Proficiency in English** is required.

Applications should be submitted via email by **5 April 2017** to:

[coordinator@wipcad-potsdam.de](mailto:coordinator@wipcad-potsdam.de)

See also <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/wipcad/admission>

#### 5. Application documents:

Please submit the following documents in English:

1. A **letter of motivation** specifying your academic and professional interests, your current goals, study and career plans. Furthermore, explain why you deem our doctoral program appropriate for your particular background (in English, not **exceeding 1,000 words**).
2. An **abstract** of your proposal (max. 1 page).
3. Your **research proposal** of the planned dissertation project (only one research proposal) **not exceeding 2,500 words** (core text, about 5 pages, bibliography excluded). It should contain
  - summary
  - research question(s), hypotheses and objectives

- state of research (outlining theoretical and empirical debates on your topic as well as deficiencies in the literature that your dissertation proposal would address)
  - research methods to be employed
  - short bibliography
4. The proposal should also include a **work schedule** listing planned periods and destinations of research or field trips. If you plan a **field study**, please also submit a short work plan and schedule about the field trip (when, where, how long).
  5. A complete **curriculum vitae** - with full contact details and information on your educational background and professional experience, publications and language skills.
  6. **Two letters of recommendation** from persons qualified to evaluate your academic qualifications, including your skills in methods, and – where applicable – your professional qualifications, e.g. university professors from the home university, issued during the last two years.
  7. **Certificates** or translated documents:
    - school leaving certificate (College, GSEC, etc.) qualifying for admission to higher education in your own country
    - certificates of annual examinations taken at the home university (transcripts of records)
    - certificates of any academic degrees or advanced qualifications showing grades and explaining the home grading system (description of grade scale)  
(For French-speaking countries: License or Maîtrise with Assez-Bien along with a DEA/DESS degree or a Master's degree according to the LMD system.)
  8. Certification of **English Proficiency** providing proof of your C1 level English language skills, or equivalent. (*see below*)
  9. A list of **publications**. (*if applicable*)

## 6. Formal requirements:

- At the time of application, candidates should not have lived in Germany for longer than 15 months.
- The last final examination for the highest university degree (usually the Master's degree) should not have taken place more than six years ago.
- The total duration of the fieldwork must not exceed 25% of the duration of your scholarship (i.e. no more than 9 months of field work during a three-year scholarship).
- Minimum scores as proof of your **English proficiency** (cf. application no. 8):
  - TOEFL: paper-based test 600, internet-based test 100
  - IELTS: Band 7.5
  - Cambridge Certificate: CAE pass

Scores must have been officially reported and accomplished within the last two years.  
The personal score report must be attached to your application.  
Applicants who are native speakers of English or who have obtained either their High School Diploma (e.g., passed their A levels), or earned a university degree at an institution where the language of instruction is English, are exempt from this requirement.
- **Certified copies** of all translated documents (*cf. application no. 8 above*) must be submitted to DAAD only after a letter of award has been received.