



## QUALITY CRITERIA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF POTSDAM

The Quality Management of the University of Potsdam regarding doctoral projects is aimed at a minimum standard for quality criteria in all graduate programs and for individuals working on a doctorate in the context of the Potsdam Graduate School. The rights and duties of those working on a doctorate and their advisors shall be regulated transparently and perceived reliably within the institution. The Potsdam Graduate School goes by internationally recognized quality standards in structured PhD candidates education (cf. UNESCO 2001, EUA 2007) and continuously develops its minimum criteria catalogue in consultation with the faculties and external partners of the university in order to safeguard quality.

## MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR DISSERTATION PROJECTS

The following quality criteria are regarded as minimum standards to be met for dissertation projects. More detailed agreements and necessary subject specific modifications are possible.

- **Written support agreements:** The confirmation of a dissertation project in the context of the Potsdam Graduate School is regulated by a written support agreement which determines the rights and duties of the PhD candidates and her/his advisor.
- **Duration of the doctorate:** Advisor and PhD candidates oblige themselves to strive for a doctorate degree in the conception and implementation of the doctoral project within 3 years (with a necessary preparation year: 4 years). Framework conditions for this are possible (e.g. choice of a topic which has to be worked on in the above-mentioned time period, good preparation, an optimal advisory situation and networking for the PhD candidates, participation possibility at inter-disciplinary offerings of the Potsdam Graduate School).
- **Doctorate concept:** Within the first half year the PhD candidates presents a scientific concept for the complete doctorate in an appropriate framework (e.g. in a scientific colloquium or seminar) which makes the degree possible in the time planned. In arrangement with the advisor the concept may be modified.
- **Duty to report:** The PhD candidates introduces the progress in the dissertation project within a suitable framework (e.g. scientific colloquium or seminar) at least once a year. After arrangement with the advisor a short written report is alternatively also possible. The verbal or written report serves as a base for possible modifications of the work schedule.
- **Support team:** Support and accompaniment of the PhD candidates is made by two experienced scientists, if necessary from several fields of knowledge ('interdepartmental support'): Task of the support team is advice and scientific support oriented toward the

individual strengths and development needs of the PhD candidates on the basis of a continuous check of the doctoral progress. As a rule, support conversations with the main advisor should take place at least monthly. As a rule, joint consultations with the support team should take place at least twice a year.

- **Development of career plans:** Oriented toward technical criteria personal development plans are created and updated, and possibilities for realization discussed regularly in the context of the advisory team. The plans are based on goals of the PhD candidates as well as opinions of the support team on necessary further developments and accomplishment.
- **Publications:** PhD candidates and advisors strive to publish a fixed minimum number of subject-specific, high-quality publications in the context of the thesis project. The concept 'of high quality' is specified dependent on the subject.
- **Mentors:** PhD candidates have the possibility of identifying mentors in addition to the support team. On the one hand this can be an additional advisor, independent of the subject (e.g. gender specific) to advise on possibilities, on the other hand they can take on a role as a mediator in the case of conflicts (e.g. in the context of the support).
- **Good scientific practice:** Advisor and PhD candidates commit to compliance with the rules of good scientific practice.

## STRUCTURED DOCTORATE PROGRAMS

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Additionally structured doctorate programs must satisfy the following criteria:

- **Transparency in the doctoral student's support:** Clearly defined selection criteria, support structures, doctorate concepts and goals, with specifications accessible to all involved.
- **Family kindness of the education**
- **Equality concepts:** These concepts contain concrete and effective positive measures which provide for the equality of women and men in the doctorate phase. Deviations from a distribution of 50:50 % of the sexes within doctorate programs require a written explanation.

## SOURCES

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European University Association (2007). Doctoral Programmes in Europe's Universities: Achievements and Challenges. Report prepared for European Universities and Ministers of Higher Education. URL:

[http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user\\_upload/files/Publications/Doctoral\\_Programmes\\_in\\_Europes\\_Universities.pdf](http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/Doctoral_Programmes_in_Europes_Universities.pdf) [09.03.2009]

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2001). Quality Assurance: World Higher Education Framework of Action. Shaping a New Vision of Higher Education. Article 11.

Qualitative evaluation. URL:

[http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/what\\_is/quality\\_assurance\\_wche.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/what_is/quality_assurance_wche.shtml)

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Rules of good scientific practice at the University of Potsdam (in German):

<http://www.uni-potsdam.de/am-up/2020/ambek-2020-19-937-944.pdf>