

# Statutes of the Innsbruck Doctoral College “Natural Hazards in Mountain Regions”

## Acronyms

CS	Coordinating Student
EB	Executive board
IDC	Innsbruck Doctoral College
LFUI	Leopold Franzens Universität Innsbruck
MORE	Research Area “Mountain Regions”
NHMR	Natural Hazards in Mountain Regions
RS	Representative Student

## Preamble

The Innsbruck Doctoral College (IDC) “*Natural Hazards in Mountain Regions*” is embedded in the Research Area “Mountain Regions” (MORE) of the University of Innsbruck. Research and education activities of MORE focus on mountain regions worldwide. The IDC *Natural Hazards in Mountain Regions* (NHMR) collaborates with the other IDCs in the frame of MORE.

### 1. Research Perspective

Since the beginning of humankind and with a continuous increase of experience and scientific knowledge, humans try to cope with natural hazards and mitigate their impacts. Unlike technological or human-made hazards, natural hazards are naturally occurring physical phenomena, threatening human lives and infrastructure. Facing the environmental conditions in mountain regions, different forms of geophysical natural hazards occur. They are classified into geological and meteorological (hydrological) processes.

The IDC NHMR focuses on all relevant natural scientific, engineering, demographic, economic and management aspects in the context of analysing geophysical natural hazards in mountain regions as well as handling risks and developing protection solutions.

### 2. Aims

As natural hazards in mountain regions cover biological, geographical, geological, geotechnical, hydraulic, hydrological, meteorological, and socio-economic issues, an interdisciplinary research approach for hazard assessment, modelling, etc. is essential. The IDC NHMR focuses on both, more general pressing questions as well as on research challenges. Thinking and acting in interdisciplinary cross-boundary domains, where knowledge and expertise are transferred over boundaries between classical natural and engineering science as well as between natural and social science disciplines, is of basic relevance.

The IDC NHMR aims to provide systematic, efficient and high-quality training for excellent PhD students within an interdisciplinary research environment. PhD students are pushed to extend their research interests, recognize and develop correlations and interfaces with other research disciplines and foci, and present their research in a broader context. Activities cover academic topics as well as the training of soft skills and career planning. The IDC NHMR is further aimed to be a fruitful platform for the members to discuss, propose and work on common interdisciplinary research issues and thereby also cooperate with external national and international research institutions.

### 3. IDC Panels

#### I. Scientist board

The scientist board consists of all senior researchers involved in the IDC. Each habilitated member acts as the main or co-supervisor for at least one PhD student of the IDC, all other members are actively involved in the support of at least one PhD student. All scientist board members regularly contribute to and participate in IDC activities.

The scientist board can make decisions in meetings or via circular resolutions. During meetings (including constituent assembly) and circular resolutions a quorum of at least 2/3 of the scientist board members based at LFUI must be represented. Vote delegation is permitted whereas one attendant member can represent a maximum of one prevented member. Decisions are taken with a 2/3 majority.

The scientist board elects the speaker and the deputy speaker (simple majority) for four years (speaker and deputy speaker are jointly referred to as “speakers”). The deputy speaker is the representative of the speaker in cases of holidays, absences, or delegations. The current speakers must announce a meeting for the election of the future speaker and deputy speaker at least one month in advance. Nominations for speaker and deputy speaker candidates have to be submitted to the speaker team at least one week before the meeting. Thereafter, the current speaker team informs the scientist board about the candidates. In yearly meetings, the speaker team reports on the progress of the doctoral program.

The scientist board decides on the main issues concerning the strategy, development, and execution of the IDC. It decides on changes in IDC statutes (confirmation of the rectorate and the MORE IDC board provided). It also decides on the admission and exclusion of scientist board members as well as the exclusion of PhD students.

#### *Constituent assembly*

*The preliminary speakers invite all members of the scientist board at least one month in advance and provide the foreseen IDC statutes. They also assign one IDC member, who will not apply for a speaker position, to handle the election of the speakers. The preliminary speakers are automatically nominated as speaker candidates unless they withdraw at their request. They have to ask for additional nominations of speaker candidates to be submitted (at least one week before the constituent assembly) to the person responsible for the speaker election. At the constituent assembly, (i) the speakers are elected (simple majority) and (ii) the IDC statutes are approved. The voting on the statutes is handled by the elected speakers. If the statutes are not accepted, the speakers have to discuss and implement requested changes (confirmation of the rectorate provided) and repeat the election.*

#### II. Student board

All PhD students of the IDC are members of the student board, which meets at least twice a year (once together with the scientist board). The purpose of the student board is to discuss ideas for future IDC events and suggestions for possible improvements to the education and research program and forwards them to the scientist board. Decisions within the student board are taken with a 2/3 majority.

