

Call for Applications

The Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) calls for applications for Heinz Heinen Fellowships for the academic year 2026/2027

The [BCDSS](#) is a Cluster of Excellence funded by the German Excellence Strategy. Its [Fellowship Program](#) brings together excellent international scholars whose research focuses on different forms of strong asymmetrical dependency (SAD) and slavery in all historical periods, and all cultural contexts.

At the BCDSS we investigate profound social dependencies such as slavery, serfdom, debt bondage, and other forms of persisting dependency across epochs, regions, and cultures. Our overall aim during the BCDSS' first (2019–2025) and second (2026–2032) funding phases is to overcome the concept of “slavery versus freedom” established as a binary. Instead, we propose the new key concept of “strong asymmetrical dependency” to explore all durable forms of bondage across time and space. During [our second funding phase \(2026–2032\)](#), the BCDSS will focus on investigating the underlying causes and mechanisms that contribute to the persistence of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies (SADs) across historical and contemporary contexts. We aim to further anchor Historically Informed Dependency Studies (HIDS) as a key interdisciplinary field, encouraging scholars across the humanities and social sciences to systematically integrate the analysis of SADs into the study of societies, economies, and cultures.

Our newly established Methods Lab, one of the BCDSS' platforms of collaboration, systematically engages with methodological challenges and questions for the study of SADs. **For the academic year 2026/2027, we invite researchers with projects that develop and critically reflect on specific methodological approaches to the study of SADs.** The main purpose of our Methods Lab is to develop, revise, test, and integrate a variety of methods in the field of Historically Informed Dependency Studies (HIDS). The Cluster is genuinely interdisciplinary and at the same time rooted in expertise in disciplines, historical periods, cultures, and spaces in their own right. It is designed as a space of mutual exchange about the different disciplines represented in the BCDSS and their working methods. The Methods Lab thus invites original and at times experimental, exploratory or unconventional thinking and practices. While we deeply value analog research methods, we also want to enable researchers across disciplines to employ new methods in Digital Humanities. Furthermore, we are interested in exploring the application of and – importantly – critical reflections on the use(s) of AI to study SAD. In doing so, researchers will receive support from the [Bonn Center for Digital Humanities](#) (BCDH). We intend for the Methods Lab to be a collaborative, creative space to discuss ongoing work, analog and digital methods and ideas to generate the best possible research.

The BCDSS is calling for applications for [Heinz Heinen Fellowships](#) (earliest starting date: October 1, 2026):

- Doctoral Fellows (about to finish their PhD) for up to 6 months;
- Junior Postdoctoral Fellows (who completed their PhD max. four years ago) for up to 12 months;
- Postdoctoral Fellows (who completed their PhD more than four years ago) for up to 12 months;
- Senior Fellows (full professors) for up to 6 months;
- “Alternative Knowledge Producers” (e.g. journalists, artists, creatives, museum professionals, curators, intellectuals) for up to 6 months.

The Fellowship comprises:

- stipend:
 - doctoral fellows: a monthly stipend of €1,700
 - junior postdocs: a monthly stipend of €2,600
 - senior postdocs: a monthly stipend of €3,100
 - senior fellows: a monthly stipend of €3,600;
- travel allowance (outward and return journey);
- a monthly lump sum for accommodation in addition to the stipend: €1,000 (or €1,250 if the fellow is accompanied by children)
- a working space including a desktop computer at the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies;
- the opportunity to organize a workshop at the BCDSS (BCDSS funding guidelines apply);
- support in organizational matters before and upon arrival;
- support in finding day care for children.

How to apply:

Doctoral Fellows:

- personal statement or letter of motivation (max. 9,000 characters excl. spaces) outlining a project description including:
 - structure of your doctoral dissertation;
 - statement on status of your dissertation;
 - detailed working plan until completion of your doctoral dissertation;
 - the relevance of your project for the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies and its Methods Lab
 - the preferred time period you intend to spend in Bonn
- concise Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages)
- list of publications (if applicable)
- copies of your degree certifications
- copy of enrollment in a doctoral study program, resp. admission as a doctoral student
- two letters of recommendation – one of which must be by your supervisor (both to be sent directly to application[at]dependency.uni-bonn.de)

Postdoctoral Fellows:

- a personal statement (max. 6,000 characters excl. spaces) outlining
 - your interest in the field of Dependency and Slavery Studies; a description of your project with an outline of your methodology;
 - the relevance of your project for the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies and its Methods Lab;
 - the preferred time period you intend to spend in Bonn
- concise Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages)
- list of principal publications
- a copy of your PhD certificate
- two letters of recommendation (to be sent directly to application[at]dependency.uni-bonn.de)

Senior Fellows:

- a personal statement (max. 6,000 characters excl. spaces) outlining
 - your academic interest in the field of Dependency and Slavery Studies; a description of your project with an outline of your methodology;
 - the relevance of your project for the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies and its Methods Lab;
 - the preferred time period you intend to spend in Bonn

- concise Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages)
- list of principal publications

Alternative Knowledge Producers:

- a personal statement (max. 6,000 characters excl. spaces) outlining
 - your academic interest in the field of Dependency and Slavery Studies; a description of your project with an outline of your methodology;
 - the relevance of your project for the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies and its Methods Lab;
 - the preferred time period you intend to spend in Bonn
- concise Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages)
- list of principal publications and/or work samples
- copies of your university degree certificates (if applicable)
- two letters of recommendation (if applicable; to be sent directly to: [application\[at\]dependency.uni-bonn.de](mailto:application[at]dependency.uni-bonn.de))

Please send your complete application documents in English, **combined into one single PDF** file to: [application\[at\]dependency.uni-bonn.de](mailto:application[at]dependency.uni-bonn.de).

The application deadline is January 10, 2026.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Successful candidates will be informed by April 2026.

For more information on the BCDSS Fellowship Programs, please see our website. For further inquiries, please contact Laura Hartmann (l.hartmann@dependency.uni-bonn.de).