

Annual Report 2019

Graduate School for Health Sciences

Faculty of Medicine
Faculty of Human Sciences



Bild: GHS Symposium 2019 Parkhotel Gunten

«It is health that is the real wealth and not
pieces of gold and silver.» **Mahatma Gandhi**

GHS Annual Report 2019

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Introduction

Letter from the President

The Graduate School for Health Sciences (GHS) of the University of Bern was founded in 2008 under the joint direction of the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Human Sciences. The vision was to offer a PhD program based on research on psychological and physiological factors that determine the health of individuals and groups in their social contexts and physical environments. There are three expert committees supporting the PhD program structure. Since the early days, the GHS has expanded its offering; particularly significant is the distinction of being the first graduate school in Switzerland to offer the unique opportunity to promote clinical practice in parallel with obtaining an academic title through a “50-50” model – one that combines clinical practice with clinical research – culminating in the academic title of PhD. Between the school’s inception and the end of 2019, 70 doctoral students earned their PhD in the GHS. In 2019 the GHS had 88 doctoral students enrolled.

In 2018, the GHS celebrated its [tenth anniversary](#) and the retirement of its founding coordinator, PD Dr. Marlene Wolf. She studied biochemistry at the University of Bern and received her doctorate from the Institute of Biochemistry in 1983. Since 1992 she coordinated the PhD training and the MD-PhD program at the University of Bern in addition to her research activities. Dr. Wolf was instrumental in establishing the interfaculty Graduate School for Cellular and Bio-

medical Sciences (GCB), which preceded the GHS, and was its operational director since its inception in 2005. Dr. Wolf accepted the responsibility for coordinating the Graduate School for Health Sciences (GHS) in addition to the GCB in 2008. The GHS PhD Steering Committee wishes to thank Dr. Wolf for her influential role in establishing and coordinating the GHS from its early years, and for being a visionary and driving force on behalf of the graduate school for its first 10 years.

In 2019 Dr. Tullia Padovani, the new coordinator succeeded Dr. Wolf. 2019 was the first full year under Coordinator, Dr. Padovani’s leadership. Originally from Rome, she started her studies at the University “La Sapienza”, and subsequently worked as a researcher in various labs across Rome, Zurich and Bern. She is a cognitive neuroscientist specialized in the study of memory and executive functions with the EEG (electroencephalogram) technique. She also earned her PhD at the University of Bern in the Division of Neuropsychology. Prior to taking over the administration of the GHS, Dr. Padovani was the head of the two EEG labs at the Institute of Psychology in Bern. In addition to her role as GHS Coordinator, Dr. Padovani is a lecturer at the University of Bern.

Noteworthy GHS highlights from 2019:

- The GHS enjoyed a 50% increase in enrollment over 2018, ending 2019 with a total of 88 students
- The new Expert Committee III, Clinical science has raised significant interest resulting from the innovative 50:50 model
- GHS Symposium in Gunten was a success and was attended by a record number of students and faculty members

Furthermore, the GHS welcomed two new expert committee members:

- Prof. Dr. Jennifer Inauen (FKI), Assistant Professor of Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine
- Dr. phil. Cinzia del Giovane (FKI), Head of Statistics and Methodology at the Berne Institute for Family Medicine (BIHAM)

We hope you enjoy reading the first edition of our graduate school’s annual report. This will give you some insight into the interesting program we offer, its leadership, partner institutions and programs and most importantly, our students.



Prof. Dr. Achim Elfering,
President GHS Steering Committee

Bern, September 8, 2020



GHS Symposium 2019 Parkhotel Gunten

Mission and Purpose

Mission

The Graduate School for Health Sciences (GHS) offers research-oriented curricula on psychological and physiological factors with the intent to develop academics and researchers whose work is dedicated to improving health and quality of life throughout people's lives.

The GHS is an interfaculty and truly multidisciplinary graduate school. This is its strength because it approaches health with different paradigms and methodologies, which render the research and clinical interventions more effective.

Indeed, the program is jointly organized by the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Human Sciences, and offers research PhD programs addressing questions rooted in both basic research and applied fields.

The extensive body of academic experts and resources available enable the GHS students to develop into highly qualified professionals whether as researchers and academics or in private or non-for-profit industries, ready to use their knowledge and skills in complex subjects in their chosen area.

Purpose

The GHS goals are to:

- Guide doctoral students to become a competent & successful researcher, with an internationally competitive PhD title
- Help doctoral students expand their knowledge beyond their specific research training with interdisciplinary courses, content, and methods in the field of health sciences
- Support doctoral students throughout their entire PhD Program, ensuring the best supervision team and a useful structure for their PhD

Profile of the Graduate School for Health Sciences (GHS)

GHS Organization

The GHS has positioned itself as an innovative graduate school with a very attractive study and supervision program. At the same time, the demands on the candidates are high, particularly with regards to publication output expectations. Furthermore, the GHS expects a lively exchange of ideas from our students. The GHS is therefore considered a rigorous program resulting in first-rate PhD theses.

The GHS in general focuses mainly on patient-oriented clinical research that is carried out directly with patients or healthy volunteers. This includes observational studies and clinical trials of all phases, as well as epidemiological and case-control studies and broad areas of health care research. Patient-oriented clinical research requires direct contact between scientists and patients/test persons.

The graduate school program offers a wide choice of courses and special workshops tailored to the individual interests and needs of PhD candidates. The program focuses on the thesis projects for which the students get the best possible support from an expert supervisory committee in their specific research area.

The emphasis is on high-quality training in research methods and study design. The PhD programs direct the candidates towards independent scientific work and qualify them to assume scientific responsibility.

The requirement for the program is a master's degree in Psychology, Medicine, Biomedicine, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Sport Science or other fields depending on the respective research project.

Each candidate is supported by a thesis committee consisting of thesis advisor, co-referee and a member of an expert committee as mentor (only in FKIII).