### III. Representative student (RS) and coordinating student (CS)

The student board nominates one representative student (RS), who manages the student board (organization of meetings, communication etc.) and represents the students in the executive board (see below).

The IDC speaker and deputy speaker nominate one student of the IDC who is willing to be engaged as the CS. In collaboration with available administrative staff, the CS supports the speakers in all aspects of IDC work.

### IV. Executive board (EB)

The EB is formed by the speaker, the deputy speaker, and the RS. The purpose of the EB is to lead the IDC's day-to-day business, the admission of new PhD students, the approval of PhD thesis supervision according to the criteria (Section 4, point II), and the utilization of the IDC budget. The EB considers the suggestions of the scientist board and the student board for possible improvements concerning the education and research program and suggests changes to the statutes to the scientist board and MORE IDC board. Decisions are taken with a simple majority.

The EB is a member of the MORE IDC board (see point V).

### V. MORE IDC board

The MORE IDC board is formed by the EBs of all MORE-IDs and by representatives of the Research Focus (speaker and/or coordinator). Each EB has one vote. The MORE IDC board requires at least one speaker or deputy speaker of each EB (vote delegation to senior members possible; max. one delegated vote per attendant member) and one representative of the Research Focus to be present. The MORE IDC board takes decisions with a simple majority.

The MORE IDC board meets at least twice a year. It is entitled the IDCs to decide on all matters relevant to general research and education strategies of the MORE IDCs, their efficient cooperation, and fruitful development.

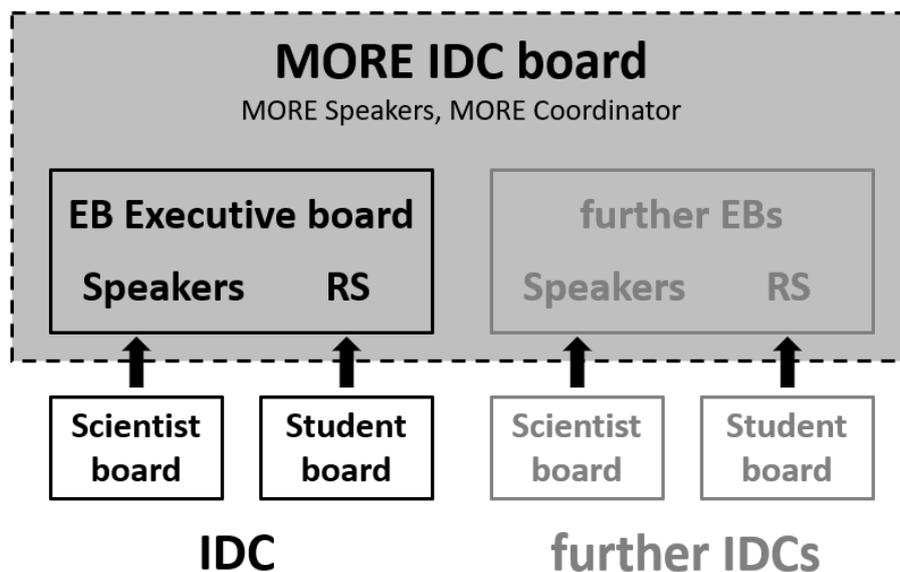


Fig. 1: Overview of the IDC panel structure. RS is a representative student. A list of all acronyms is provided on page 1.

## 4. Execution

### I. Admission of new<sup>1</sup> scientist board members

New scientist board members are expected to be highly qualified scientists who complement the scientific program of the IDC. They submit an informal application to the EB to be discussed and approved by the scientist board.

### II. Exclusion of scientist board members

The scientist board members can resign at their own request. Additional reasons for excluding members are (1) unethical behavior like mobbing and violation of rules for good scientific practice, (2) neglect of duties as PhD supervisor and mentor, (3) being permanently (> 1 year) without a PhD student to supervise or support (for non-habilitated members), and (4) non-contribution (not involved in any IDC activities > 1 year; sick and maternity leave excluded) to IDC activities. If one of the above reasons applies, a written statement has to be sent to or prepared by the speaker and deputy speaker, who in turn must ask the accused person for oral and written statements. Unless clarification occurs within three months, the exclusion of this member is proposed to the scientist board.

### III. Admission of new<sup>2</sup> PhD students

The applicants have to be enrolled and registered at the University of Innsbruck or a university cooperating in the frame of the IDC program. The main PhD supervisor and one co-supervisor are members of the IDC and must have different research foci.

