



Cologne model of structured doctorates

Preamble

The doctoral degree is central to scientific excellence as an independent research achievement of the doctoral candidate. It represents an outstanding academic qualification, the supervision and implementation of which are among the core tasks of the university. Doctorates contribute to the conceptual, theoretical or methodological development of a subject, provide impetus, open up new perspectives in their field of research and deliver new scientific findings. Furthermore, in addition to their subject competence, doctoral candidates also carry their knowledge into various areas of society to help generate and critically reflect knowledge. A doctorate not only qualifies a person for an academic career. Rather a large proportion of doctoral graduates pursue non-academic careers in the medium to long term. A supervision concept for doctorates must take all this into account.

For the University of Cologne (UoC) and its Faculties, responsibility for the doctoral process and the supervision of doctoral researchers is a high priority. The focus is on excellent academic supervision and the best possible preparation for career options within and outside academia.

The Cologne model for structured doctorates is an addition to the doctoral regulations of the Faculties, outlining a guiding principle intended to ensure the best possible supervision for all doctoral candidates at the UoC, regardless of their Faculty, form of doctorate, and funding. The goal is the transparent and comparable organization of the doctoral phase. As a joint project of the Faculties, the Cologne model also takes into account the specific features of the Faculties and subjects.

The Cologne model of structured doctorates comprises the following seven structural elements:

1. Supervision of doctorates

The supervision of doctoral candidates is primarily the responsibility of the supervising senior researchers. The University and its institutions, specifically the Faculties and institutes, must ensure both the subject-specific and the interdisciplinary and professional framework conditions for high-quality supervision. If possible, there should be a second supervisor in addition to the first supervisor from the beginning – if necessary also by other supervisors (dissertation committee or thesis advisory committee). The supervision services are specified in a joint supervision agreement. The Faculties ensure an orderly and transparent course of

the entire doctoral procedure. To this end, the Faculties can develop their own structured doctoral models.

2. Supervision agreement

A supervision agreement is an important element ensuring effective and transparent supervision. It should be concluded in the course of the first doctoral year. The Albertus Magnus Center (AMC) provides all Faculties with a legally approved template based on the recommendations of the German Research Foundation (DFG) (form 1.90 - 10/14) and the German Council of Science and Humanities (Drs. 1704-11). For faculty- or programme-specific supervision agreements, this template can be individually adapted.

3. Additional offers

In addition to an excellent academic education, doctoral candidates should be well prepared for diverse career options, e.g. in the form of tailored skills development, both within and outside academia. The Cologne model provides numerous offers for this purpose: introductory events on the doctoral process, on good scientific practice, furthermore information on counselling opportunities at the UoC on various topics (e.g. career development, discrimination, ombudsperson services, psycho-social counselling), research infrastructure; enabling participation in scientific networks (conferences, seminars, class sessions, etc.); courses on general and methodological competence building; as well as participation in further education and seminars on subject-specific and interdisciplinary key qualifications.

4. Internationalization

As a globally oriented research university, the UoC seeks cooperation with the best researchers worldwide and recruits the best early-career researchers from all over the world. If possible, advertisements for doctoral positions are published internationally. All participants undertake to be culturally and linguistically sensitive in their communication.

The international aspect will also be taken into account in the interdisciplinary qualifications and appropriate further training courses (e.g. in English) will be provided. International doctoral models such as cotutelle procedures, doctor europaeus or joint doctorates are explicitly promoted.

5. Quality assurance

The Cologne model supports the application of general and transparent quality standards in doctoral supervision. Transparent and institutionalized procedures are intended to ensure scientific integrity. The Faculties are responsible for actively pursuing the rules of good scientific practice, also in the supervision of doctoral researchers, and for communicating them in appropriate events. The Faculties shall also ensure transparent decision-making procedures (for example in personnel decisions, questions of funding, and conflict resolution). This also includes institutionalized and regular feedback opportunities at Faculty and university level. All doctoral candidates also have access to an independent ombudsperson system at Faculty and university level.

6. Graduate schools

The Faculties are institutionally responsible for doctorates. This is laid down in the doctoral regulations. The Faculties have set up central graduate schools that ensure comparable quality standards, taking into account subject-specific requirements and Faculty-specific regulations. At the same time, they act as a coordinating body for the activities of the graduate institutions within the respective Faculty and vis-à-vis the central institutions of the UoC, especially the Albertus Magnus Center.

7. Albertus Magnus Center

The Albertus Magnus Center is a joint institution of the Faculty graduate schools. Within the network of faculty-wide graduate schools at the UoC, it is the central information, training, and counselling centre for all those interested in doctoral studies as well as doctoral candidates and postdocs at the University of Cologne. The aim of the AMC is to provide effective support above all during the transition phases between career steps. It represents the promotion of early-career academics at the UoC internally and externally.

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