

Guidelines for Good Supervision of Doctoral Candidates

at the University of Freiburg



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Checklist for Good Supervision

This checklist briefly illustrates basic aspects for the good supervision of doctoral candidates. It complements the *Guidelines for Good Supervision of Doctoral Candidates at the University of Freiburg*. This checklist can be used to discuss reciprocal expectations of the supervisory relationship.

General principles

- ☐ How do you reach agreements that are transparent and binding?
- ☐ How do you ensure an open and trustworthy atmosphere?
- ☐ How do you ensure the Rules of Good Scientific Practice?

Expectations

- ☐ How much time could and should be invested in the supervision?
- ☐ How do you define your own role in the supervisory relationship?

Framework of the dissertation project

- ☐ How and for how long is the dissertation project funded?
- ☐ What influence does the professional and personal situation of the doctoral candidate have on the dissertation project?
- ☐ In what kind of environment (e.g. office, lab, with certain equipment) does the doctoral candidate work?

Scientific guidance of the dissertation project

- ☐ To what extent have you discussed the contents of the dissertation project?
- ☐ In what time frame can the dissertation project be realistically completed?
- ☐ Has the exposé been written yet?
- ☐ At what regular intervals do you plan to meet to discuss the project status?
- ☐ How do you envision the monitoring of the project?
- ☐ Which opportunities are provided to present the dissertation project (e.g. colloquium for doctoral candidates)?

Academic development

- ☐ In which way can the doctoral candidates present themselves and their dissertation projects to the scientific community?
- ☐ In which way is the establishment of scientific networks supported?
- ☐ In which academic working contexts can the doctoral candidate gain experiences?
- ☐ To what degree are the doctoral candidate's individual career goals taken into account?

Co-supervision

- ☐ Are several supervisors' expertise and perspectives to be used to enrich the dissertation project?
If yes: What model of supervision will be used and how many supervisors will be involved?
- ☐ How will each supervisor's responsibilities be decided and where will this be recorded (e.g. in the supervision agreement)?

Introduction

In these *Guidelines for Good Supervision of Doctoral Candidates at the University of Freiburg*, the central aspects of good supervision are presented as recommendations. The guidelines are meant to give guidance as well as create opportunities to reflect on how to design a good supervisory relationship. Both supervisors and doctoral candidates shall become aware that good supervision can take many forms and is a task of great responsibility. In addition to the above mentioned recommendations, these guidelines provide an overview of the legal framework and requirements that are part of the supervisory relationship. Many changes have been made over the years concerning the doctorate, for example, a supervision agreement is now obligatory.

With these guidelines, standards for good supervision are established. These will serve to strengthen the culture of supervision at the University of Freiburg.

In keeping with the principle that the design of the doctoral examination process is the responsibility of the faculties, these guidelines are addressed to the doctoral candidates and supervisors of the University of Freiburg. In particular, they are directed at graduated researchers who have not yet gained much experience in supervising doctoral candidates. In doing so, the different cultures of academic fields are taken into account, as well as the diversity of doctoral paths and supervision models. Accordingly, certain aspects may not be equally relevant for each faculty.

The University of Freiburg is aware of its institutional responsibility towards doctoral candidates. One of its central tasks is to support doctoral candidates' academic development and independence. Both in its [Struktur- und Entwicklungsplan 2014-2018](#) (2015) as well as in the [Personalentwicklungskonzept für den wissenschaftlichen Bereich](#) (2018), the university stresses the importance of doctoral candidates. The university defines them as *First Stage Researchers* and regards them as a driving force for research. The University of Freiburg signed [The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#) (2017) and adopted the [Leitlinie zur Laufzeit von Arbeitsverträgen im wissenschaftlichen Bereich](#) (2016). With both of these measures, the university advocates for outstanding conditions in research, teaching, and qualification in Germany and in Europe.

By implementing these guidelines, the university aims to provide the foundation for successful supervision and strives to ensure and improve the quality of the doctorate at the University of Freiburg.

Various publications provide the basis of the Guidelines for Good Supervision (a selection of which can be found on page 17). Various committees, groups of people and institutions of the University of Freiburg were involved in the process of developing these guidelines. It was compiled by the Graduate Centre; the contents were agreed upon with the ombudspersons of the University of Freiburg, with representatives of the Joint Working Committee of the Doctoral Candidate Councils and SciNet (the network for young scientists and academics), the faculties, the deans' council, the rectorate and the senate. On 29 April 2020, the *Guidelines for Good Supervision of Doctoral Candidates at the University of Freiburg* were reported to the senate.

I. Design of the Supervisory Relationship

1. Clarifying the Framework and Expectations

1.1. Characterization of a Good Supervisory Relationship

Relationship based on trust

Respectful communication

Time-intensive supervision

The basis for a successful working relationship between supervisors and doctoral candidates is a supervisory relationship characterized by mutual trust, in which both the professional advice of the supervisors and the independent research of the doctoral candidates are equally valued. Open and respectful communication between the two parties involved is of central and essential importance. Regardless of the respective supervision model – whether in the context of a classic one-to-one supervision or co-supervision – supervisors and doctoral candidates form a research community that ideally generates a win-win situation for all those involved. Supervisors invest a lot of time and accompany the doctoral candidate during the doctorate, give professional advice and support doctoral candidates and their academic development in order to help them become independent and creative researchers. Doctoral candidates, in turn, substantially contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge with their research. By doing so, they also enhance the reputation of the supervisors in the scientific community.