To apply for the IDC, an expression of interest in the form of an exposé (contents, time, and finance plans) on the planned thesis topic has to be submitted to the EB by the main supervisor. If the EB has no concerns about the feasibility of the PhD project, the EB invites the PhD students to present their PhD concept and motivation for joining the IDC in the frame of an “application-colloquium” (can be an independent event or part of another IDC event) offered by the IDC at least twice a year in case of pending applications. The final admission is decided by the EB.

### IV. Confirmation of participation

After graduating, the PhD students automatically resign from the IDC. Those who have successfully fulfilled the IDC education program (Section 5), obtain confirmation concerning their participation in the IDC from the speakers of the IDC, including a list of attended IDC activities.

### V. Exclusion of PhD students

Reasons for excluding PhD students from the IDC are (1) at their request, (2) removal from the register of PhD students at LFUI or the universities cooperating in the frame of the IDC program, (3) unethical behavior like mobbing or violation of rules for good scientific practice and (4) at the request of the supervisor. In the case of points 3 or 4, the speakers (3) or the supervisor (4) have to issue a written statement. The EB must contact the PhD student and ask for oral and written feedback on the statement. Unless an agreement between the

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<sup>1</sup> All IDC members listed in the IDC proposal are automatically members of the IDC if they agree on the statutes.

<sup>2</sup> All PhD students that are namely listed in the IDC proposal are automatically part of the IDC.

speaker/supervisor and PhD student can be achieved within three months, the EB can propose the exclusion of the PhD student from the scientist board.

#### VI. Evaluation

In the case of external evaluations, the IDC is represented by the speaker and deputy speaker.

#### VII. Termination of IDC

The IDC ends if (1) the SB members do not continue the program (less than 5 habilitated members left for >1 year), (2) the number of PhD students in the program falls below 10 for > 2 years or (3) the rectorate formally terminates the program. In the case of termination, the current PhD students are entitled to obtain confirmation about their attendance at the IDC, if they have joined the IDC education program for at least 2 years (Section 5).

### **5. IDC education program**

Beyond the usual requirements and recommendations in the different PhD-curricula, PhD students in the IDC have to fulfil the following tasks:

#### I. Participation in IDC courses

Students regularly participate in interdisciplinary courses organized in the frame of the IDC.

#### II. Participation in summer/winter school

Students participate in at least one summer/winter school. Participation in and contribution to any summer/winter school offered by the IDCs of MORE is highly appreciated.

#### III. Presentation and discussion of research findings

PhD students have to present their research activities in the early and late phases of their PhD project in the frame of regularly organized meetings open for all IDC members.

#### IV. Contribution to and participation in MORE IDC events

Students are encouraged to develop, organize, contribute to and participate in events involving several IDCs within MORE. Participation in at least one event is required.

The IDC speakers and the respective supervisors decide on the possible credit for already completed educational activities for the IDC education program.

## **6. Collaboration with other IDCs in MORE**

This IDC collaborates with the other IDCs in MORE to size the potential of comprehensive scientific expertise on a wide range of mountain-related topics. The collaboration is supervised by the MORE IDC board and explicitly based on three pillars:

### **I. Planning and organization**

MORE IC board meetings serve to exchange general experiences, critically reflect on collaborations, detect potential new synergies, and discuss further development. To uphold a uniform nature of admission criteria as well as criteria for successful participation in all IDCs of MORE, required changes are to be discussed and confirmed among the MORE IDC board.

### **II. Intended joint teaching activities**

IDCs organize joint interdisciplinary teaching activities, such as common lectures, (modular) summer/winter schools, and training courses (soft skills, safety etc.).

### **III. Research and Socializing**

Students of the IDCs are encouraged to organize events (informal format, open for members of all IDCs) aiming at knowledge exchange and strengthening collaboration between researchers of different MORE IDCs.

## **7. Specific statutes**

### **I. Compatibility of family and career, support of female researchers**

In the university environment, the compatibility of family and work has a high priority. The IDC promotes women in science and will consider gender aspects. To increase the fraction of female applicants, the program will provide sufficient flexibility to allow successful completion of the program (in case of maternity leave, filial leave etc.).

### **II. Upcoming project proposals related to the IDC**

Abstracts of any project proposals that refer to the IDC should be sent to the speakers by any IDC member before being submitted (for information only, no approval required).

### **III. Information and communication**

Website: The IDC maintains a website which includes (1) the research perspectives of the IDC, (2) a list of the current members of all IDC panels (as listed in Section 3), and (3) upcoming and past (archived) IDC events. Optionally, an intranet may be included in the website for efficient data exchange. The basic structure of the website should be the same for all IDCs of MORE to promote readability.

E-mail lists are set up for the scientist board and the student board.