Awarded PhD title is:

PhD in Health Sciences (specialist area).

Administration

Beginning in January 2019, Dr. Tullia Padovani took over the role of GHS Coordinator from PD Dr. Marlene Wolf, at which time the GHS offices also moved its location to the newly renovated building at Mittelstrasse 43, in Bern.



GHS Organization

- FACULTIES**
- Faculty of Medicine (Med)
 - Faculty of Human Sciences (Hum Sci)

- STEERING BOARD**
- **Achim Elfering (Hum Sci), President**
 - Thomas Abel (Med)
 - Urs Fischer (Med)
 - Sissel Guttormsen (Med)
 - René Müri (Med)
 - Roland Seiler (retired July 2019)
 - Marlene Wolff, Coordinator (retired January 2019)
 - Tullia Padovani, Coordinator

- ADMINISTRATION**
- **Tullia Padovani, Coordinator**
 - Edith Imthurn, Secretary
 - Cinzia Marti, Secretary
 - Brigitte Schutte, Secretary

EXPERT COMMITTEES

Expert Committee I (FKI)

Research areas: Preventive and social medicine, public health, medical education, psychology, rehabilitation & clinical research

- **Sissel Guttormsen (Med), Chair**
- Thomas Abel (Med)
- Arnaud Chiolero (Med)
- Cinzia del Giovane (Med)
- Jennifer Inauen (Hum Sci)
- Matthias Wilhelm (Med)
- Marcel Zwahlen (Med)
- Tullia Padovani (Coordinator)

PHD STUDENTS

Expert Committee II (FKII)

Research area: Neurosciences and Clinical Neurosciences

- **René Müri (Med), Chair**
- Dario Cazzoli (Med)
- Thomas Dierks (Med)
- Daniel Erlacher (Hum Sci)
- Daniela Hubl (Med)
- Jürg Streit (Med)
- Tullia Padovani (Coordinator)

PHD STUDENTS

Expert Committee III (FKIII)

Research area: Clinical Sciences; clinical career & patient-oriented research (50:50 model)

- **Urs Fischer (Med), Chair**
- Guido Beldi (Med)
- Thomas Berger (Hum Sci)
- Lorena Gianotti (Hum Sci)
- Stefan Klöppel (Med)
- Philipp Latzin (Med)
- Tobias Nef (Med)
- Lorenz Räber (Med)
- Christoph Stettler (Med)
- Sven Trelle (Med)
- Maria Wertli (Med)
- Matthias Zumstein (Med)
- Tullia Padovani (Coordinator)

PHD STUDENTS

PhD Steering Committee

Steering Committee

The Graduate School is managed by a Steering Board. The Steering Board is composed of two representatives each from the Faculty of Human Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine, together with the Program Coordinator. Those representing the Faculties are professors. At least one representative per Faculty must be a member of the respective Faculty Council (Fakultätskollegium). Additional persons can be elected to sit on the Steering Board if the Faculties concerned are in agreement.

The members of the Steering Board must be renowned scientists. The members of the Steering Board are elected by the University Board of Directors for a period of office of four years, upon application by the Faculties involved. They can be reappointed. The representatives of the Faculties on the Steering Board preside over the Board in turn, each for a period of one year.



Prof. Dr. Achim Elfering Extraordinarius, Work and Organizational Psychology, Institute of Psychology. He has been a member of the GHS Steering Committee since 2009, serving as **President** since January 2019.



Thomas **Abel**

Prof. Dr. phil. Thomas Abel, Head of Research Group Senior Management Group, Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine. Member since August 2008.



Urs **Fischer**

Prof. Dr. med. Urs Fischer, MD MSc Extraordinarius for Acute Neurology and Stroke, Co-Chairman Stroke Centre Bern, Deputy Director Clinical Trial Unit Bern. Member since October 2017. **Chair Expert Committee III.**



Sissel **Guttormsen**

Director, Institute for Medical Education (IML). Founding President and Member since August 2008. **Chair Expert Committee I.**



René **Müri**

Prof Dr. med. R. Müri Chief Physician, Head of University Neurorehabilitation, University Hospital for Neurology. Member since January 2010. **Chair Expert Committee II.**



Roland **Seiler**

Prof. em. Dr. Roland Seiler, Head of programme and studies DAS Sport Psychology. Former Extraordinarius Department of Sports Science II. Member since November 2011.



Tullia **Padovani**

Dr. Tullia Padovani, GHS Coordinator and Lecturer. Member since January 2019.

Expert Committees

PhD candidates currently carrying out their research projects within the framework of the GHS are grouped by GHS Expert Committees and listed on the [GHS Website](#).

Three Expert Committees with competences in:

- 1. Preventive and Social Medicine, Public Health, Medical Education, Psychology, Rehabilitation & Clinical Research (FKI)
- 2. Neuroscience (FKII)
- 3. Clinical Sciences (FKIII)

The committees are responsible for the admittance, guidance, and evaluation of the PhD candidates. Each PhD candidate is assigned to one of the GHS Expert Committees, which together with the candidate decides upon the individual training program.