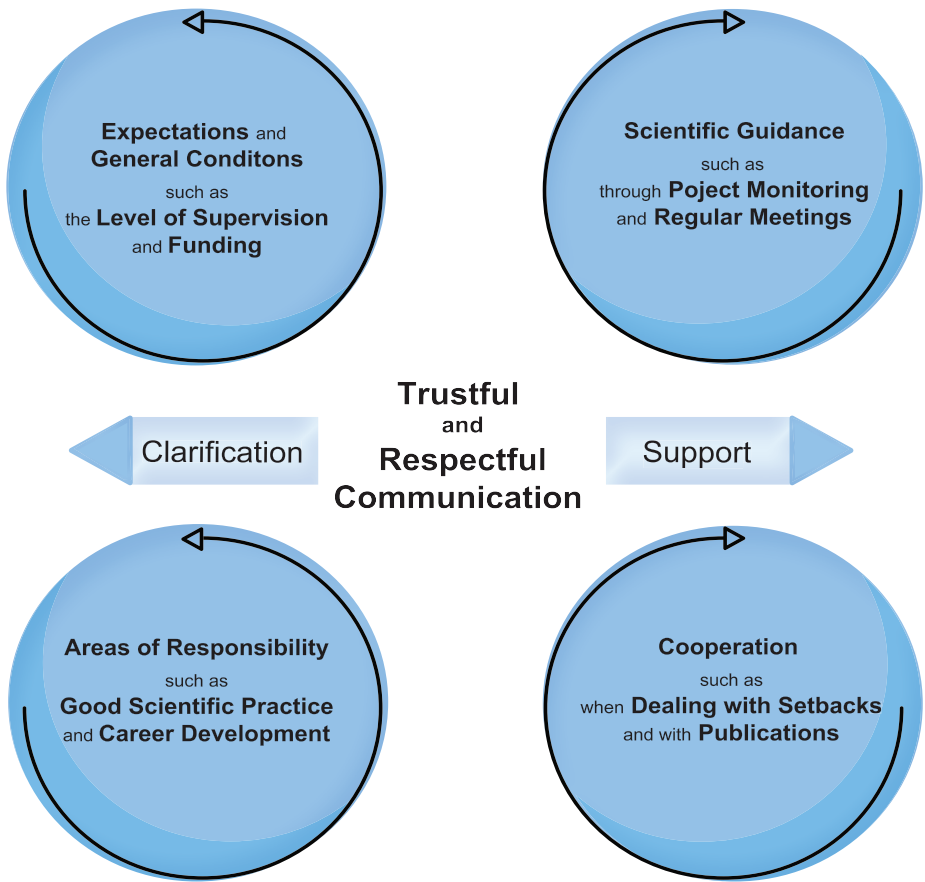


Fig. 1: Good communication in the supervisory relationship

1.2. Understanding of Roles in the Supervisory Relationship

Open and continuous exchange about their respective expectations of the supervisory relationship between the parties involved is a fundamental component of good and successful cooperation. The expectations of supervisors and doctoral candidates are related to the roles they have in the supervisory relationship. Whether supervision in a team or in a one-to-one supervision: individual role concepts can be different, but they are equally valid.

Reflecting on your own role concept

Examples of different role concepts¹:

The role as *advisor* might be defined as a friendly sharing of one's wealth of experiences with the doctoral candidate. Existing hierarchies and the institutionally expected function of evaluating work do not play such an important role. The instruments of control and oversight, on the other hand, are increasingly used by the *assessing supervisor*, who usually concentrates on the content of the doctoral project. Doctoral candidates can also take on different roles, in which, for example, the level of guidance or the need for freedom can vary. *Autodidacts* do not ask for much feedback, whereby *team workers* seek regular interaction.

Becoming aware of one's own role and recognizing the values underlying it requires a process of self-reflection. This process can be supported by exchange with colleagues and through coaching sessions for *doctoral candidates* and *postdocs* offered by the *Freiburg Research Services*. It is highly recommended that a first exchange takes place in a well-prepared preliminary talk. During this talk, it is possible to clarify one's own expectations and see whether they are compatible with those of the other party involved. A discussion atmosphere encouraging the participants to openly share their views is helpful. Once an agreement has been reached about the organization and design of the supervisory relationship, the way is paved for a binding supervision agreement (see also Chapter II, page 14). Furthermore, during the doctorate, supervisors and doctoral candidates should talk about the supervisory relationship regularly, since one's perspective may change over time. In this way, misunderstandings and conflicts due to a lack of transparent communication can be avoided.

Clarify ideas and expectations

Regularity of communication

¹ Different role concepts are discussed in Reis, Oliver and Szczyrba, Birgit: Beraten und Beratenwerden in der Doktorandenbetreuung. Rollengestützte Forschung und Weiterbildung zur wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchsförderung, in: Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Soziometrie, 10/2011, pp. 81–98.

1.3. Exchange about Financial and Personal Conditions

Funding the dissertation

Often, the question of how to finance the doctoral research period is decisive in determining whether a dissertation project is taken up at all. For this reason, this topic should be addressed early during a preliminary talk. On the one hand, doctoral candidates should inform themselves about the various funding options in their field. On the other hand, supervisors should communicate clearly about what kind of support they can give their prospective doctoral candidates. Various options exist: for example, supervisors can support doctoral candidates by applying for third-party funding for specific projects or they can write recommendation letters for scholarships. In this way, the appropriate format for each doctoral candidate can be decided on and necessary steps can be taken to secure funding (e.g. position at the university, scholarship, external funding). It is highly recommended that applications for doctoral scholarships are prepared well in advance, since these can usually only be handed in once or twice a year. Furthermore, the process of awarding scholarships can take some time (often up to six months) during which time the financial situation must be taken into account.

