UNIVERSITÄT OSNABRÜCK

Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Doctorates

Individueller Entwicklungsplan zur Promotion

www.uni-osnabrueck.de

Framework
Supervision
Good Scientific Practice
Further Qualification and Training
Career Planning

Preamble

A doctorate serves as proof of advanced scientific work based on independent scientific research. Taking this demanding path and making a contribution to the advancement of science requires considerable self-discipline and motivation. In order to support the planning and development of a doctorate, a series of agreements between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor are intended to help reinforce a sense of **responsibility**, **orientation**, and increased **transparency** during the candidate's academic qualification and training. The Individual Development Plan for Doctorates is therefore an important contribution to implementing the **Strategic Objectives for Researchers in Qualification phases** laid down by Osnabrück University.

The IDP contains agreements relating to the framework of the project, a supervision agreement, and a commitment to comply with the principles of good research practice. It also includes agreements on issues relating to further qualification and training in the candidate's specialist field, transferable skills, and individual career planning.

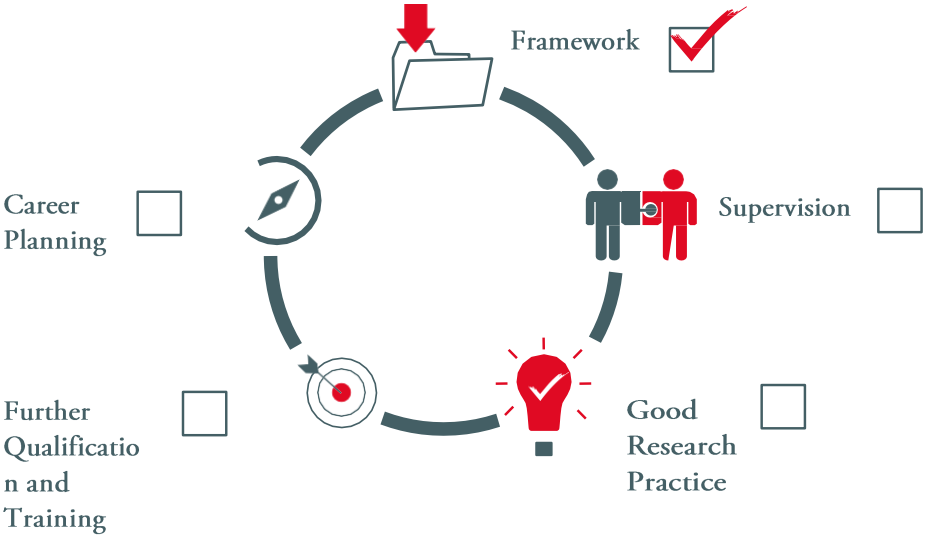
The IDP is based on the **Quality Standards for Doctorates at Osnabrück University**. It serves as a basis for discussion, helping the candidate and their supervisor outline and reconcile their respective expectations at the beginning of and during the doctorate. The IDP is intended to accompany the entire doctorate, forming the basis for regular work-in-progress discussions between doctoral candidates and their supervisors.

Any agreements made within the IDP are confidential. Supervisors are responsible for its safekeeping. In order to provide a record that the IDP has been concluded, please hand in the form "Confirmation of the conclusion of an IDP".

It is recommended that the IDP is updated annually.

Step by Step – The Structure of the IDP

The following five fields serve as a basis for discussion. They examine the process of planning, shaping and completing the doctorate as well as individual career planning.



The IDP is also available online at: https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/research/doctorate-and-postdoc-phase/pursuing-a-doctorate-at-osnabrueck-university

To help you fill out the IDP, recommendations, advice and examples relating to individual sections in the text are marked as follows:

1. Framework

1.1. Details of the Doctoral Project

Surname, First Name(s):

School:

Doctoral Subject/Field:

Target Qualification (Type of Doctorate):

First Supervisor:

Others (e.g. Co-Supervisors, Mentors):

The doctoral candidate has fulfilled the formal requirements for a doctorate in accordance with the Doctoral Degree Regulations (e.g. accreditation of degrees awarded outside Germany or outside the field in which the candidate seeks to take their PhD).

1.2. Content Planning

The intended dissertation topic is/ the dissertation topic will be located in the following field:

The dissertation will be written in the following language(s):

The dissertation will be publications-based ☐ / a monograph ☐.

The most promising options for this type of dissertation will be decided by (date):

The candidate has presented a project outline; it was discussed on:

The candidate will submit a project outline by (date):

Is the candidate required to deliver an oral presentation of their project outline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, under what circumstances (e.g. colloquium)?

1.3. Time Planning

The candidate has submitted a preliminary work and time schedule for their doctoral project (incl. milestones where applicable). This was discussed on (date):

The candidate will submit a preliminary work and time schedule by (date):

Alternatively: The candidate has submitted a time schedule setting out a time frame within which they will identify their topic. This was discussed on (date):

The candidate will submit a time schedule setting out a time frame within which they will identify their topic by (date):

You are free to design work and time schedules as you see fit.
Please include them in the IDP.