Expert Committee I / Fachkommission I		
Research Areas: Preventive and social medicine, public health, medical education, psychology, rehabilitation and clinical research		
Actual Position	Affiliation	Institute
Sissel Guttormsen	Institute for Medical Education (IML) Institute for Medical Education	
Thomas Abel	Faculty of Medicine	Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM)
Arnaud Chiolero	Faculty of Medicine	Institute of Primary Health Care (BIHAM)
Cinzia del Giovani	Faculty of Medicine	Institute of Primary Health Care (BIHAM)
Daniel Erlacher	Faculty of Human Sciences	Institute of Sport Science
Jennifer Inauen	Faculty of Human Sciences	Institute of Psychology
Matthias Wihelm	Faculty of Medicine	Institute of Sport Science
Marcel Zwahlen	Faculty of Medicine	Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM)
Tullia Padovani	GHS Coordinator	Graduate School for Health Sciences

Expert Committee II / Fachkommission II		
Research Areas: Neurosciences and Clinical Neurosciences		
Actual Position	Affiliation	Institute
René Muri	Clinical Group Head, ARTORG Center	University Hospital for Neurology
Dario Cazzoli	Faculty of Medicine	ARTORG Center for Biomedical Engineering Research
Thomas Dierks	Faculty of Medicine	University Psychiatric Services (UPD)
Daniel Erlacher	Faculty of Human Sciences	Institute for Sports Science
Daniela Hubl	Faculty of Medicine	University Psychiatric Services (UPD)
Jürg Streit	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Physiology
Tullia Padovani	GHS Coordinator	Graduate School for Health Sciences

Expert Committee III / Fachkommission III		
Research Areas: Clinical Sciences, clinical career and patient-oriented research (50:50 model)		
Actual Position	Affiliation	Institute
Urs Fischer	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Neurology
Guido Beldi	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Visceral Surgery and Medicine
Thomas Berger	Faculty of Human Sciences	Institute of Psychology
Lorena Gianotti	Faculty of Human Sciences	Institute of Psychology
Stefan Klöppel	Faculty of Medicine	University Hospital of Old Age Psychiatry
Philipp Latzin	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Pediatrics
Tobias Nef	Faculty of Medicine	ARTORG Center for Biomedical Engineering Research
Lorenz Räber	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Cardiology
Christoph Stettler	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Diabetes, Endocrinology, Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism
Sven Trelle	Faculty of Medicine	Clinical Trials Unit Bern
Maria Wertli	Faculty of Medicine	Department of General Internal Medicine
Matthias Zumstein	Faculty of Medicine	Department of Orthopedic Surgery and Traumatology
Tullia Padovani	GHS Coordinator	Graduate School for Health Sciences

PhD Program

Doctoral Program

The doctoral degrees are issued jointly by the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Human Sciences, after submission of the written thesis and successful defence of the thesis. As a rule, the PhD thesis must be submitted no later than one year after completion of the experimental work. The University regulations require enrollment until the successful completion of studies.

Supervision

Each PhD candidate is supervised by a thesis committee consisting of the advisor, a co-referee, a member of the appropriate GHS Expert Committee, and mentor (FKIII only).

Thesis Committee

Thesis advisor is responsible for the research project, adequate supervision, the laboratory infrastructure and the salary of the candidate.

Co-referee

should be an expert in the research area of the thesis project, but must not be affiliated with the same institute as the supervisor. He/she meets with the candidate at least twice a year to

discuss and assess progress of the thesis work, as well as advising and supporting the candidate, is present at the exams, and is present at the thesis defense.

Mentor (only FKIII)

decides on the tailor-made training program called doctoral agreement, together with the candidate and the supervisor and evaluates the progress report. The candidate's previous education and the relevance to the planned research work is taken into account. The mentor is also a mediator in case of conflict within the thesis committee.

Requirements

The training program requires at least 18.0 ECTS of learning credits, which can be obtained by participating in approved, project-related and interdisciplinary courses, workshops, seminars, and lectures.

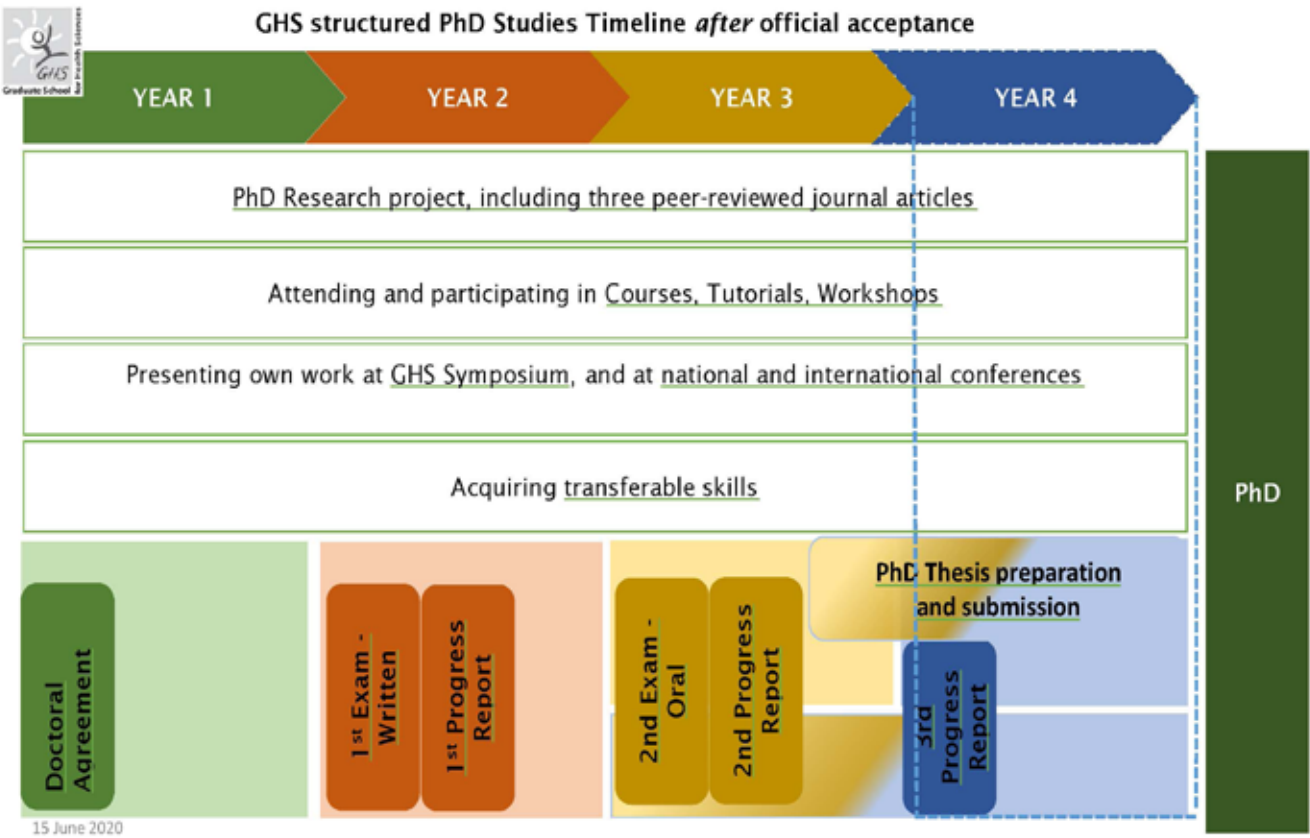
There are two required exams: one written after the first year, and the second is an oral presentation of the student's work which takes place at the end of the second year. Candidates present their work in a scienti-