In case an application for third-party funding is decided on, the topic of the dissertation should be closely tied to the project. This allows doctoral candidates enough time to work on their dissertation project and can avoid spending too much time on work not related to their dissertation project. In general it is important that all involved parties mutually agree on a funding arrangement that all are satisfied with. If possible, funding should be secured for the complete duration of the doctorate.

Funding for conferences etc.

During the doctoral research period, doctoral candidates may face financial challenges apart from basic funding. When, for example, the doctorate takes longer than expected, additional funding needs to be secured. The question of how to obtain money for conferences, research in archives, material or machinery that is needed for certain experiments, is also an important one. Supervisors and doctoral candidates should look for answers to these questions together.

More information about funding and contact points at the University of Freiburg:

- Advising on funding options at [Freiburg Research Services](#)
- [Freiburg Funding Portal](#)

Personal situation

For a successful dissertation project, more than just the financial framework has to be ensured. It is essential that the personal situation of the doctoral candidate is considered, too. Depending on the individual's personal, family or professional circumstances, she/he may be limited in their ability to work on the dissertation project. For example, parenthood or a challenging workload might be reasons for a dissertation project to slow down. It is highly recommended that supervisors and doctoral candidates openly talk about all the aspects in life that may be relevant to and may influence the dissertation project. In this way, supervisors and doctoral candidates can work together on possible solutions which should be transparent and acceptable for all.

Setbacks are a part of the process of a dissertation project as well. These can be related to one's field of study, for example when a seemingly important aspect of the research does not work. In these cases, doctoral candidates should contact their supervisors as early as possible – talking to them can be both helpful and motivating.

Challenges

While working on their doctorate, doctoral candidates often experience an immense amount of pressure that can result in a mental health issues. This may be due to constant and very high pressure and expectations (e.g. to publish), precarious funding of the doctorate or uncertain career perspectives. Self-doubt concerning one's own abilities and performances can be a cause of mental stress, as well. In this context, the supervisory relationship can play an immense role: it should be possible to discuss the topic of mental health and possible causes of doctoral candidates' struggles. In this way, potential triggers can be detected early and measures be taken. In order to prepare for these conversations, the [Psychosoziale Beratungsdienst](#) offers coaching sessions to employees of the university. Additionally, this counseling service supports employees when work-related conflicts or private crises arise. For doctoral candidates who encounter a social conflict, the Graduate Centre offers [conflict counselling](#). If the conflicts concern the supervisory relationship itself, it is recommended to contact the ombuds office of the [central ombuds process for doctoral candidates and supervisors at the university](#). On its website, as well as on the website of the [Personalrat](#), links can be found that provide information about other counseling services at the university (for example, the [family service](#)).

