Doctoral Studies Agreement

Please note: This translation is provided for information purposes only. In the event of any discrepancies between the translation and the original German version, the latter shall take precedence.

Saarland University attaches great importance to educating, training and fostering the development of early career researchers. This agreement is designed to facilitate a structured and effective approach to conducting doctoral research projects at Saarland University and sets out in a transparent manner the reciprocal rights and obligations pertaining to the relationship between a doctoral research student and his or her supervisors. Subject to the applicant being accepted as a doctoral research student by the relevant faculty and pursuant to the provisions of the applicable doctoral degree regulations, the following doctoral studies agreement is concluded between:

Doctoral research student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and

Main supervisor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Co-supervisors (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The above named doctoral research student intends to undertake a doctoral research project in Faculty       at Saarland University (Department:      ) and to submit a written thesis (dissertation) for assessment.

Scope and general information

* *Research topic / Provisional title*
Research topic or provisional title of the doctoral dissertation:
* *Estimate of time needed to complete the doctoral research project[[1]](#footnote-1),*[[2]](#footnote-2)Beginning of the doctoral research project:
Planned end of the doctoral research project:       (realistic estimation)
* *Research plan and schedule or project synopsis*The doctoral research project shall be conducted on the basis of a research plan and schedule or a project synopsis, which shall be subject to regular revision and may be appended to this agreement.
* *Provision of materials and research infrastructure*
Supervisors shall devote their best efforts to support the doctoral student and to provide the materials and research infrastructure necessary for the doctoral research project. The specific details of how the requisite materials and research infrastructure are to be provided shall be set out in the research plan and schedule.
* *Acceptance and enrolment or registration as a doctoral student at Saarland University*At the beginning of the doctoral research project, the prospective doctoral student shall apply to the respective faculty for acceptance as a doctoral student. Once accepted, the doctoral student shall report to the Saarland University Admissions Office for enrolment or registration as a doctoral student. This requirement applies to each and every semester of the doctoral research project (see [www.uni-saarland.de/promotion](http://www.uni-saarland.de/promotion) for further information).

Supervision of the doctoral research project and requirement to submit progress monitoring reports

* *Assistance and support of the doctoral student by the supervisors*
The supervisors undertake to guide and assist the doctoral student with respect to both content and methodology in the relevant field of research, to facilitate the timely and productive progress of the doctoral research project and to encourage the doctoral student’s independent academic research and career development. Where possible, the doctoral student should be integrated into a working group or collaborative research team or be given the opportunity to join a structured doctoral research programme. In their role as mentors, supervisors recognize that there may be a need to balance the competing commitments of the doctoral student’s family responsibilities and his or her academic research work.
* *Supervision meetings to monitor project progress*Regular meetings involving the supervisors and the doctoral student shall be held in order to discuss the current state of progress of the student’s research project. Both parties shall endeavour to facilitate discussion of the research work or other project-related issues whenever such a need arises. Whenever possible, written records should be kept of the mutually agreed results of the supervision meetings. Additionally, the progress of the doctoral research work may be presented at regular intervals in the form of short written progress reports. The supervisors shall provide comprehensive and constructive feedback on any academic or scientific texts produced and presented by the doctoral student.
* *The thesis assessment period*
The supervisors undertake to provide their written assessments of the doctoral dissertation in a timely manner so that the period from the submission of the candidate’s thesis to the oral presentation and defence of the dissertation does not exceed six months[[3]](#footnote-3). If necessary, the oral presentation and defence shall be scheduled to take place during the semester break (non-teaching period).