fic seminar in the presence of the thesis committee, to document in-depth knowledge of the research field.

Financial Support

By granting a financial contribution, the GHS actively supports the participation of candidates in national and international conferences and in special training courses offered by recognized institutions in Switzerland and abroad.

PhD Program Structure



Clinical Sciences - FKIII

PhD in Clinical Sciences:
Clinical career and patient-oriented research (50:50 model)

Objectives

- Obtain a PhD title while simultaneously pursuing a clinical career
- Benefit from the combination of clinical work and patient-oriented research while maintaining an individual schedule

Program

- PhD in Clinical Sciences is a program of the Graduate School for Health Sciences (GHS)
- Clinically involved candidates (medical doctors, psychologists, physiotherapists, etc.) can pursue their clinical work in a 50% position and dedicate the remaining time to a research project



GHS Clinical Sciences PhD Program

Requirements

- State exam or master diploma in medicine, psychology or in a related clinically oriented field
- Both a clinical position and a research position

Duration of Program

- 4-5 years

Training

- Emphasis is put on comprehensive training in research methods, such as statistics, study design, epidemiology and scientific writing

Awarded Title

- PhD in Health Sciences (Clinical Specialty)

MD-PhD Scholarships

GHS doctoral students with a Master in Medicine may apply annually for the MD-PhD scholarships.

The National MD-PhD Program, which is supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS/SAMW), and several other foundations, awards 9 to 12 scholarships every year to outstanding graduates in human medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry with residency in Switzerland.

Further information can be found on the [SNSF](#) and [SAMS](#) websites.