Mental health



2. Scientific Guidance of the Dissertation Project

2.1. Common Understanding of the Contents of the Dissertation Project

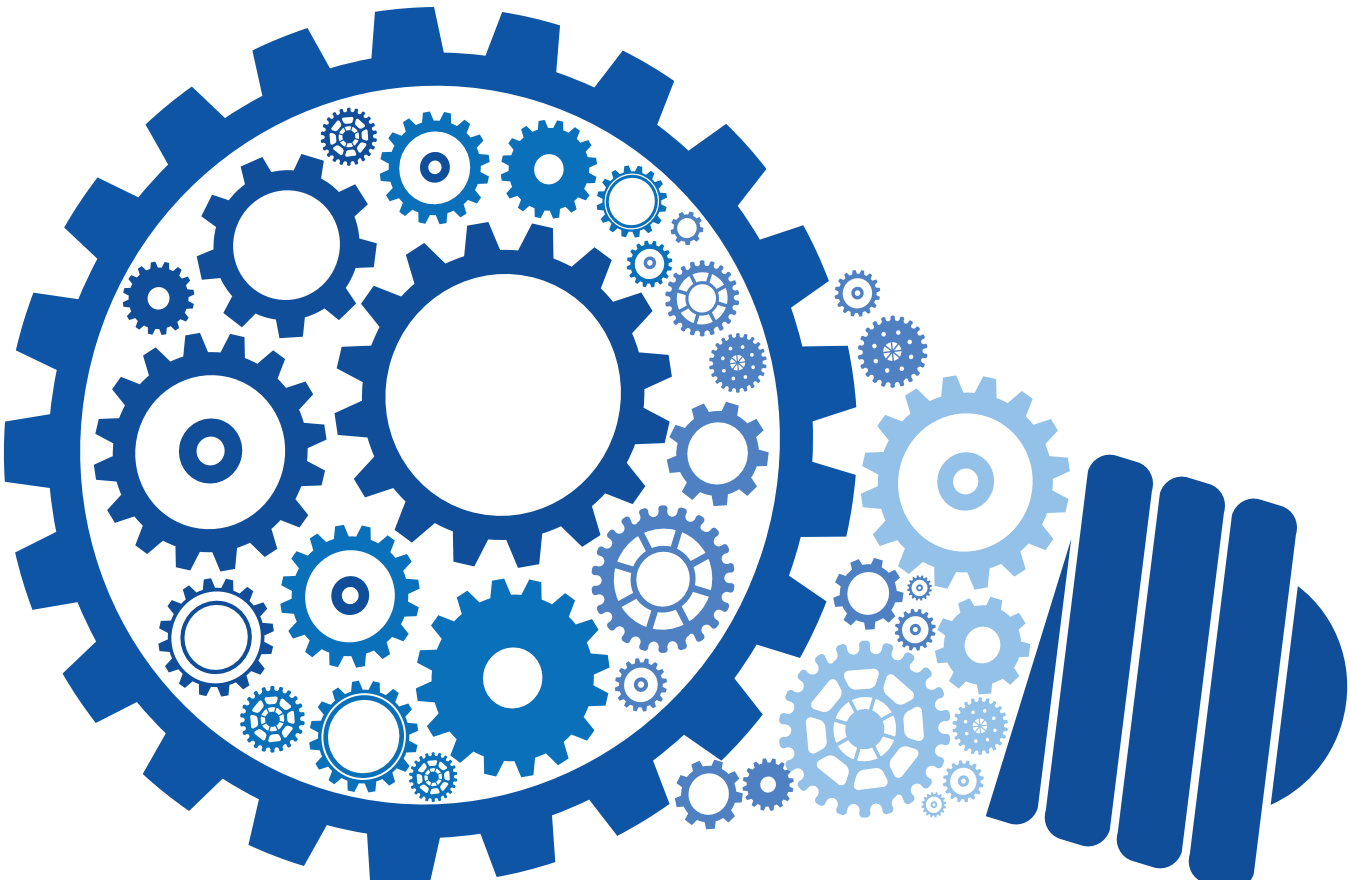
Development of the dissertation project

Involvement of all supervisors

Exposé

Three year project period

Scientific guidance of the dissertation project is one of the core tasks of a supervisor. This already includes the joint development of the dissertation project as well as a precise formulation of the leading research questions. It is immensely helpful if the supervisors are experts in the research area and have a good overview of current research in the field so that they can make use of this knowledge when giving content-related advice. Particularly for interdisciplinary dissertation projects, it is important to include all involved supervisors in the development of the project. Furthermore, it is highly recommended that doctoral candidates write an exposé during the first few months of a doctorate. This exposé introduces the research project and can be used as the basis for regular meetings about the progress of the project. If regularly updated, it provides a good orientation about the contents of the project during the doctorate. Additionally, an exposé is an essential part of an application for a doctoral scholarship. Depending on the subject culture, the way supervisors and doctoral candidates work together on developing the dissertation project can vary immensely. In the natural and life sciences, dissertation projects are usually part of bigger research projects, which means that the topic of the dissertation project is often fixed. In contrast, in the humanities, doctoral candidates can usually decide on topics more freely. Irrespective of the choice of topics and the cultures of academic fields, supervisors should ensure that the dissertation project and its leading research questions are tailored in such a way that the doctorate can be handled within three years.



2.2. Monitoring the Research Process and Instruments of Scientific Exchange

In the course of every research project, theses and concepts must be put to the test repeatedly, adapted to new findings and eventually be revised. To this end, supervisors monitor the dissertation project intensely and at all times during the doctorate; they should have profound knowledge of its progress. Regularly scheduled meetings between supervisors and doctoral candidates play a crucial role in this process. All parties commit to these meetings when they sign the supervision agreement in the beginning of the doctorate. On the one hand, these meetings provide the opportunity to discuss the current status of the research project on the basis of outlines or reading samples and, on the other, to clarify methodological questions. In addition, the next steps and goals can be planned – these should be continuously recorded in a work and time schedule. Discussions should be conducted objectively and constructively, especially when criticism is expressed. It is recommended that the results of such discussions should be written down in short protocols. This makes it possible for both sides to be sure of the contents discussed and there is also a higher level of commitment regarding the agreements made. Apart from the scientific and project-related discussion, these meetings may offer the possibility to address personal topics and difficulties. Another instrument of exchange has proven useful: doctoral candidates should regularly present their research and its progress, for example in their working groups or in colloquia. In these environments, doctoral candidates can receive direct and constructive feedback within a protected framework in their own university. The nature, frequency, and contents of the exchange between the parties varies greatly – also because of different cultures of academic fields – and should be adapted accordingly. However, regular meetings are of utmost importance in ensuring a high quality of the dissertation project and that the dissertation project is successfully completed.

Active guidance

Regular supervision meetings

Summary of meeting results

Presentation of the research project

2.3. Co-supervision

Recommendation
for co-supervision

At the University of Freiburg, there are a number of models of supervision, for example supervision with one supervisor, supervision in a team of two, exchange in a working group or within research networks (e.g. in collaborative research projects) or supervision through thesis advisory committees. Irrespective of the individual structure of the supervision, it is strongly recommended that at least one other person in addition to the main supervisor is involved in the supervision of doctoral candidates. This ensures the scientific quality of the dissertation project, since it is thereby enriched by additional expertise and further perspectives. In this context, and especially in the case of interdisciplinary research projects, care should be taken when selecting supervisors to ensure that the best possible synergy effects are achieved through the supervisors' research foci. Through co-supervision, responsibilities can be divided amongst the supervisors so that the workload for each supervisor is lightened. Additionally, this provides the opportunity to involve persons in the dissertation project who may act as second reviewers if the review process and supervision are not separated.

