



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE DOCTORAL PHASE



PREAMBLE

A doctorate represents a first piece of independent research which is of fundamental importance for academia and research. In consideration of this special achievement and for quality assurance among early-career researchers, the University of Tübingen has produced this code setting out the principles of a supervisory relationship between doctoral candidates and supervisors. The code does not replace the faculties' legally binding doctoral regulations and supervision agreements; rather, it supplements them with clearly formulated steps for fair and transparent cooperation. The code is intended equally for supervisors and doctoral candidates.

The University of Tübingen sees equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnic origin, age, social and religious background, disability or sexual identity not only as a fundamental right to be upheld, but also as a foundation of academic excellence. Supervisors in particular are expected to maintain the highest level of professionalism at all times and to approach the special nature of a doctoral relationship with attentiveness and sensitivity and to maintain appropriate distance.

Furthermore, the University of Tübingen requires that completion of a doctoral thesis must in principle be feasible within 3-4 years and that adequate funding must also be ensured over this period. It should also be possible to complete part-time doctorates within this period, in line with the planned work timetable. In this regard, the University of Tübingen holds to the DFG guidelines.



FACTORS IN A SUCCESSFUL DOCTORAL QUALIFICATION PROCESS

The foundation for a successful doctorate is laid as soon as the supervisor agrees to supervise the candidate. Before concluding the supervision agreement, it is important to clarify the mutual expectations and put them down in writing. We therefore recommend using the attached checklist to standardize the initial interview. The checklist provides the necessary transparency from the very beginning and should be processed jointly by the supervisor and the doctoral candidate before the supervision agreement is concluded. Realistic goals are to be formulated and career planning and further perspectives are to be



discussed. The choice of a second supervisor may be made jointly; in this case, the relevant provisions in the doctoral regulations must be observed. In general, team supervision is considered to be very beneficial for the technical and content-related design of the doctoral qualification process, as well as for the supervisory relationship in general. Clear agreements and open communication between the various participants are essential throughout the entire doctoral qualification period.

FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

The doctoral project is planned jointly by the supervisor and the doctoral candidate. The supervisor ensures that the doctoral project is a realistic and well-focused topic that fits the professional competence and qualification of the doctoral candidate and can be carried out within 3-4 years.

The doctoral candidate, on the other hand, is responsible for preparing the content of the doctoral project, usually in the form of an outline or an exposé. Doctoral candidates can demand clear structures and specifications for the fulfillment of the doctoral project from their supervisors.

Any changes in the planning must be discussed promptly between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate. In particular, the scope of time commitments in relation to the actual doctoral project should be critically examined at regular supervision meetings. In order for doctoral candidates to be able to report openly on difficulties, it is essential that there is mutually respectful communication and that constructive feedback can be expressed.

In addition, both doctoral researchers and supervisors ensure that research is conducted in compliance with the guidelines for ensuring good academic practice. The Graduate Academy provides guidance and courses on Good Scientific Practice that should be taken early by all doctoral candidates at the University.

As a family-friendly university, the University of Tübingen expects its doctoral supervisors to actively work to make the conditions for working and obtaining qualifications family-friendly and to give special consideration to the concerns of doctoral candidates with family responsibilities. For this group of doctoral students, the ability to plan and financially secure a doctorate is particularly important. Therefore, time planning must be correspondingly long-term, but still flexible. Family responsibilities must not be a disadvantage for doctoral candidates.

In case of problems, the supervisor works out individual solutions with the doctoral candidate in order to compensate for any such disadvantage. The supervisors respect the individuality and cultural background of the doctoral candidates and promote their personal potential on this basis.

Other important points that need to be clarified at the beginning of a doctoral qualification process are

- whether and to what extent funding is possible
- whether additional tasks arise, such as teaching assignments or administrative tasks
- if the supervisors or doctoral candidates seek additional qualifications beyond the subject area
- if further qualifications are desired with regard to the doctoral candidate's personal career planning

SUPERVISION MEETINGS

In addition to the regular meetings specified in the supervision agreement (usually once a year), further supervision meetings should be held at regular intervals, depending on the needs and working style of the doctoral candidate. The aim of these meetings is to provide the supervisor's professional expertise with regard to open questions, difficulties and further procedures. In addition, doctoral candidates should be able to request constructive feedback on their research. To this end, the guidelines for good leadership must be observed, in which open, appreciative communication and openness to criticism are mentioned as central elements of responsible leadership. In general, these discussions may also take place with the secondary supervisor.

In addition, ideally, milestone agreements are made for each quarter, in which, for example, the submission of work samples is recorded. Work samples are forms of results insight (e.g., chapters, papers, abstracts, lab books, colloquia, etc.) and provide an immediate and unfiltered impression of the state of affairs. Such agreements create obligations, help doctoral researchers with time management and enable the timely recognition of undesirable developments.

CAREER PLANNING

The doctoral candidate's career planning and professional goals should be clearly discussed before starting the doctoral qualification process. The supervisor acts in an advisory capacity by providing a realistic assessment of the career opportunities. The University's researcher development concept provides for regular counseling sessions for this purpose, which may be conducted as part of the supervision meetings. These are important with regard to career planning in order not to lose sight of professional goals or, if necessary, to re-explore them in the course of the doctoral process. In addition, supervisors can point out counseling services offered by the University.

If doctoral candidates wish to end their doctoral process prematurely, supervisors should react in a supportive manner and advise on a possible exit strategy.

MENTAL HEALTH, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND OMBUD PROCEDURES

A doctorate opens up great opportunities, but it also means a high level of commitment over a significant period of time. If it becomes apparent that the doctoral candidate is reaching his/her stress limits and that his/her mental health is in danger, the supervisor and the doctoral candidate must work together to find a solution to improve the situation in the long term. In the event of acute psychological danger, professional counseling centers, such as psychosocial or psychotherapeutic counseling centers, should be consulted.

In the event of problems or conflicts within the supervisory situation, the regular meetings offer the opportunity to address these issues directly and openly and to jointly seek solutions for them. If conflicts persist,

the Doctoral Offices or the central Graduate Academy may be contacted for an initial consultation. These can refer the parties to the right offices, such as the Ombudsperson, the Family Office, the Staff Council, or the Representative for Disabled Persons.

In addition, there is also the option of directly contacting the respective faculty's responsible Ombudsperson for doctoral matters. They are the contact persons in case of conflicts in the context of the doctoral process and may involve the doctoral examination committee, depending on the requirements of the situation.



PROMOTION AND QUALIFICATION OF EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS

The central Graduate Academy offers qualification programs for both doctoral researchers and supervisors. In the area of interdisciplinary training, the Doctoral Researcher Development Program provides a broad portfolio for doctoral candidates. Participation in such programs should be facilitated and encouraged by supervisors. The Researcher Development Program offers training and individual coaching for supervisors.

The perception within the academic community depends to a large extent on how the doctoral candidate positions his/her research results



in the academic discourse. Supervisors should therefore facilitate participation in workshops, meetings and conferences in order to introduce doctoral candidates to national as well as international research networks. For doctoral candidates, these bodies provide good opportunities to gain fresh inspiration for their projects, to make their projects visible and to subject their results to a stress test. Against this background, the University expects that on the part of the supervisors, each and every doctoral candidate will be given the opportunity to participate in such a format an appropriate number of times.

Imprint

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