



by PhDs and Postdocs

Department of Geosciences

Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen

organized by

Ph.D./Postdoc Representatives

(Department of Geosciences)

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gleichstellung@geo.uni-tuebingen.de



**Equal Opportunities Officer
Geosciences**

Dr. Annett Junginger

(Hö12, Room S545)

annett.junginger@uni-tuebingen.de



**Equal Opportunities Officer
Geosciences (deputy)**

Dr. Ilka Schönberg

(GUZ, Room 6U05)

ilka.schoenberg@uni-tuebingen.de

Need help during your PhD or PostDoc?

We are your PhD/PostDoc representatives for Geosciences
Get in touch with us! Individual (online) meetings possible

phd-postdoc.reps@ifg.uni-tuebingen.de



Dr. Keiko Kitagawa

Early Prehistory

(Schloß, Urgeschichte 111)

keiko.kitagawa@uni-tuebingen.de



MSc. Daniel Boateng

Geodynamics

(GUZ, 3R35)

daniel.boateng@uni-tuebingen.de



Dr. Carolina Rosca

Isotope Geochemistry

(GUZ, 6U07)

carolina.rosca@uni-tuebingen.de



Dr. Carolin Röding

Palaeoanthropology

(Rü23, 705)

carolin.roeding@uni-tuebingen.de



Dr. Andreas Braun

Geography & Geoinformatics

(Rü23, W407)

an.braun@uni-tuebingen.de



Dr. Silvia Rita Amicone

Archaeometry

(LMB, 014)

silvia.amicone@uni-tuebingen.de

Interested to join the group? – contact us!



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FUNDING

1. What funding opportunities are provided by the university?

There are funding opportunities related to the [Excellence Strategy](#) within the University. (link accessed on 28.1.2023)

2. Would it be possible to get information on funding options in Germany to continue my work here?

See general information provided by the [graduate academy](#). For support for junior researchers, click [here \(Funding for Junior Researchers\)](#) OR [here \(Funding for Postdocs\)](#). (link accessed on 28.1.2023). Moreover, the [research funding team](#) offers advice on the various funding formats and supports the application process.

Check out the [Funding Database](#) for external funding for research in Germany (link accessed on 28.1.2023)

3. I am on a 60% work contract but I have to work 100%. What happens to the 40% percent of my salary?

For Ph.D. students, the promotion is considered “private work”. It is expected that a Ph.D. candidate works a percentage for their project and uses the rest of their time to pursue their doctorate degree (e.g. DFG funded projects are usually between 65-100%). For more information, check the [FAQ page](#) of the DFG website (link accessed on 28.1.2023).

4. Are there any guidelines for postdoctoral researchers interested in starting their own grants?

Guidelines can be different from one funding body to another. However, most of the funding bodies do provide the desired format for their grants. Official forms (i.e., what a grant should include) for DFG grants can be found on their webpage (click [here](#) for more information in English or [here](#) for guidelines in German).

More specifically, click [here](#) to access postdoc grant possibilities offered by Marie Curie actions (EU funded).

5. Does my third-party funding get prolonged in case of parental leave?

Contact the [Gender Equality Office/Gleichstellungsbüro](#) (partly in German) or [Family Office/Familienbüro](#) for more details. Moreover, you can also sign up for their newsletter [here](#) for irregular information concerning the compatibility of studies with family and care responsibilities.

6. Are there limitations in the number of contracts or years that PhDs/postdocs can be temporarily employed by the university in Germany?

This is regulated by the “Wissenschafts Zeitvertragesgesetz” (WissZeitVG). A person can have up to six years of fixed-term contracts before and after the completion of the doctoral program, respectively (12 years in total). If the Ph.D. program is finished in under 6 years, the “unspent time” will be a bonus to the 6 years after the Ph.D. program is completed (for example, Ph.D. finished in 3 years → after Ph.D., 9 years of fixed-term contracts are allowed) (see [here](#), download: ‘Ratgeber Befristete Arbeitsverträge in der Wissenschaft, page 14 -15, accessed 30.01.23, in German). Fixed-term contracts with third-party funding are possible regardless of whether or not the upper limits for the time limit for qualification have already been exhausted (see page 18 in the document).

