

Principles of good practice in the advancement of early-career researchers in the Faculty of Human Sciences:

– Explanatory notes on the doctoral level –

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(0) Preliminary remarks

- a. This paper explains in detail the key points of the declaration of commitment of the members of the Faculty of Human Sciences to comply with the principles of good practice in the advancement of early-career researchers during the doctoral phase.
- b. The paper serves as a compilation of relevant information and guidelines but is not to be understood as a regulatory requirement. However, those passages that derive from university regulations, in particular the *University Ordinance* (UniV) and the Promotionsreglement der Philosophisch-humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Bern *Doctoral Regulations of the Faculty of Human Sciences of the University of Bern* (Doctoral Regulations), are non-negotiable. In the event of differences between this document and university regulations, the provisions set out in the regulations apply.
- c. At the Faculty of Human Sciences, PhD projects are usually completed as part of a structured doctoral program, which, in addition to the close connection to a supervisor, envisages educational achievements amounting to 10 ECTS credit points. Alternatively, it is possible to complete a PhD project as a member of a graduate school or – at the request of a potential supervisor – as an individual doctorate, i.e., in close connection with this person without additional educational requirements. There may be specific requirements for doctoral studies in graduate schools or for individual doctorates that arise from special regulatory provisions in the former case and from special agreements between doctoral candidates and their respective supervisor. Therefore,

this paper deals with PhD projects that are completed within a structured doctoral program of the Faculty. This does not change the fact that the members of the Faculty of Human Sciences are also committed to good practice in the advancement of early-career researchers in PhD projects that arise within the framework of graduate schools or individual doctorates. In such cases, the principles formulated here are binding to the extent that they do not contradict special stipulations of the graduate school or special agreements of the individual doctorate.

- d. The paper deals with (1) desirable employment relationships, (2) doctoral supervision, (3) details on the form of the mentoring program and (4) functions of the Faculty's *Advisory Center for Early-Career Researchers*.

(1) Employment relationships

- a. The start of a PhD project presupposes its acceptance by a supervisor from the Faculty but not the existence of an employment relationship with the University of Bern. Within the Faculty's structured doctoral program, doctorates can therefore also be completed as external doctorates. However, as a rule there will be an employment relationship with the University of Bern for a doctorate within the structured doctoral program.
- b. In the case of external doctorates within the structured doctoral program, special agreements are required between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor with regard to the structuring of the doctorate, in particular regarding the definition of milestones, the completion of educational achievements and the intended overall duration of the PhD project. The duration of the doctorate becomes a particularly important issue if the doctoral candidate is in a time-intensive employment relationship with an employer outside the University of Bern and can therefore only invest a limited amount of time to making progress in the PhD project. Nevertheless, not exceeding a maximum total of 4 years should still be aimed for in the case of external doctorates, insofar as this is feasible given the person's current circumstances.
- c. In the case of external doctorates, it should also be noted that the doctoral candidates are not entitled to legal advice from the University of Bern or to appeal to the University's Ombuds Office, due to the lack of an employment relationship with the University of Bern. Nevertheless, the mentoring program of the Faculty of Human Sciences is also open to this group of people. In the event of doctorate-related problems, external doctoral candidates can also be advised to contact the Faculty's Intermediate Staff Representative or the University's Intermediate Staff Association for advice or support.
- d. Non-external doctoral candidates have an employment relationship with the University of Bern. The position can be based on cantonal personnel funds of the University, on external funds, or on a mixture of both sources. As a rule, these funds are either allocated to the supervisor by the university, faculty or institute or have been acquired by the supervisor from an external funder. In the case of supervisors without their own personnel or external funds, financing can also come from earmarked funds allocated to the supervisor by the head of the institute or division.
- e. Doctoral employment at the University of Bern is preferably in a doctoral position, or also in a Teaching and Research Assistant III position. Rare exceptions are cases in which, for example, a person who already holds a permanent position as a research

assistant wants to pursue a doctorate. In such cases, special agreements are required between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor, in particular with regard to the question of how the research time needed for the completion of the PhD project can be guaranteed.