Year in Review

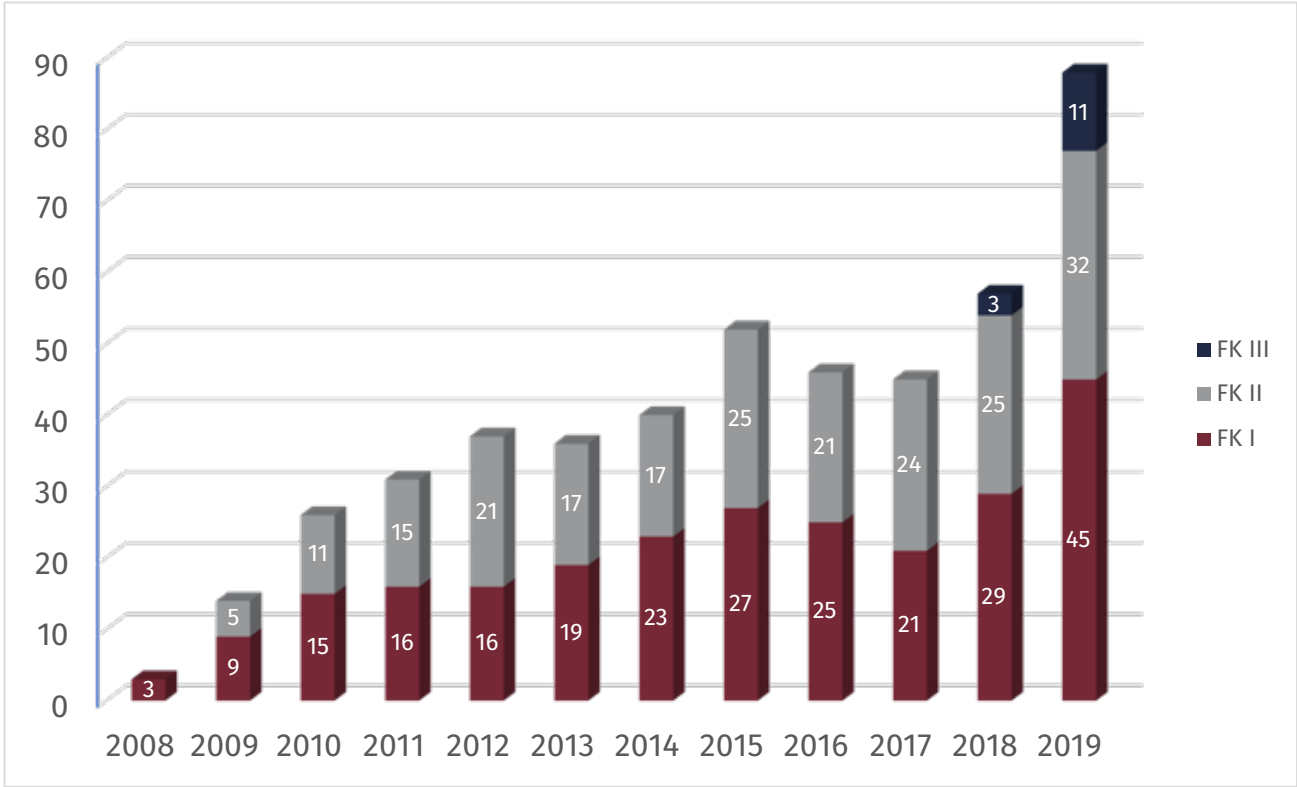
Students

Chart 1. Chart GHS Matriculations
Growth in Matriculations 2008 - 2019



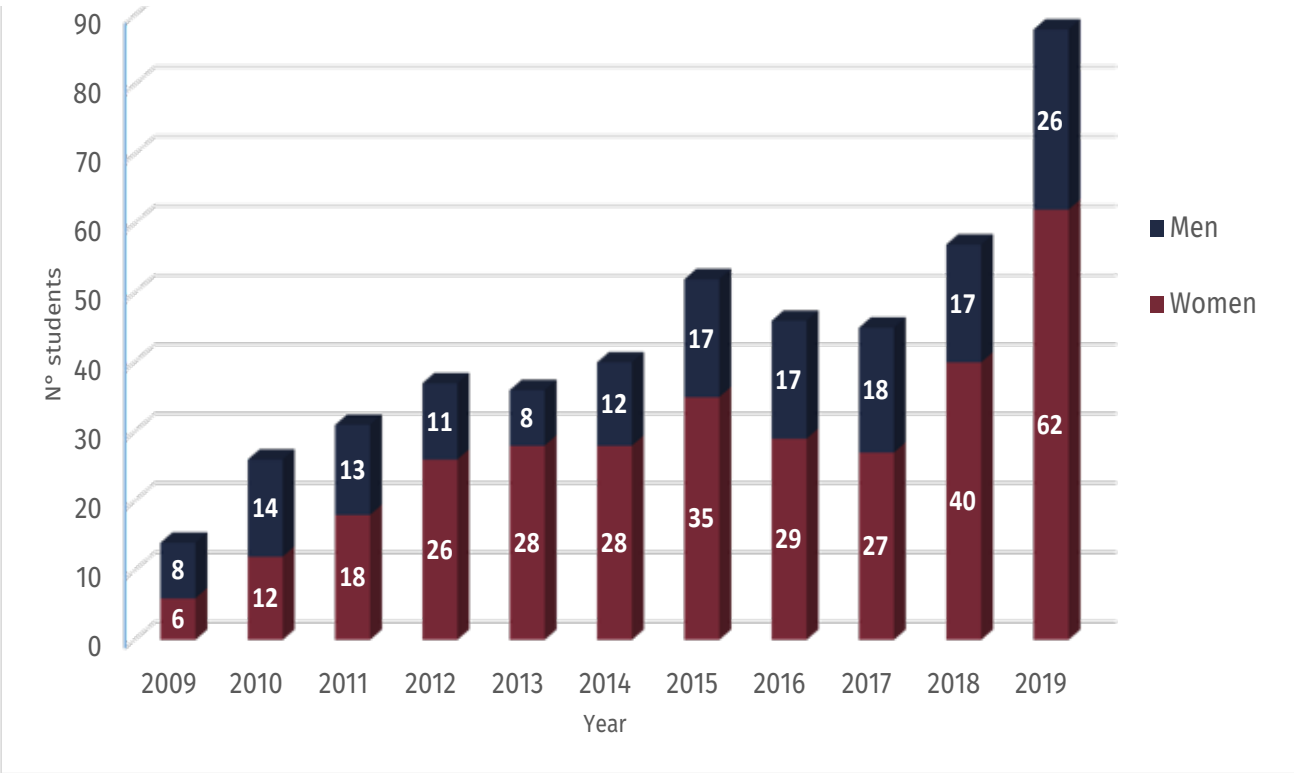
Expert Committees

Chart 2. Student Distribution accross Expert Committees
Distribution across Expert Committees 2008 - 2019