Sharing
responsibilities

Transparency

In order for the co-supervision to be a success, it is very important that transparent agreements are made concerning what should be achieved in the project. Furthermore, the respective responsibilities of the supervisors should be clearly defined in the supervision agreement. It is therefore recommended that joint meetings about the status of the dissertation project are held at regular intervals with the whole team of supervisors. These should be held at least once a year. However, the main responsibility for supervising doctoral candidates lies with the main supervisor. This responsibility cannot be delegated.

Example of good practice:

In an International Research Training Group (IRTG) at the University of Freiburg, doctoral candidates are supervised by teams of supervisors: Two supervisors from each of the two partner universities build a core team and ensure permanent scientific support. One additional researcher is added to the team to provide specific expertise. Together with the doctoral candidates, the supervisors define concrete goals that should be achieved within specific time periods – these are reviewed in regular meetings and can be adjusted if necessary. At least three times in three years, doctoral candidates have to present their research in symposia or conferences of the IRTG, at which their supervisors are present. In this way, doctoral candidates are provided with individual and intensive scientific supervision.

2.4. Good Scientific Practice

“Scientific work is based on basic principles of methodical, systematic and verifiable procedures, which are the same in all disciplines, internationally and interculturallly. Above all, honesty towards oneself and others is important.”

Gute wissenschaftliche Praxis an deutschen Hochschulen. Empfehlung der 14. Mitgliederversammlung der HRK am 14. Mai 2013 in Nürnberg

Every researcher at the University of Freiburg is obliged to know and observe the Rules of Good Scientific Practice. For this purpose, the University of Freiburg adopted the [Ordnung der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität zur Sicherung der Redlichkeit in der Wissenschaft](#) in 2011. Together with the establishment of the University of Freiburg's Prorectorate for Research Integrity, Gender and Diversity, it has thus created the framework conditions for integrating good scientific practice into everyday research.

As part of the supervision, it is the responsibility of the supervisors and the faculties to set an example of good scientific practice, to make doctoral candidates aware of the rules of this practice and to ensure that they adhere to them. At the same time, doctoral candidates must familiarize themselves with the Rules of Good Scientific Practice and act according to them. These include, for example, the protection of intellectual property rights or the authors' responsibility for the content and presentation of their published results. The correct documentation and storage of research data and the right to (co-)authorship in publications or the responsible performance of leadership tasks are also within the scope of good scientific practice.

Where there are uncertainties and open questions regarding the Rules of Good Scientific Practice, it is advisable to discuss views with colleagues. It is important to deal with the respective subject-specific requirements and specifications of the Rules of Good Scientific Practice. In addition, doctoral candidates and postdocs can take advantage of the qualification programs offered by the [Freiburg Research Services](#), which regularly include workshops on good scientific practice. By signing the supervision agreement, all participants acknowledge and commit to respect and follow the Rules of Good Scientific Practice and to avoid and prevent scientific misconduct.

Honesty

Integrity at the
University of Freiburg

Individual
responsibility

Addressing
open questions

Commitment to
compliance



3. Supporting Academic Development

Visibility

In order to be perceived as independent, self-reliant and creative researchers, doctoral candidates have to position and prove themselves in the scientific community. In doing so, they can also demonstrate that their dissertation project is of such a high quality that it meets the standards of this community. National as well as international meetings and conferences provide a suitable framework for presenting research projects to the scientific community and for testing one's subject specific expertise outside of their own university's protected environment. At these meetings and conferences, doctoral candidates can particularly profit from feedback provided by researchers who view the project from the outside and may be able to offer new perspectives and ideas.

Networking

In addition, it is possible to get in contact with researchers as well as research institutes at these events; doctoral candidates can build a network in the research community. Especially if doctoral candidates want to pursue a scientific career, it is essential that they actively and firmly position themselves and network in this highly competitive environment.

To this end, doctoral candidates should be able to rely on their supervisors. One of the central tasks of supervision is to introduce doctoral candidates to the scientific community and provide access to their scientific networks. Gathering experience abroad, for example in the form of research stays or conference trips, is an important part of the doctoral candidates' academic development and should therefore be encouraged.

Integration in research and teaching

Furthermore it is recommended, particularly if doctoral candidates want to pursue an academic career, that they take part in scientific work apart from their own research project. For example, doctoral candidates can gain early professional experience in science through the possibility of remunerated work on project applications, in teaching or in the preparation of publications.

Supporting professional goals

In order for these support measures to fit the doctoral candidate's individual career goals and wishes, supervisors and doctoral candidates should talk about these career goals, how to achieve them and explore possible perspectives. On the basis of their experience in the academic landscape, supervisors can share their expertise on academic career paths. They can, for example, give advice on which strategic steps – such as publication strategies – should be taken in view of a possible postdoc phase. This may also mean advising doctoral candidates not to pursue an academic career if success seems unrealistic. To inform themselves about various possibilities in and outside of academia, doctoral candidates can take part in cost-free workshops offered by the [Freiburg Research Services](#) and the [Interne Fort- und Weiterbildung der Universität Freiburg](#); they can also attend various advising services.

4. Ombuds Process for Doctoral Candidates and Supervisors

The University of Freiburg has a [central ombuds process](#) to support doctoral candidates and their supervisors in resolving conflicts arising from the supervision relationship or work on the dissertation. The process is strictly confidential and consists of two levels, making it as easy as possible for supervisors and doctoral candidates to overcome their inhibitions and speak openly about problems early on. The process may be broken off at the request of the person seeking advice at any time.