Important note: The above information is just a general guide. The law can be differently applied in different German states or vary depending on the type of funding (e.g., third-party, scholarship, or university funding) and position (e.g. ‘akademischer Rats’-position or junior professorship). We strongly recommend that you seek advice from your faculty or a lawyer to clarify how the law applies to your situation.

Note on the current situation (Pandemic)- It is announced by the Federal Government that due to the **Corona crisis**, it will be possible to extend the maximum length of fixed-term contracts for an additional six months (click [here](#) for more information, accessed 30.01.2023) or check [here](#) (in German only) for detail information.

7. Is it possible to extend my contract due to COVID-19?

A potential extension of the Ph.D. or Postdoc contract due to COVID-19 as well as the length of the extension can vary significantly from one funding body to another. We advise you to directly contact the person in charge of that matter, and/or approach your supervisor/mentor to discuss other possibilities.

8. Are Ph.D. candidates students or employees in Germany?

At the University of Tübingen, Ph.D. candidates have to enroll as students (since March 2018; here for [reference](#), last accessed 28.01.23). Ph.D. candidates are considered as a researcher but enrolled as students to ensure their insurance status (according to written communication of Kirsten Sonnenschein, Graduate Academy 10.2020). However, the enrollment process is not entirely mandatory if you have a work contract of at least half the regular hours of a full-time employee. On that, the declaration of exemption is required.

9. How is your salary decided?

At the university, you are usually employed by the State of Baden-Württemberg. The salary for public service can be [calculated online](#), depending on the employee's tax class, working time, and work experience. The salary for a Ph.D. student depends on third-party funding and the field of research (e.g., [according to DFG](#) (in German), Ph.D. candidates receive salaries between 65 and 100% depending on their field of research).

10. Can funded Ph.D. contracts be extended after 3 years? If so, under what conditions?

In principle, Yes. However, this will depend on the project and source of funding.

COVID-19

11. If fieldwork is canceled due to COVID-19 and I need a year's worth of field data, could my funding be extended?

See our answer to question #5 in this document.

12. What are the most updated safety measures for our work at the University?

Please see [the hygiene concept](#) of the University of Tübingen for updated safety measures:

This page also contains the most updated news on the current situation, the level of Alarm, and what regulations come with it. These FAQs refer to the version of the hygiene concept from 28.01.2023.

The information will be modified according to the situation at hand. Depending on the level of Alarm determined by the State of Baden-Württemberg, a surgical mask (FFP2, N95, N95, KF94, KF99) is required with a few exceptions (under A1.2 in the Hygiene Concept). Currently, the obligation to wear a medical mask was extended until 01.02.2023.

As of 28.01.2023, in all areas of the university, the requirement for 3G checks was lifted. This means that participation in courses and examinations, as well as access to most university facilities, will no longer require the person concerned to prove that he or she has been vaccinated, recovered, or tested negative. 3G checks at conferences and conventions as well as at cultural and sports events on campus are no longer needed either.

13. Are there any resources in English for online teaching and technical support in addition to the ILIAS help team?

Please have a look at the guidelines on [Digital Teaching](#) provided by the University of Tübingen and the overall offer of training and workshops around the teaching of the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

14. Does the University provide help to both students and employers related to stress management?

The [Center for Psychosocial Counseling Service for University Employees](#) offers advice in stressful situations and conflicts which come with the corona crisis.

15. What happens to my salary payment if I have been in contact with an infected person and must isolate?

The staff council of the University answers questions relating to Labor Law and COVID-19 on their [information page](#). It states that wages are paid depending on whether you can work from home or not during quarantine. If you can, you should be paid accordingly. If you cannot, it depends on whether you have been fully vaccinated or recovered. If this does not apply in your case and you cannot come to work, you won't receive a compensation payment since November 2021 (for details see [source; point 10](#), accessed on 28.01.2023).

16. Can I insist on having meetings with my PI during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can s/he insist on having personal meetings with me?

At the moment, the university has relaxed the Covid-19 restrictions. Therefore, meetings can be arranged with PI in person or still be conducted virtually. Click [here](#) for the current updates concerning Covid-19.