The supervisor and the candidate decide together whether there is sufficient time available to complete work on the dissertation.

Please note that the time available to doctoral candidates to work on their dissertation might be reduced by employment outside the university or by duties and obligations in teaching and research that are not directly related to their dissertation.

Time planning should factor in any family responsibilities (children, caring for relatives) and personal constraints.

In order to ensure that there is enough time in the candidate's doctoral studies to write the dissertation, the supervisor and candidate agree the following:

(e.g. agreements concerning attendance time and the organization of teaching duties)

The dissertation will be completed in the following time frame:

Planned commencement:

Planned submission:

1.4. Work and Research Context

The equipment and software needed for this doctorate are available.

These specifically include:

What steps are necessary to ensure that they are and remain available?

There is guaranteed access to the literature, archives and documents necessary for this doctorate.

These are specifically:

What steps are necessary to ensure that they are and remain accessible?

Is it likely that the candidate will have to draw on external expertise to carry out the doctoral project:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what shape or form will this take (e.g. cooperation, purchase of data, external research, laboratory work)?

What is the time frame for these activities?

The candidate's involvement in the activities of the school/department is supported by the following:

(e.g. participation in colloquia, assisting in laboratory work)[1]

1 For options relating to the candidate's participation in conferences and meetings see point 1.6.

1.5. Involvement in Teaching

Will the candidate have any teaching duties? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes: how many hours and which course types? (e.g. lectures, seminars, supervising tutorials)

What teaching content can the candidate offer? Can the candidate offer course content of their own?

1.6. Financing the doctorate[2]

The candidate's living costs during the doctorate in the time

from

to

will be financed by:

a) an established position at Osnabrück University: ☐

b) an externally funded position at Osnabrück University: ☐

c) a scholarship: ☐

d) a position outside Osnabrück University: ☐

e) self-funding: ☐

If the issue of financing is yet to be settled, supervisors should inform their doctoral candidates about the possibilities of external funding and draw their attention to the information and advice offered by Osnabrück University.[3]

In order to settle the issue of funding, the following is agreed:

2 The supervisor will accompany the candidate for the full duration of the doctorate until completion, irrespective of the duration of any financing.

3 E.g. the brochure »Promotionsfinanzierung« published by ZePrOs: https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/fileadmin/uos/30_forschen/80_promotion_postdocphase/60_ZePrOs/Dokumente/Broschuere_Promotionsfinanzierung_Stand_2025_April.pdf. ZePrOs also offers individual advice on funding opportunities for doctorates (Email: zepros@uni-osnabrueck.de).

It is projected that the costs for the doctoral project (e.g. conference costs, access to archives, office and consumable materials, costs arising from accessing external expertise) will be covered by:

(e.g. budgetary resources from the school, external funding)

It is also possible to consent to the funding of conferences subject to available budgetary resources and as long as they accord with the candidate's work and time plan.

For further financing options (e.g. for conference travel costs and research stays), supervisors should draw their candidates' attention to potential sources of financial support and make them aware of the information and advice offered by Osnabrück University[4].

1.7 Acquisition of key competences during the doctoral phase

The PhD and Postdoc Career Center (ZePrOs) at Osnabrück University offers doctoral candidates from all disciplines a wide range of advisory and qualification services to support academics in early career phases in their academic and professional qualification. See also 4.3.

To support doctoral candidates in actively shaping their doctoral phase and their individual career development, supervisors should draw new candidates' attention to the offers of ZePrOs at the beginning of the doctorate.

4 For a first overview of options, candidates can contact ZePrOs for a consultation : https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/university/institutions-from-a-to-z/phdpostdoc-career-center-zepros.

2. Supervision Agreement

The planning and design of a doctoral project should be managed to enable the candidate to successfully complete their project within a reasonable period of time.

Doctoral candidates can expect supervisors to support the doctoral project in compliance with any agreements made and in line with the work schedule, and to feel committed to this project. **Supervisors can expect** doctoral candidates to be suitably committed to their research project and to carry out the specified workload.

2.1. Supervisory meetings/progress reviews

The central element of doctoral supervision consists of regular meetings between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate concerning the progress of the dissertation.

If regular discussions about the doctoral project are not already scheduled – for example through cooperation in a working group or on a research project – it is recommended that the frequency of the supervisory meetings be determined as required. Such meetings should, however, take place at least once per semester.

The supervisor and the candidate agree to meet for a work-in-progress discussion once every:

The candidate has the possibility to meet their supervisor at short notice for consultations, advice and feedback as required.

2.2. Progress Reports

The doctoral candidate must provide his or her supervisor with regular updates about the progress of their doctoral project and report back on interim findings regarding the content of their dissertation.

