

Guidelines for Doctoral Training at Max Planck Institutes

Preamble

The following *Guidelines for Doctoral Training at Max Planck Institutes* supplement the doctoral study regulations of the universities, and do not apply whenever they are incompatible with these regulations.

1. The Max Planck Society is committed to excellence. For doctoral thesis research this implies that much is expected of the doctoral students, whose work is to contribute to a common research program, as well as of the supervisors, who are to make their best efforts to help doctoral students realize their full potential.
2. Doctoral training offered at Max Planck Institutes, above all, serves the needs of the doctoral students and helps them pursue a successful career. All rules and regulations are to be applied flexibly and in good faith. The training also ensures that doctoral students become familiar with the principles of good scientific practice.
3. Doctoral dissertations produced at Max Planck Institutes are independent work within the limits of disciplinary and professional practice. Max Planck Institutes and thesis supervisors are committed to ensuring that the personal accomplishments of doctoral students in their research will be visible as such to the scientific community at large.
4. The total number of doctoral students per supervisor must be such as to ensure appropriate thesis supervision. For many, but not all, disciplines, it is advisable that a principal supervisor should not supervise more than eight doctoral students at the same time. A higher number of doctoral students per principal supervisor is viable in certain fields of research, or if the principal supervisor involves additional experienced scientists or scholars in the day-to-day supervision of doctoral students.
5. Thesis supervisors will have regular consultations with their doctoral students about the progress of their thesis work. Where suitable and desired by doctoral students, the Max Planck Institute will form a thesis committee that consists of at least three academics, including the student's principal supervisor. Thesis committees will be available for regular discussions with doctoral students on the progress of their thesis work.
6. To the extent that it contributes to the successful conclusion of their research, is conducive to their education, and does not interfere with the timely completion of an excellent dissertation, doctoral students may or should, depending upon their field of study and in agreement with their principal supervisors, attend courses and conferences, publish their research results (see 9 for details), participate in teaching, and engage in other professional activities.
7. Max Planck Institutes accepting a doctoral student will cooperate with a suitable university towards this student being admitted to the appropriate doctoral programme if such a programme exists, and towards his or her principal supervisor being eligible to serve as reviewer (*Erstgutachter*) of the dissertation (see also the *Memorandum of Understanding* between the *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* and the Max Planck Society of March 14, 2008).
8. Doctoral students must at all stages of their work be informed about when they are expected to complete their thesis. Principal supervisor and doctoral student will be in regular consultation with each other about the schedule for completing the dissertation. A doctoral thesis should be completed in a timely fashion according to what is customary in the discipline concerned. Apart from exceptional cases, the duration of a thesis should not exceed five years.

9. Authorship agreements between doctoral students and supervisors must obey the rules of internationally recognized good scientific practice in the relevant field of study. Supervisors should encourage publication of research results even while the work for the dissertation is still in progress if publication promotes the students' scientific careers and does not interfere with the completion of the thesis.
10. In the course of their doctoral training, students must have an opportunity to refer to an independent party in all matters relating to their education, particularly in cases of disagreement with their supervisor. The independent party must make an effort to settle conflicts to the satisfaction of all sides, taking into account the legitimate interests of both the doctoral student and the Max Planck Institute providing the training, and aiming to preserve or restore mutual confidence and cooperation.

Additional Notes

The above *Guidelines for Doctoral Training at Max Planck Institutes* do not address the issues (i) work and family life, (ii) administrative support for international PhD students, and (iii) stipends *versus* contracts, as these are addressed in separate policies of the Max Planck Society.

The Scientific Council of the Max Planck Society acknowledges the *Best-Practice Guidelines* developed by the PhDnet (see enclosure) and recommends that these guidelines should be considered by Max Planck Institutes when appropriate.