Ph.D. & Postdoc Work

In addition, to the questions outlined below please also see [this presentation](#) from Prof. Paul Bons (02.2023) for questions concerning the rules and requirements for a doctoral dissertation and habilitation. The information provided in the presentation is not legally binding but a help to understand the in parts complicated legally binding German version of the doctoral and habilitation regulations of the Faculty of Science.

18. What is Habilitation?

The *Habilitation* is almost like a second doctorate, though it is not a degree and the aim is to qualify for a professorship. It is a four to six-year period of independent research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities that culminates in writing either a monograph or several articles of outstanding quality (click [here](#) for reference, last accessed 28.01.2023). Also, see [here](#) for more information from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (accessed 28.01.2023).

19. When is a Habilitation possible?

Requirements for a habilitation can be found in the "[Habitationsordnung](#)" of the Faculty of Science ("Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät" in German) (link accessed on 28.01.2023).

20. What are the general requirements for Ph.D. completion?

Please see [Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Science](#) (link accessed on 28.01.2023) for all the regulations concerning a successful completion at the university of Tübingen. Note that there is a separate document regarding supervisors and reviewing committees that can be accessed on the website under the downloads section.

21. What are the legal rights of Ph.D. students or Postdocs when publishing articles with professors? Who has ownership over the data produced by Ph.D.'s/Postdocs in collaboration with professors?

Please refer to [this link](#) (in German, accessed 22.03.2022) for more information. In general, the University owns the data, and the Professor (PI) shares some rights. Moreover, check the [University site](#) for more details such as open access and publication regulations.

22. When should I start to write my Ph.D. dissertation? How is this structured?

You can start writing your dissertation whenever you want. We suggest speaking to a Postdoc mentor from the same field and discussing this with your supervisor.

23. What should I do if my advisor and I do not agree on the number of publications a doctoral degree requires?

To obtain a doctoral degree from our faculty, journal publication is not necessarily required. The requirements for a doctoral degree are summarized in the [Promotionsordnung](#) (download under 'Information' 'Information Sheet for Doctoral Candidates and PromO-Rules and Guidelines for Doctoral Studies 2015'). However, for a true cumulative dissertation, the Ph.D. Committee ([Postgraduate Affairs Board](#)) requires at least two manuscripts accepted for publication. Nevertheless, the supervisor decides what is enough for a dissertation (find the document 'Recommendations for Cumulative Dissertations' under 'Information'). Alternatively, a monograph can be written (no publication required) but the supervisors have to approve the format. In addition, there is the option for a monograph including co-authored chapters (already published or in prep. publications). If your supervisor insists on a cumulative thesis with more than two publications and you think more publications are not necessary to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree, you should contact the [Promotions-Ausschuss/Postgraduate Affairs Board](#).

24. I am currently outside Germany. Will I be able to defend my dissertation on Zoom?

Yes, [online examinations are now allowed](#) (link accessed on 28.01.2023). For more details go to the section 'Current information and changes because of Corona crises' and download [this information sheet](#).

25. Are we insured if we work outside business hours and/or on the weekends? If a work-related accident happens, will the insurance company take responsibility?

For work accidents, click [here](#) (link accessed on 28.01.2023).

JOURNAL ARTICLES

26. When will we have access to publications in Elsevier journals?

As of 12.8.2020, the University library suggests using Interlibrary Loan & Document Delivery Services called [FIZ AutoDoc](#) (in German). [Read more](#) on Projekt Deal.

27. What are the online journals the University library has access to?

The catalog of the [Electronic Journals Library](#) is found here.

28. Will there be a local library in GUZ?

As of now (12.8.2020) and according to the university librarian, there will be no library in the GUZ.

SUPERVISION

29. I rarely meet with my advisor. What are the university rules for this?

For Ph.D. candidates, only one meeting per year is mandatory (see [supervision agreement](#); under the 'Forms and Policies' □ 'Application for Acceptance' link accessed on 28.1.2023).

30. What can be done when disagreements occur and no other advisors are involved in the project?

Depending on the type of disagreement, one of the faculty Ombudspersons can be contacted (click [here](#) for more information; link accessed on 28.01.2023).

In case of misconduct in science, click [here](#). (German only; link accessed on 28.01.2023). There is a list of Ombudspersons for download on this website.