It is recommended that candidates and their supervisors conclude agreements on the scope and frequency of reports on the progress of the dissertation.

2.3. Dealing with Conflicts

Should any disagreements, misunderstandings or conflicts arise, the parties involved should as a basic principle try to resolve the issue by engaging in dialogue in a mutually respectful way.

If additional support is required, the parties should refer to the guidelines for conflict resolution in doctorates at Osnabrück University.[5][6]

Issues relating to good research practice should be addressed to Osnabrück University's ombudsperson[6] for safeguarding good research practice and handling academic malpractice (cf. point 3).

5 The procedural guidelines for conflict resolution in doctorates and a list of contact persons is available in the menu "Dealing with Conflicts in the Doctoral Phase" on this website : https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/research/doctorate-and-postdoc-phase/pursuing-a-doctorate-at-osnabrueck-university.

6 https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/university/presidents-cabinet-and-committees/committees-and-commissions/ombudsman-committee.

2.4. Agreement to Continue the Doctorate

If it transpires that the dissertation will not be completed within the agreed time frame, the candidate and his or her supervisor should discuss whether the doctoral project is to be continued and/or what steps need to be taken for the project to be successfully completed.

The candidate's personal circumstances such as health issues or family leave should be taken into account in any decision.

In order to support the successful completion of the dissertation, the candidate and supervisor have agreed the following measures:

(e.g. modifications to the planning of content, financing the final phase)

3. Good Research Practice

3.1. Principles of Good Research Practice

The candidate and the supervisor pledge to uphold the principles of good research practice in accordance with the guidelines for safeguarding good research practice and academic malpractice at Osnabrück University.[7]

At Osnabrück University, ZePrOs provides regular workshops for doctoral candidates and postdocs on good research practice.

3.2. Safeguarding Good Research Practice

In order to ensure good research practice – in accordance with the standards laid down by the DFG[8] (German Research Association) – the candidate and their supervisor agree upon the following arrangements for the areas relevant to this doctoral project:

(e.g. authorship, citations, handling research data: use, storage and access)

7 The guidelines for safeguarding good research practice and handling academic malpractice at Osnabrück University can be found under: https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/research/good-research-practice.

8 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (2019): Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice.Code of Conduct. Bonn: https://zenodo.org/records/14281892.

4. Further Qualification and Training

4.1. Additional Scientific Qualification and Training

Which additional academic expertise does the candidate need to acquire in support of their doctoral project during their doctorate?

(e.g. familiarity with research methods, how to operate technical appliances)

The candidate and the supervisor agree on the following measures to improve visibility and networking inside the academic community:

(e.g. publications, participation in conferences and meetings, research stays)

4.2. Further Qualification in Teaching

To improve the candidate's teaching expertise, the candidate and their supervisor have discussed the candidate's participation in (the following) courses of learning and teaching in higher education:

4.3. Key Competences

Which other qualifications and skills might support the candidate's work on their dissertation and/or help to prepare them for their subsequent professional lives?

Courses in the following fields are regularly offered at UOS:[9]

- Science and methods (e.g. research methods, good research practice)
- Leadership skills (e.g. conflict management, team building, project management)
- Self-management skills and career planning (e.g. time and self-management, application training, career pathways inside and outside academia)
- Work techniques, language and media skills (e.g. academic writing, presentation techniques, academic English)

Recommendations for courses / desirable qualifications:

9 For more information see e.g. the course program compiled by ZePrOs, which lists courses offered at Osnabrück University in the field of academic staff development, see: https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/research/doctorate-and-postdoc-phase/key-competences-courses.

5. Career Planning

5.1. Career Prospects in Academia

If required, the candidate and their supervisor should, over the course of the doctorate, discuss whether the candidate envisages continuing his or her career in academia and whether this is advisable and offers good prospects for the candidate.

If the candidate seeks to embark on an academic career, the candidate and their supervisor should discuss the requirements he or she needs to meet, consider potential career paths, and plan the candidate's next steps (e.g. publication strategies, acquiring external funding, stays abroad).

Plans for the candidate's further academic qualification:

5.2. Career prospects outside the University

If required, doctoral candidates who seek employment outside the university environment upon completion of their doctorates or who seek an alternative to an academic career should receive support in their career planning.

In order to gain a first orientation in regard to a career outside the academic environment, the supervisor should make the doctoral candidate aware of the existing information and support services within the schools as well as university-wide.

Osnabrück University may assist candidates with career planning inside and outside academia through one of its support programs.[10]

10 These include mentoring programs (https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/research/doctorate-and-postdoc-phase/mentoring), a coaching program entitled »Career direct« (https://www.uni-osnabrueck.de/en/research/doctorate-and-postdoc-phase/career-development) or an individual consultation at ZePrOs.

Additional Agreements

The IDP was discussed on:

Name of Doctoral Candidate

Signature

Name of Supervisor

Signature

Imprint

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