- f. For doctoral positions and Teaching and Research Assistant III positions, the duration of contracts with the goal of successfully completing a doctorate is limited to a total of 4 years. To enable the doctoral candidates to plan successfully, the contract should not let this maximum period be too fragmented. For this reason, it is considered optimal for employment contracts with the goal of completing a doctorate to be for a term of 3 years, together with an extension option for a further year. However, the extension option should only be applied if it is foreseeable after 3 years that the envisaged PhD project can be successfully completed in the course of the following year. Nevertheless, doctoral candidates should bear in mind that constraints may stand in the way of completion within this optimal duration. This is especially the case with financing from an externally funded project that will expire at an earlier date without the certainty of funding approval that would enable follow-up financing. In such cases, the associated opportunities and risks should be carefully considered by the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor before starting the doctorate.
- g. An important feature of both doctoral positions and Teaching and Research Assistant III positions is the definition of “protected research time” for the pursuit of the researcher’s own PhD project. In the Faculty of Human Sciences, protected research time is defined as all activities that are directly related to the realization of the PhD project, i.e., from finding a topic and then literature research, study planning, data collection and analysis to writing it up and – in the case of cumulative dissertations – publishing the results. Depending on the employment relationship, some or all of the working time remaining after deducting the protected research time is to be spent on tasks that are not directly related to the PhD project, under the direction of the supervisor or possibly of another person having a management role within the organizational unit. This may involve a wide variety of teaching-related or administrative tasks as well as research activities that do not directly relate to the candidate’s PhD project. In addition to committee work at institute, faculty or university level, educational achievements of 10 ECTS points that forms part of the doctorate – corresponding to (rounded, average) 2 hours per week over a three-year duration – is also allocated to the non-research protected working time. This also includes conference attendance, insofar as this was defined as an educational objective during the annual employee appraisal.
- h. The concept of protected research time is not to be interpreted by doctoral candidates to mean they are free to fill this time as they see fit. Rather, it is seen as a central task of the supervisor to ensure that the protected research time is used efficiently to advance the PhD project. This particularly applies in cases where the doctoral candidate is employed within an externally funded project, since the supervisor must then guarantee that the project-funded doctoral candidates complete the externally funded work in accordance with the approved research plan.
- i. For doctoral positions, the technical level of employment at the University of Bern is set at 75 percent. However, this technical level of employment has a purely calculative value in the salary system and does not therefore reflect the level of employment that applies to all other University of Bern employees. Doctoral positions are instead expected to be full-time, i.e., a full-time commitment to the doctorate amounting to 100

percent of a working week of 42 hours. For precisely this reason, doctoral positions are remunerated with a doctoral candidate lump sum and therefore cannot be filled at a reduced level of employment. Nevertheless, doctoral candidates in doctoral positions have the possibility of entering into an additional employment relationship up to a maximum employment level of 25 percent. For doctoral positions, the protected research time amounts to 60 percent of a working week of 42 hours, i.e., (average) around 25 hours per week. The maximum proportion of weekly working hours that doctoral candidates in doctoral positions can use to carry out teaching-related, administrative or research work not directly related to their PhD project is 10 percent, i.e., (average) around 4 hours per week. The remaining time – depending on the extent of any additional employment – of 5-30 percent of the weekly working time can be used by the doctoral candidates at their own discretion if these activities serve to advance their doctorate-related qualification, such as educational activities, workshop attendance, committee activities, etc. These activities are also discussed in the annual employee appraisal.

- j. For Teaching and Research Assistant III positions, the level of employment can be between 5 and 100 percent – possibly fluctuating over the period of employment. The protected research time for Teaching and Research Assistants III amounts to 30 percent of the contractually agreed working hours, i.e., for example, (average) about 8 hours per week at an employment level of 60 percent. The remaining proportion of the contractually agreed working hours, for example, (average) around 18 hours per week at an employment level of 60 percent, is to be used as instructed by the supervisor. This is subject to the condition that the doctoral candidates are given sufficient time during this period to achieve the agreed-upon educational objectives. In the case of doctoral candidates in Teaching and Research Assistant III positions, the annual employee appraisal considers on the one hand the tasks carried out under instruction and on the other, doctorate-related activities pursued as educational objectives during the protected research time or outside the contractually agreed working hours.
- k. The extent of the protected research time defined for doctoral positions as (average) around 25 hours per week is generally regarded – also for doctoral candidates in Teaching and Research Assistant III positions – as the minimum amount of time that doctoral candidates need to invest in their own research project to bring it to a successful conclusion after 3-4 years. This minimum amount can be guaranteed for doctoral candidates in doctoral positions even if they are on the maximum employment level of 25 percent and enter into an additional employment relationship. This is different for Teaching and Research Assistants III if the non-protected research time – apart from time required to complete agreed-upon educational achievements – is completely filled with work that does not serve the realization of the PhD project. In this case, the doctoral candidates must put in unpaid hours to achieve the minimum amount of time.
- l. For both doctoral positions and Teaching and Research Assistant III positions, it should be noted that the protected research time should not be understood as being the maximum number of hours that doctoral candidates are allowed to invest in their PhD project. Thus, doctoral candidates in doctoral positions may well come to an agreement with the respective supervisor that – apart from the completion of educational achievements – all the weekly working hours be invested in their PhD project. Similarly, supervisors of doctoral candidates in Teaching and Research Assistant III positions are free to assign them tasks during non-research-protected working hours that directly advance the realization of their supervised PhD project or are otherwise considered

relevant to their qualification. In contrast, it is not possible to agree on tasks that would result in the working week of 42 hours being exceeded or would affect the doctoral candidate's vacation time.