Academic activities and professional development

* *Academic activities*
In addition to writing a doctoral dissertation, the doctoral student will over the course of a doctoral research project carry out other independent academic and scientific activities, such as submitting scientific publications, attending academic conferences in Germany and abroad, organizing academic meetings and events. Any such activities shall be specified in greater detail in the research plan and schedule. Supervisors undertake to use their best efforts to support the doctoral student in carrying out such independent academic and scientific activities.
* *Progress presentations in a colloquium*
The doctoral student shall regularly give a presentation on his or her research in a (doctoral research) colloquium or in other meetings in order to receive feedback on the research work in progress and suggestions for improvements to the project.
* *Teaching duties*
The parties may agree that the doctoral student shall perform limited teaching duties, either in the form of a paid teaching assignment or as an integral part of the doctoral student’s employment contract at Saarland University. The courses and/or practical skills classes etc. to be taught shall be detailed in the research plan and schedule.
* *Additional activities (unrelated to the doctoral research project) included in an employment contract*
If the doctoral student has an employment contract at Saarland University that requires him or her to perform activities for the supervisor(s) that are unrelated to the doctoral research project, the parties shall discuss the type and scope of such activities (e.g. work carried out at a supervisor’s department). The supervisors shall endeavour to ensure that the amount of time spent on these activities does not significantly or continuously exceed the agreed scope of such activities and that the doctoral student is given sufficient opportunity (typically one third of the contractually agreed working hours) to work on his or her doctoral research project (c.f. Section 44(4) SHSG). Furthermore, these additional activities should, where possible, support the development of the doctoral student’s career and/or facilitate networking within an academic research environment or closely related field.
* *Study and research abroad* / *Stays at partner institutions*
During the doctoral research project, the doctoral student has the option of spending time studying or researching abroad or at another academic or non-academic (partner) institution. If applicable, the relevant details shall be set out in the research plan and schedule.
* *Attending specialist and general professional development programmes*
To facilitate the further professional development of the doctoral research student, supervisors shall routinely notify the student about suitable skills development courses or programmes at Saarland University or at other institutions. General professional development resources are provided to doctoral research students by Saarland University’s graduate student support and networking programme GradUS and by other professional development institutions at Saarland University.

Supplemental agreements

* The doctoral research student undertakes to adhere to the generally accepted principles of good academic practice pertinent to his or her area of research. The parties confirm that they have read and understood the Principles of Good Scientific Practice at Saarland University (see the Official Bulletin 2001, p. 342 for the original German version) and the Guidance on Preventing and Responding to Scientific Misconduct at Saarland University (see the Official Bulletin 1999, p. 54 for the original German version) and that they shall uphold the principles contained therein with respect to the doctoral research project.
* If a dispute arises between the doctoral research student and the supervisors that cannot be resolved amicably, mediation or arbitration by an independent adjudicator shall be initiated with the aim of resolving the dispute. In addition to support provided by the Doctoral Committee, advice is also available from other members of the university or university bodies (e.g. the committee representing the interests of the university’s academic staff, the graduate student support and networking programme GradUS, the ombudsman/ombudswoman, the Vice-President for Research and Technology Transfer). In the event of a dispute, both parties shall, as far as is possible and within reasonable limits, endeavour to secure the successful outcome of the doctoral research project, particularly with respect to guaranteeing the continued supervision of the doctoral research project and the continued provision by the supervisors of the necessary materials and research infrastructure (e.g. laboratory facilities, consumables).
* Additional agreements: (e.g. individually tailored provisions):[[4]](#footnote-4)

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Place, Date

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Signature of the doctoral student

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Signature of the main supervisor

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Signatures of co-supervisors (if applicable)

1. This estimation of the time needed to complete the doctoral research project may be shortened or extended where reasonable grounds exist. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The information provided does not confer any legal right to (continued) employment as a member of academic research staff, nor to the award of a scholarship or grant. However, this does not affect any rights and obligations arising from other employment contracts or collective bargaining agreements. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. C.f. Section  69(7) of the Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (SHSG) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. When compiling an individual doctoral studies agreement, and particularly when drafting additional agreements, advice and assistance may be obtained from the relevant bodies at Saarland University (e.g. the Doctoral Committee, the committee representing the interests of the university’s academic staff, the graduate student support and networking programme GradUS). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)