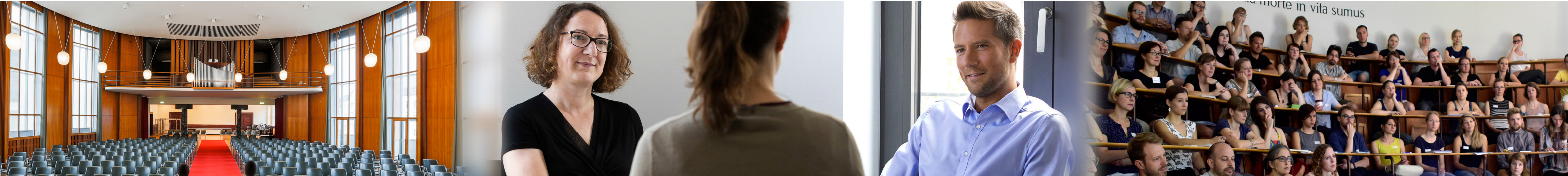
Two-step process

The first place to turn to in the case of a conflict is generally the ombuds office, which is staffed with two employees of the Graduate Centre who are trained in mediation and have many years of experience with conflict counseling. They discuss the conflict situation and possible ways of resolving it with the person seeking advice to clarify the matter. This discussion may also involve techniques for strengthening personal skills and practicing communication strategies in preparation for difficult conversations.

1. Ombuds office

If the problem cannot be resolved at the first level, the next step is to call in one of the two ombudspersons or their deputies, all of whom are retired professors of the University of Freiburg. They also begin by holding one-on-one discussions with the person seeking advice to form an impression of the problem situation. If the person gives his or her consent, the ombudspersons may then establish contact with the other parties involved and, if necessary, organize a discussion with them. It is also possible to contact the ombudspersons directly without first contacting the ombuds office. All parties involved are supported in their search for an amicable resolution to the conflict. If none is found, the ombudspersons may make recommendations to one or the other party.

2. Ombudspersons



II. Legal Framework and Conditions

The following information lays out the legal framework and conditions surrounding the supervision of doctoral candidates. It includes the many statutory changes to the doctoral education in recent years (such as making a mandatory doctoral agreement). The University of Freiburg has implemented the state law regulating higher education institutions in Baden-Württemberg ([Landeshochschulgesetz, LHG](#)) through the university doctoral degree regulations framework ([Rahmenpromotionsordnung, RPO](#)) and the following revised faculty doctoral degree regulations ([Promotionsordnungen der Fakultäten, PromO](#))². In addition, the RPO and the relevant PromO address further regulations. Doctoral candidates are only directly affected by the provisions of the LHG and the doctoral degree regulations of their faculty. If no faculty is cited when citing a paragraph or section from a PromO, it is identical across all the doctoral degree regulations listed in footnote 2. Please note, the terms used are non-official translations of the German technical terms.

1. Acceptance as a Doctoral Candidate

Prerequisite

The master's degree is one of the three degrees which qualify the recipient for doctoral studies pursuant to s. 38 (3) sentence 1 nos 1–3 LHG. Anyone wishing to write a doctoral thesis must apply for acceptance as a doctoral candidate at the earliest possible date, s. 6 (1) sentence 1 PromO. A decision on the application must be made promptly after supervisory commitment has been granted and the doctoral agreement finalized. The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate must be submitted to the doctoral committee of the respective faculty no later than six weeks after the doctoral agreement has been made. The doctoral committee will usually make a decision on the application within three months, s. 6 (3) sentence 1 PromO. The Faculty of Engineering will decide within one month, s. 6 (3) sentence 1 PromO Faculty of Engineering. The doctoral committee of the relevant faculty will decide on acceptance as a doctoral candidate and the withdrawal or revocation of such acceptance as a collective body, s. 38 (5) sentence 2 LHG. The faculty doctoral committee must advise the doctoral candidate of its decision in a written notification, s. 6 (4) PromO. Following acceptance of a doctoral candidate, the faculty is obliged to provide academic supervision for the doctoral candidate, s. 38 (5) sentence 2, second clause LHG. The main supervisor must assess the doctoral project two years after the doctoral candidate has been accepted to determine whether the project can be concluded, and advise the faculty's doctoral committee of findings of this assessment in writing, s. 6 (9) PromO. The doctoral degree regulations provide a maximum duration of the doctorate. This is generally for a period of five years, with an option to extend for a maximum of two years, s. 1 (3) or (4) PromO. However, the Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of Humanities PromO, s. 1 (3) provides for a maximum duration of six years plus the option for extension. After the maximum duration, the acceptance as a doctoral candidate also expires, unless the doctoral procedure has already begun, s. 1 (4) sentence 3 PromO Faculty of Theology. Periods of protection and leaves of absence (as specified in ss. 20, 22, or 23 PromO) are not included in the calculation of the maximum duration.