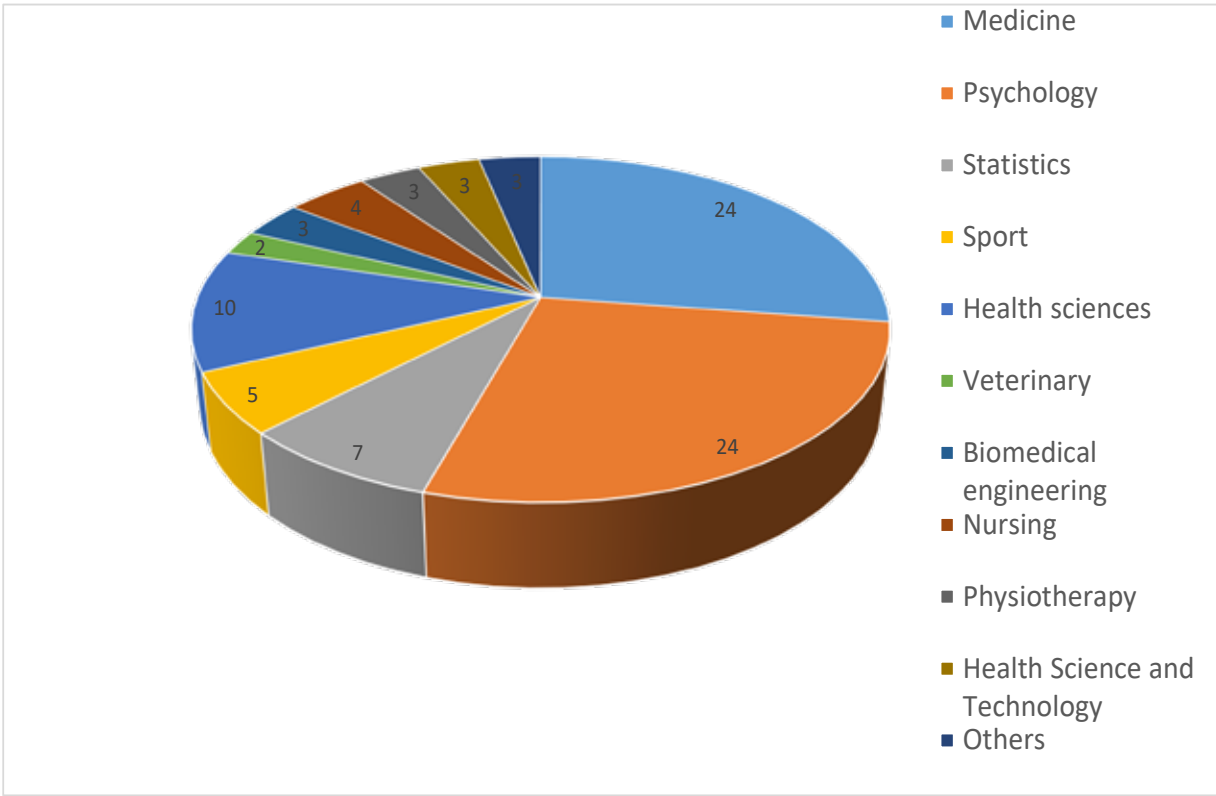
Gender

Chart 3. Student Gender Distribution
Student Gender Distribution 2008 - 2019



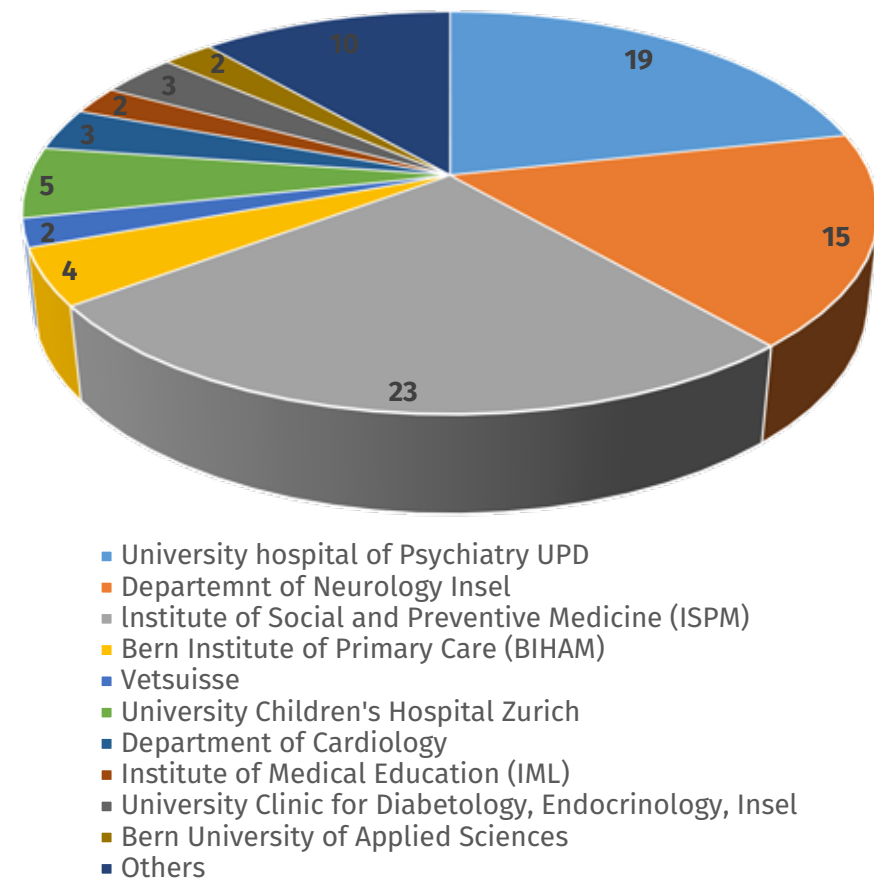
Field of Study

Chart 4. GHS Students - Master Degree Fields of Study
Student Fields of Study 2019



Institutes

Graph 5. GHS Students - Institutes where research is performed
Research Institutes - 2019

