Graduate Center handout on the supervision agreement between supervisor and doctoral candidate

Introductory information

At the beginning of the doctorate supervisor and doctoral candidate conclude a supervision agreement on the writing of a dissertation (short: supervision agreement) according to the doctoral degree regulations of the respective faculty. This agreement defines certain basic points of the doctorate.

The „Grundsätze für Promotionsordnungen an der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel“ („Principles for doctoral degree regulations of Kiel University“) in the version of 15 May 2013 prescribe such an agreement in section (2), and specify in section (3) the elements that it must at least contain:

1. Topic of the dissertation
2. Doctoral degree pursued
3. Responsible faculty
4. Statement of the supervisor
5. Declaration of consent according to the data protection laws
6. Declaration to abide by the principles of Good Scientific Practice
7. Declaration concerning commercial agencies organizing doctorates

Some faculties prescribe further points that should also be the object of an active supervision.

The Graduate Center of Kiel University regularly offers consulting to doctoral candidates pursuing a doctorate in all subject areas on offer at the university. This includes consulting in cases of conflict, which are then handed over to the two persons of trust of the Graduate Center. The experiences from these discussions show that it might make sense if both parties concerned discuss further aspects to the ones listed above and then document them in an additional memorandum if necessary. This is a transparent and accessible way to determine the pertinent points of a specific doctorate and to avoid misunderstandings later on.

The following list contains points that might be of interest for such a discussion. Since the academic disciplines at the CAU can be very different interested parties can choose freely those points that are relevant for the doctoral research project in questions. They are also invited to add further points if they wish.

Start of the doctorate

In many cases a doctoral research projects starts with one or more informal discussions between the prospective doctoral candidate and potential supervisors. Issues discussed are usually ideas for a research projects as well as possible topics for a dissertation. The Graduate Center offers both
parties the following checklist for the subsequent planning phase. We recommend that you go through the points in the order listed below:

**Have you thought about the following?**
**Have you clarified or agreed upon the following?**
**Have you decided upon the following or initiated it?**

**Important:**

1. Does the doctoral candidate have precise knowledge of the doctoral degree regulations of their faculty and of the further information on the doctorate according to the website of the dean’s office?
   - The doctoral degree regulations are legally binding for all parties involved. They cannot be modified by the supervisor or by persons working in the dean’s office of a faculty. If you have any questions concerning the interpretation of the doctoral degree regulations please approach the contact person in the dean’s office of your faculty in charge of the doctorates.

**Optional:**

2. Is there supposed to be one or more co‐supervisors or second supervisors?
3. Are there any persons in other faculties or external institutions who are experts in the subject and whom the doctoral candidate could contact with questions?

**Important:**

4. How is the doctorate funded?
   - Cost of living of the doctoral candidate?
   - Funds for the research project?
5. If applications for grants and/or research funding are being planned:
   - What is the schedule for these applications?
   - What are the documents both sides need to supply?

**Important:**

6. How often and for how long are supervisor and doctoral candidates going to meet during the doctorate?
7. Is the doctoral candidate supposed to prepare data, texts and other documents for these meetings and submit them in advance?

**Important:**

8. Is the doctoral candidate supposed to attend events to learn particular methods or acquire particular skills? If yes, what is the schedule for this? If there are any costs, who pays for them?

**Obligatory:**

9. Have you already signed an agreement on the supervision of a doctorate according to the doctoral degree regulations?
10. Have you already applied to be accepted as a doctoral candidate by the faculty that will organize the doctoral examination procedure?
11. According to § 43 of the “Hochschulgesetz des Landes Schleswig-Holstein” (Higher Education Act of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein) doctoral candidates are obliged to matriculate. The details are prescribed by the matriculation regulation of Kiel University: if you have already studied at Kiel University you can rematriculate as a doctoral candidate; if not you can matriculate anew as a doctoral candidate.

Optional:

12. Does it make sense to append the finished abstract (if available) to the supervision agreement?

13. All doctoral candidates of Kiel University are invited to take advantage of the offers of the Graduate Center. For this they must register with the Graduate Center. The registration requires the submission of a copy of the acceptance letter of the faculty that they have been accepted as a doctoral candidate.

Important:

Form of the dissertation and publication of research results – *please discuss this at the beginning and during the final stages of the doctorate.*

14. At which stage of the doctorate should a doctoral candidate start to present their research results to their scientific community, inside Kiel University as well as outside (conferences and other events)? And in what form?

15. At which stage should a doctoral candidate start publishing his research results? And in what form? How many publications are expected?

16. Should the dissertation be submitted as a monograph or as a cumulative dissertation? What rules does the faculty postulate for cumulative dissertations? Do the expectations of the supervisor match these rules?

Important:

17. In which language is the dissertation supposed to be written? Does the doctoral candidate possess the necessary language skills? If not, when and how are they going to acquire them?

18. Which language will be used in the oral examination? Does the doctoral candidate possess the necessary language skills? If not, when and how are they going to acquire them?