Application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate

Maximum duration of the doctorate

2 There are new doctoral degree regulations in the following nine faculties: Faculty of Theology, Faculty of Economics and Behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Medicine (Dr. sc. hum.), Faculty of Philology, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, Faculty of Engineering. (Status: 03.01.2020)

2. Doctoral Degree Supervision

In principle, university instructors (*Hochschullehrende*³), honorary professors, adjunct professors, emeritus and retired professors, and lecturers classified as *Privatdozentinnen* and *-dozenten*, from the relevant faculty may supervise, assess, and examine a doctoral degree, s. 5 (1) RPO. Early career researchers may, under specific circumstances, be granted the right to supervise a doctoral candidate, s. 5 (1) and (3) RPO. There are more specific regulations in each faculty PromO. The doctoral degree regulations must provide the opportunity for supervision and examination by professors from universities of applied sciences or the cooperative state university of Baden-Württemberg (DHBW), s. 38 (4) sentence 3 LHG. University instructors from universities of applied sciences shall participate in doctoral procedures as supervisors and examiners with the same rights and duties, s. 38 (6) LHG. On application, university instructors from universities of applied sciences may be associated with faculties from universities with the right to award doctorates for a limited period of time, s. 38 (6a) LHG⁴. In addition, in accordance with s. 22 (4) sentence 2 LHG, university instructors from another faculty or university may also be co-opted. Doctoral candidates accepted after 01 April 2014 must conclude a written doctoral agreement with their supervisors, including the minimum content stipulated in the templates, s. 38 (5) sentence 3 LHG.. The doctoral agreement must be signed immediately after a commitment to supervision is made, and prior to acceptance as a doctoral candidate; however only becomes effective on acceptance as a doctoral candidate, s. 4 (3) (4) or (5) PromO. The doctoral agreement is a legal document under public law. It is intended to give transparency to the supervisory relationship in both content and duration, to increase the binding nature of the supervision, and provide a reliable basis for a successful and respectful working relationship. The agreement should be adapted to suit the needs and life situation of the doctoral candidate and must be regularly updated and maintained. External doctoral candidates working on their dissertation, who do not have an employment relationship with the university or a direct connection to a professorship should maintain a high level of scientific exchange with their supervisors, for example by participating in doctoral seminars and doctoral research groups. The supervisor must ensure the doctoral candidate is familiar with the Rules of Good Scientific Practice, s. 6 (8) PromO. A central ombuds process for doctoral candidates and supervisors exists to address any conflicts arising from the supervisory relationship or work on the doctoral thesis (see I. 4. above).

Right to award a doctorate

Doctoral agreement

External doctoral candidates

Good scientific practice

Ombuds process

3 University instructors are defined as professors, junior professors and docents that are authorized to supervise doctoral candidates and assess a doctoral thesis, see s. 44 (1) sentence 1 LHG.
4 Bylaws of the University of Freiburg on the Association of University Teachers from Universities of Applied Sciences, dated 27 March 2019.



3. Central Registration and Participation of Doctoral Candidates

Registration	Docotoral candidates must be centrally registered on concluding their doctoral agreement, s. 38 (5) sentence 4 LHG.
Mandatory enrollment	All doctoral candidates accepted after 30 March 2018 must be enrolled, s. 38 (5) sentence 1, first clause LHG. Doctoral candidates who have the University of Freiburg as their main place of employment (employment contract for at least half of the regular working hours of a full-time employee) may be excluded from the obligation to enroll, s. 38 (5) sentence 1, second clause LHG. All doctoral candidates accepted before the 30 March 2018 may also enroll but are not required to do so.
Mandatory registration	Accepted doctoral candidates who do not enroll, must register, s. 1 (4) or (5) sentence 1, sentence 2 or sentence 3 PromO. Registration and enrollment are carried out through the Student Service Center , or, for international doctoral candidates, the International Admissions and Services .
Separate status group	Enrolled doctoral candidates are deemed a separate member group for the university and must be represented with voting rights in the committees formed to include and represent member groups, s. 10 (1) sentence 2 no. 4 LHG. This is reflected in the university constitution ⁵ .
Doctoral candidate councils	Doctoral candidate councils can make recommendations to university bodies on matters that concern them, s. 38 (7) LHG. In addition to the councils existing at the faculty level, there is also a Joint Working Committee of the Doctoral Candidate Councils, which is made up of representatives sent by each faculty.
Quality management	Doctoral education must be involved in the university’s quality management, s. 5 (1) LHG. The quality management system should provide for the principle of collective responsibility in making decisions on acceptance and admission to doctoral studies. The central registration of doctoral candidates serves to ensure quality; the University of Freiburg submits anonymized statistics on doctoral candidates, covering 33 characteristics, to the state bureau of statistics each year. The other quality assurance provisions in s. 38 LHG, such as the introduction of doctoral agreements, the appointment of ombudspersons, and the establishment of doctoral candidate councils must be seen in connection with s. 5 (1) LHG.

4. The Doctoral Dissertation

Monograph	The dissertation is usually composed as a monograph. Generally, it may be written in either German or English; for the Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of Humanities, submission in English must first be agreed on with the supervisor. If the dissertation is composed in a foreign language, it must also contain an abstract in German, s. 8 (or s. 9) (2) PromO.
Cumulative dissertation	The opportunity and university standards for a dissertation by publication are laid out in s. 10 (3) RPO. Six of the eight new doctoral degree regulations allow for dissertation by publication ⁶ .

⁵ For example, see ss. 5, 12, and 15 of the Constitution of the University of Freiburg dated 17 December 2018.
⁶ The doctoral degree regulation of the Faculty of Biology also allows for dissertation by publication, s. 9 (3) PromO.