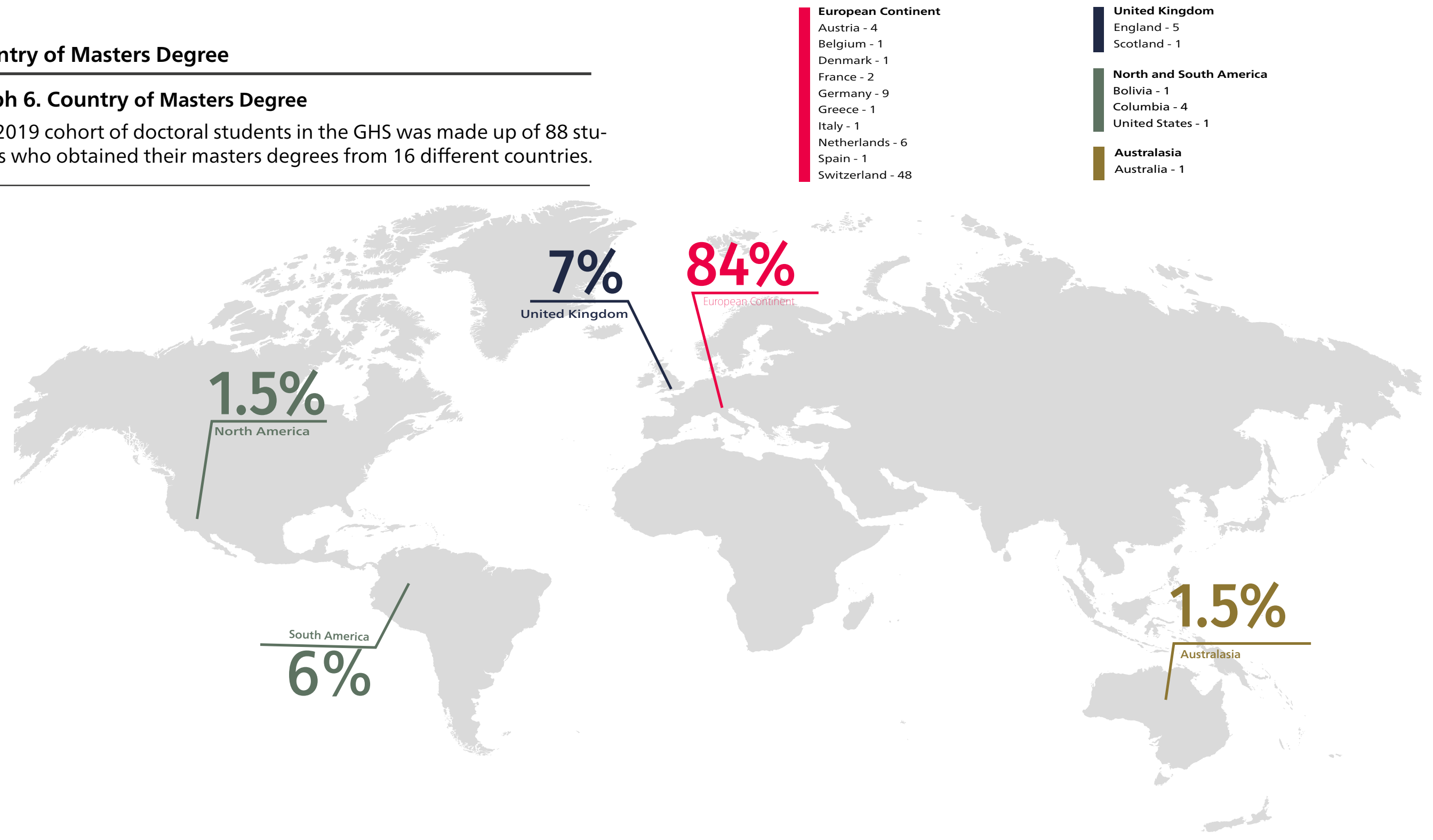


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Country of Masters Degree

Graph 6. Country of Masters Degree

The 2019 cohort of doctoral students in the GHS was made up of 88 students who obtained their masters degrees from 16 different countries.



Courses and Seminars

Seminars and courses are selected for each candidate individually from courses supported by GHS, from the teaching units of the faculties, and also from courses offered by other Swiss universities. Students may choose the courses best for their PhD studies, within University of Bern, as well as other national and international academic institutions. Some candidates also take part in internationally organized Summer Schools, which provide high quality training in specific fields.

18 ECTS credit points are necessary for the GHS PhD program. These ECTS include:

- ☐ Mandatory Requirements (min. 3 ECTS)
- ☐ Core Courses (2 to 4 ECTS)
- ☐ Method Skills (4 to 6 ECTS)
- ☐ Special Knowledge (min. 6 ECTS)
- ☐ Meetings / Conferences (subject to prior approval)

The [course catalog](#) lists suggestions for the different course categories. The Mandatory, Core, Methods and Special Knowledge Courses offered by the GHS are listed on the website under Training/Course Catalogue. GHS recognizes external courses when they meet the appropriate requirements, and can provide financial support in many cases.

The Mandatory Curriculum Requirements

- ☐ Each PhD candidate compiles an individual curriculum based on qualifications and relevance to the research interests.
- ☐ Courses not listed in the GHS Course Catalog can be selected upon agreement with the GHS; the courses have to last at least one day and must involve active participation.
- ☐ The selection of courses should be documented in the Doctoral Agreement (DA).
- ☐ In addition, the GHS supports efforts to acquire basic knowledge in cases where the PhD candidates are new in the field.

Mandatory Requirements

Basics of Ethics in Health Sciences Research
GHS Symposium: Poster presentation
GHS Symposium: Oral presentation

Partner Programs

The BENE弗里 Neuroscience Program

is a convention between the Universities of Bern and Fribourg and is available to GHS students. Its purpose is the organization of joint postgraduate courses and lectures for PhD students in Neuroscience at the two Universities. At the moment it includes the Faculty of Medicine in Bern and the Faculty of Science in Fribourg.

The Swiss School of Public Health PhD program (SSPH+)

assembles the inter-university faculty of public health sciences affiliated with the twelve Swiss universities of the SSPH+ Foundation: Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Svizzera italiana, Zurich, BFH, SUPSI and ZHAW. SSPH+ is the national coordinating body for the promotion of postgraduate university education and research in the fields of public health.

Transferable Skills (University of Bern)

provide key qualifications for your academic and non-academic Career: individual feedback from experts, intensive learning in small groups, and multidisciplinary networking. These skills are competencies acquired in one context that can be applied to other contexts, jobs, positions, functions or fields of work.

