

Information Sheet for the Model Doctoral Supervision Agreement:

Suggested Additions and Examples¹

Purpose of Doctoral Supervision Agreements

The purpose of doctoral supervision agreements is to make the content and timeframe of the supervision relationship between doctoral candidates and their dissertation supervisors transparent.

The dissertation project should be planned and organized in such a way that it may be completed within a reasonable period of time.

In addition, the agreements have the purpose of regulating the relationships, the expectations, and the respective obligations of the doctoral candidate, the first dissertation supervisor, the second dissertation supervisor, and a possible mentor (e.g., a postdoc) in order to ensure that the research and the publications resulting from it are of high quality.

Duties and Obligations of the Doctoral Candidate

Regular progress reports as a record of achievement, participation in qualification measures, regular presentation of interim findings

Example:

The doctoral candidate agrees to work on the dissertation project agreed upon and to submit a written progress report and discuss it with his/her supervisors at least once per semester.

The doctoral candidate agrees to complete the required qualification measures.

The doctoral candidate agrees to immediately inform his/her supervisors of changes in the thematic focus of the dissertation, of problems with regard to the research question being dealt with in the dissertation project, and of any other changes that influence his/her work on the dissertation.

Example: Progress Reports

The doctoral candidate and his/her supervisors meet at least once per semester to discuss the dissertation project. If further supervisors or mentors are involved in supervising the project or if topics are to be discussed that are the responsibility of other supervisors or mentors, these persons should also be present at the meeting. The doctoral candidate must prepare a written report for this meeting and submit it to the supervisors no later than one week beforehand. During the meeting, both of the supervisors fill out a form² detailing the progress the candidate has made on the dissertation, plans for future work, any required courses of the doctoral program he or she has completed, and changes to the supervision agreement. The form should be made available to every participant at the meeting.

¹ Modeled on the recommendations of the German Research Foundation for drafting supervision agreements, DFG-Vordruck 1.90 – 10/14.

² The supervisors may request a form for this purpose from the IGA.

Duties and Obligations of the Supervisors

Regular academic advising, promotion of early academic independence, career promotion/mentoring, regular supervision to ensure progress (quality assurance)

Example:

The supervisors agree to supervise the dissertation project beyond the period of guaranteed funding and to offer the doctoral candidate regular advising on field-specific issues and the content of the dissertation. They take part in the joint progress reports at least once per semester and give the doctoral candidate feedback on them. They support the early academic independence of the doctoral candidate and introduce him/her to the academic community.

In addition, the supervisors provide the doctoral candidate support on career promotion/mentoring, on the submission of manuscripts for publication, and on participation in academic conferences/meetings.

The supervisors support the doctoral candidate in applying for financial support (e.g., scholarships or travel grants).

Workspace

The material resources made available to the doctoral candidate

Example:

The doctoral candidate will receive a workspace at (institute/department) _____ with the following materials/resources:

- workspace
- computer
- internet
- telephone
- access to laboratory
- necessary lab equipment and expendable materials
- funding for further expenses, e.g., remuneration for test subjects

Measures or Regulations on the Compatibility of Family and Academic Work

Example:

If the doctoral candidate has children, the supervisors agree to consult with the doctoral candidate before scheduling progress meetings and doctoral colloquia in order to ensure that childcare can be arranged.

The supervisors agree to support the doctoral candidate in applying for financial aid for childcare, if needed.

Whenever possible, laboratory work should be scheduled at family-friendly times.

The doctoral candidate should be given sufficient freedom alongside his/her academic work to attend to family matters. The supervisors should show consideration for limitations in the doctoral candidate's ability to work due to sick children.