5. Doctoral Examination Procedure

The doctoral examination procedure (assessment of the dissertation and oral examination) begins on application by the doctoral candidate to the doctoral committee of the relevant faculty. The doctoral committee’s decision regarding admission to the doctoral examination procedure is advised in a written notification, s. 7 (or s. 8) (4) sentence 3 PromO.	Examination procedure
The first reviewer is generally the main supervisor, s. 8 (s. 9 or s. 10) (1) PromO. The reviewers must compile a written review, providing sound reasoning, generally within two to four months. Should the reviewers issue widely differing recommendations (for example, differing by more than one grade level), a third reviewer will be appointed, s. 9 (or s. 10) (3) or (4) PromO.	First reviewer
The oral examination should be conducted at the latest one year after the dissertation has been accepted, s. 10 (1) PromO. In contrast, in (1), the Faculty for Environment and Natural Resources: at the latest, four weeks after the dissertation has been accepted; (2) the Faculty of Philology and (3) the Faculty of Humanities: within four months after the dissertation has been accepted; and (4) the Faculty of Theology and the Faculty of Medicine for the Doctor of Human Medicine: at the latest, six months after the dissertation has been accepted. The oral examination, usually takes the form of an oral defense (in the Faculty of Theology and the field of economics, the candidate may elect for a <i>Rigorosum</i> ; in the Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of Humanities, the candidate may also elect for a subject examination (<i>Fachprüfung</i>)), and is usually in German. Many faculties also permit oral examination in English, s. 10 (3) or (4) or (5) PromO.	Oral examination
The oral examination must be about the dissertation and must address content of the dissertation to a significant degree, s. 38 (2) sentence 1 LHG. Every five years, the faculty creates a report on its transparency and quality assurance measures for awarding grades. This report is made available to the other faculties by the Vice-President for Research and Innovation, s. 2 (5) or (7) PromO, for the purpose of sharing information and experience, and further development of the measures.	Transparency for awarding grades
Within one year of passing the oral examination (or two years for the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty of Economics and Behavioral Sciences, the Faculty of Philology, the Faculty of Humanities, and the Faculty for Chemistry and Pharmacy), the doctoral candidate must make the dissertation available to academia in an appropriate manner, by printing and distributing copies of the version approved by the first assessor or the examination board (or, for the Faculty of Engineering, by the doctoral committee chairperson), s. 13, s. 14, s. 15, or s. 16 (1) PromO. Publication is an essential prerequisite for the award of a doctoral degree certificate.	Publication of the dissertation
The doctoral degree is completed by handing over the doctoral degree certificate; prior to receipt of the doctoral degree certificate, the doctoral degree cannot be conferred, nor can a prefix be used (e.g. “Dr. des.”), s. 14 (4), s. 15 (4), s. 16 (2), or s. 17 (2) PromO.	Award of the doctoral diploma
The doctoral candidate has the right to view the examination documentation for a period of one year after conclusion of the doctoral examination procedure.	
The regulations governing joint supervision with other German or international universities (such as, for example, dual-nation supervision of a doctorate, known as Cotutelle-procedures are laid out in s. 24, s. 25, s. 26, or s. 27 PromO.	

Selected Publications

Bernstein-Derichs, Svenja et al.: Vereinbarkeit von Familie und wissenschaftlicher Qualifizierung. Ein Rechtsratgeber der Gewerkschaft für Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW), 2. Auflage, Frankfurt a. Main 2017

Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS): Leitfaden für die Betreuung von Promotionen, Bielefeld 2014

Byrne, Joanne; Jørgensen, Thomas; Loukkola, Tia: Quality Assurance in Doctoral Education – results of the ARDE project, Brüssel 2013

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG): Leitlinien zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis. Kodex, Bonn 2019

Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK): Gute wissenschaftliche Praxis an deutschen Hochschulen. Empfehlung der 14. Mitgliederversammlung der HRK am 14. Mai 2013 in Nürnberg

Jaksztat, Steffen; Preßler, Nora; Briedis, Kolja: Promotionen im Fokus. Promotions- und Arbeitsbedingungen Promovierender im Vergleich, in: HIS: Forum Hochschule, 12/2012

Leibniz Universität Hannover: Leitlinien für eine gute Betreuung von Promovierenden, Hannover 2013

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft: Leitlinie. Empfehlungen der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis und zum Umgang mit Vorwürfen wissenschaftlichen Fehlverhaltens, Berlin 2017

Lottmann, André: Bist du glücklich? Zusammenfassung der Befragung zur Graduiertenausbildung an der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt am Main 2014

Qualitätszirkel Promotion: Gemeinsam die Promotion gestalten. Handlungsempfehlungen für Promovierende bzw. Handlungsempfehlungen für Betreuende, 4. Auflage, Neustadt a. d. Aisch 2018

Reis, Oliver und Szczyrba, Birgit: Beraten und Beratenwerden in der Doktorandenbetreuung. Rollengestützte Forschung und Weiterbildung zur wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchsförderung, in: Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Soziometrie, 10/2011, S. 81–98

Schneijderberg, Christian: Promovieren in den Sozialwissenschaften. Eine sozialisationstheoretische Erschließung des Forschungsfeldes Promotion, Wiesbaden 2018

Universitätsverband zur Qualifizierung des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses in Deutschland (UniWiND): Betreuung Promovierender. Empfehlungen und Good Practice für Universitäten und Betreuende, 2. Auflage, Jena 2017

Wissenschaftsrat (WR): Empfehlungen zu wissenschaftlicher Integrität. Positionspapier, Stuttgart 2015

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