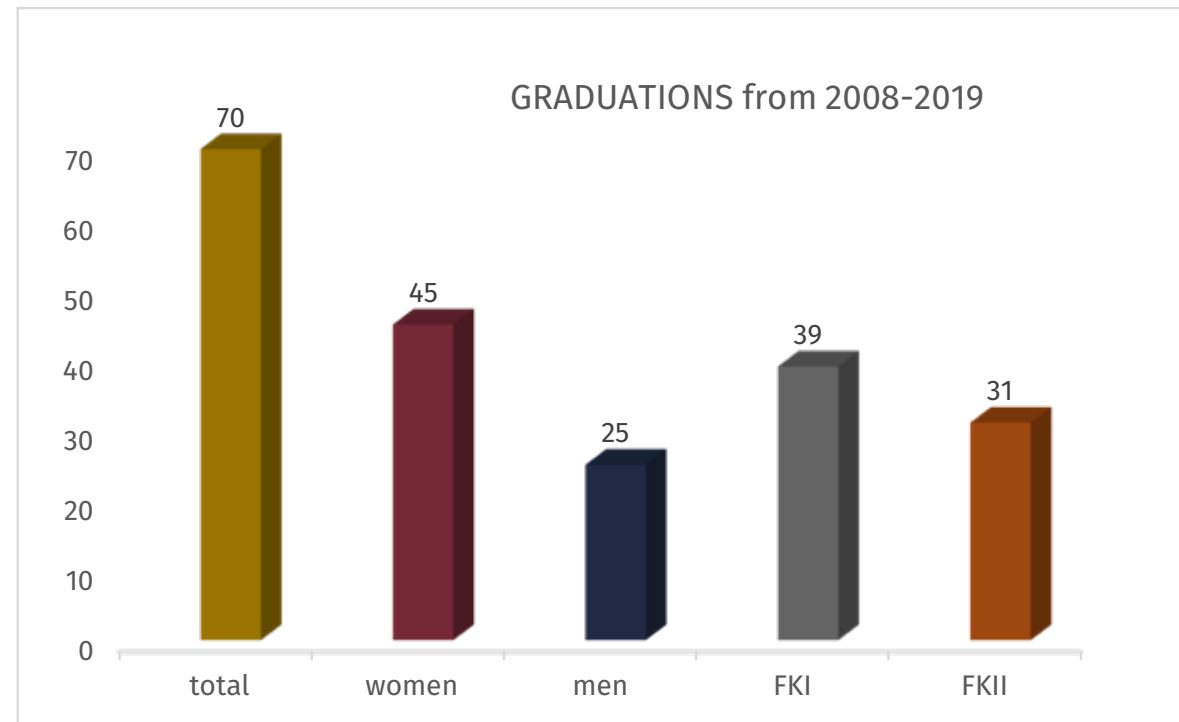
Clinical Neuroscience Bern

is an Interdisciplinary collaboration pivotal to success in clinical neuroscience research and methodology. The research focus of Clinical Neurosciences Bern aims to improve information exchanges and promote cooperation with internal and external partners.

The Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (GCB) (University of Bern)

is jointly administered by the Faculties of Medicine, Science and Vetsuisse, offers structured, experimental research training programs leading to a PhD, MD.PhD or DVM.PhD degree.

Graduations 2019



January 9

Stephanie Winkelbeiner, PhD in Health Sciences (Neurosciences)
University Hospital of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Translational Research Center, Division of Systems Neuroscience of Psychopathology
Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Thomas Dierks
Thesis: *Brain imaging and treatment of positive symptoms in schizophrenia*

January 15

Garyfallos Konstantinoudis PhD in Health Sciences (Epidemiology and Biostatistics)
Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine ISPM
Thesis Advisor: PD Dr. Ben Spycher
Thesis: *Analysis of Clustering of Childhood Cancers*

January 18

Natascha Marion Wyss PhD in Health Sciences (Epidemiology)
Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine
Thesis Advisors: PD Dr. Julia Bohlius und Prof. Dr. Matthias Egger
Thesis: *Cancer in HIV-positive populations: studies of incidence, prognosis and oncovirus seroprevalence*

February 6

Florian Samuel Halbeisen, PhD in Health Sciences (Epidemiology)
Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine
Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Claudia Kühni
Thesis: *Lung Function and Diagnostics in Patients with Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia*

August 23

Alvin Chesham, PhD in Health Sciences (Neurosciences)
ARTORG Center for Biomedical Engineering Research
Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Tobias Nef
Thesis: *Puzzling the Mind: Development and Evaluation of Puzzle Games to Assess Cognitive and Motor Function in Neurocognitive Aging*

November 1

Anneke Grietje Elizabeth Godeschalk, PhD in Health Sciences (Neurosciences) Inselspital, Department of Neurology, Faculty of Medicine
Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Johannes Mathis
Thesis: *What is sleepiness? - Characterizing the borderland between wakefulness and sleep by microsleep episodes*

December 4

David Schreier, PhD in Health Sciences (Neurosciences) Inselspital, Department of Neurology, Faculty of Medicine
Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Johannes Mathis
Thesis: *Vigilance assessment and judgement of fitness to drive in sleepy individuals*

Publications 2019

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GHS Symposium 2019

Topics in Health Science



Parkhotel Gunten

The 11th GHS Scientific Symposium was held Tuesday, November 19th to Wednesday, November 20th, 2019, at the Parkhotel Gunten, Seestrasse 90, 3654 Gunten.

Program

The symposium was kicked off on Day One with a welcome from Achim Elfering, GHS president and an overview of the current graduate school statistics by Tullia Padovani, GHS coordinator. Sessions 1 and 2 followed with student presentations. The final session of the day was devoted to poster presentations and viewing.

"The organization of the entire symposium was excellent. The symposium was a great Enrichment. Thank you for that." (feedback from survey of symposium)



Room Saal - Talks, Presentations

"The diversity of the different topics makes this symposium extremely...exciting and valuable. The quality of the lectures is mainly on a very high level. The students are given an important platform to practice: interesting presentations." (feedback from survey of symposium)

Award Ceremony

A brief award ceremony was held in the evening, during which Dr. Padovani presented the award for the best poster and the best talk.

Poster: Virginia Chiocchia

Talk: Stephanie Perrodin

Day Two Workshops

On the second day, Dr. Priya Satalkar and Prof. Bernice Elger lead parallel workshops on Introduction to Ethics in Health Sciences.



Poster Presentations

The presentations were quite good. It's also great to get feedback. (feedback from survey of symposium)



Ethic Workshop Day Two

Exciting and informative! (feedback from survey of symposium)

Acknowledgments

PD Dr. Marlene Wolf

A million thanks to Marlene for her help and fantastic consulting in introducing the new coordinator into the new job. The GHS celebrated its 10 Year Anniversary in 2018, at which time PD Dr. Marlene Wolff's retirement and the arrival of the Dr. Tullia Padovani as the new GHS Coordinator was announced. The 10 Year Anniversary newsletter is published on the [GHS Website](#).

The Theodor Koch Institute (TKI)

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- Marianne Schori
- Ursula Zingg

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