31. If you have complaints about professors' remarks and behaviors, especially with regard to power harassment (not sexual harassment), who can you address while remaining anonymous? If a report has been initiated, what kind of actions can we expect? Can professors be accounted for?

Please see our answer to question 32. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against professors (and civil servants in general) if there is sufficient evidence of misconduct. Depending on the severity of the misconduct, the following penalties may be imposed: reprimand, fine, reduction of salary, downgrading, and removal from the position (click [here](#) for source in German; link accessed on 28.01.2023).

32. In case of conflict with an advisor, what neutral parties do we have access to for addressing such issues?

Please see: [Conflict Mediation Commission](#) (in German; accessed on 28.1.2023).

33. Is it legal that my supervisor does not pay me for writing my thesis/publications?

Normally, one is not paid for writing a thesis. If your project description, however, includes the publication of papers, the hours spent writing papers should be paid by the project. You can also refer to our answer to question #3.

34. Is it possible to change supervisor? How?

It is possible at any time to change supervisor. All involved persons have to agree on the change. Please hand in the form “**Application for Acceptance as Doctoral Candidate and Supervision Agreement**” again with your new supervisor and put a note on it, saying that this is not a new application but a supervisor change. (see page 2 of the document ‘Information Sheet for Doctoral Candidates’ that you find [here](#), link accessed on 28.01.2023).

WELL-BEING

35. Is there any emergency mental health service provided by the university?

Contacting the Clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy in Tübingen (Tel. 07071 / 29-82311) or dialing 112 is referred to as a point of contact for emergencies by Counselling of the Studierendenwerk Tübingen-Hohenheim. There is also a telephone counseling service (see [source](#); accessed on 28.1.2023).

36. What can I do when my advisor fails to protect me from an abusive coworker?

There are 4 steps recommended by the University concerning cases of mobbing, sexual harassment, or discrimination. These steps can be found [here](#) (download the file ‘Richtlinie Partnerschaftliches Verhalten an der Universität Tübingen’ (Guidelines on Cooperative Behavior)) On the German website there is also a brochure about sexual harassment.

These steps are:

- **First Stage:** Attempt of direct clarification of the conflict situation by the parties/affected persons themselves. For this purpose alone, the advice provided by a body mentioned under "Step 3" can take place.

- **Second Stage:** The persons concerned have the option to inform their immediate or next higher superior (e.g., head of the institute, dean), who is also responsible for an appropriate working atmosphere. In order to support parties taking this step, each faculty has a list of non-academic staff members that volunteer as specific contact persons for such cases.
- **Third Stage:** Complaint to one of the following institutions/counseling centers depending on the underlying issue: Personnel Department (human resources), Staff committee, Gender Equality Office, Psychosocial counseling center for employees, Psychotherapeutic counseling center for students, Company medical service, Representative body for severely disabled persons, Commission for Ethical Conduct in Science.
- **Fourth Stage:** If no solution could be found at level 3, the person/party affected can bring the case to the attention of the Rectorate Commission for cooperation. This step may happen with or without the help of the above-mentioned institutions.

Note - You can always contact the [representatives for PhDs and PostDocs](#) as well as Equal Opportunities in the Geosciences department (under 'Advice and Help' □ 'First point of Contact within each Department' and see poster).

37. What can I do when my supervisor behaves unprofessionally (e.g., excessive criticism, looking down on me and my project, etc)''

See our answers to question 32 for the steps you can take.

38. Is there an expert to talk to about issues related to mental health?

You can contact the [Psychosocial Counseling Service for University](#) (Contact person available for English counseling: Dr. Annette Mauch, Qualified social worker) (link accessed on 28.1.2023). Students can contact the [Counselling of the Studierendenwerk Tübingen-Hohenheim](#) (link accessed on 27.2.2022). For a list of other counseling services, click [here](#). (link accessed on 29.1.2023)

39. What steps should a victim of harassment take and what resources are available to help with facing harassment of any kind?

For sexual harassment, see the steps listed by the [Gender Equality Office/Gleichstellungsbüro](#). Also, see our answer to question 32.

40. Is there any mentoring program at the university?

For women check the [Mentoring and Training program](#) from state-funded LaKoG under Förderprogramme (in German link accessed on 29.1.2023) and check services offered by the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#).