- m. PhD projects are planned by supervisors in such a way that they can be completed in 3-4 years, provided that the protected research time and any additional research time agreed to is fully utilized. In the case of a cumulative empirical dissertation, it is considered optimal in this context if the data collection for the final study of the PhD project is completed by the end of 3 years, so that already published articles can be included in the dissertation; that the extension year can be used for final writings and for the submission, review and defense of the dissertation; and that there may still be time left to pursue a postdoctorate or to look for employment outside the university sector.
- n. It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidates to use the time available in such a way that it is possible to successfully complete the doctorate within the applicable deadlines. For doctoral candidates employed as Teaching and Research Assistants III at a level of employment of less than 100 percent, this means that any additional employment during the doctorate particularly employment outside their subject area, is generally not an ideal solution. However, in the interests of a speedy and promising completion of the doctorate, doctoral candidates in doctoral positions are also advised not to enter into an additional employment relationship if this relationship does not directly benefit their own qualification and is therefore not considered to be conducive to it.
- o. In terms of salary, a doctoral position is roughly equivalent to a Research and Teaching Assistant III position with an employment level of 60 percent. From the doctoral candidate's point of view, if there is no reason to enter into an additional employment relationship with an employment level of more than 25 percent, and if no employment in a Research and Teaching Assistant III position with an employment level of significantly more than 60 percent is planned, a doctoral position is generally preferable to a Research and Teaching Assistant III position of 60 percent. This is because the doctoral position offers a greater amount of protected research time without a reduction in salary. At the same time, however, it should also be noted that a doctoral position does not as a rule provide any teaching experience, which in turn could prove to be a disadvantage if a future university career is envisaged.
- p. For certain supervisors, a doctoral position has the advantage over a Research and Teaching Assistant III position with a 60 percent workload that the former is charged against personnel resources at only 42 PP, while the latter is charged at 57.6 PP. An example is where the supervisor has management duties in the division and therefore both an obligation to efficiently utilize the available personnel resources and also to advance early-career researchers. At the same time, from the supervisor's point of view, doctoral positions have the disadvantage that only 10 percent of the weekly working hours, i.e., (average) around 4 hours per week, are available for work not directly related to the PhD project. In contrast, this time amounts to 70 percent of the contractually agreed working hours for Research and Teaching Assistants III, i.e., (average) around 15 hours per week at an employment level of 60 percent, after deducting the time required for educational achievements .
- q. Against the background of the above considerations, a good solution in terms of a balance of interests would be to employ doctoral candidates in doctoral positions but to offer them an additional Research and Teaching Assistant III position at an employment level of 10-25 percent. A successful balance of interests is particularly likely to be

achieved if the supervisor allocates tasks for the Research and Teaching Assistant III percentage that still advance the doctoral candidate's career despite not being directly related to the PhD project. Moreover, the doctoral candidate thereby recognizes that through the allocation of such tasks, the extension of the protected research time beyond the 60 percent already guaranteed for the doctoral position can be dispensed with. Examples of such tasks that are not directly related to the PhD project but are career-enhancing activities would be conducting BSc seminars, documented co-supervision of student theses, or responsibility for the organization of workshops. This applies in particular if these seminars, theses or workshops are relevant to the topic of the PhD project. In the case of an additional appointment as a Research and Teaching Assistant III at an employment level of 20 percent, the 42-hour working week would then be divided into 60 percent protected research time (from the doctoral position), 20 percent for allocated tasks somewhat related to the doctorate (from the Research and Teaching Assistant III position), 10 percent for allocated tasks not necessarily related to the doctorate (from the doctoral position), and 10 percent to be used at the candidate's discretion, including educational achievements (from the remaining 42-hour working week). Of course, ambitious doctoral candidates are free to invest even more time in completing their PhD project, but this cannot be demanded by the supervisor.

- r. To illustrate a personnel resources calculation, let us use the example of a supervisor who has 144 PP available for qualification positions. Instead of splitting these into three Research and Teaching Assistant III positions at an employment level of 50 percent each ($3 \times 0.5 \times 96 = 144$), it is recommended that two doctoral positions be created, each with additional tasks in Research and Teaching Assistant III positions at an employment level of 20 percent, and that the remaining resources be used to engage student assistants at a total of 36 percent ($2 \times 42 + 2 \times 0.2 \times 96 + 0.36 \times 60 = 144$). In both cases, from the supervisor's point of view, this results in total working time support of around 40 hours per week – in the doctoral position version, 12.5 hours per week each from the two doctoral candidates and 15 hours per week from the student assistants. However, the doctoral position version gives the doctoral candidates a significantly greater amount of protected research time compared to the Research and Teaching Assistantship version, and with a significantly higher gross monthly salary.
- s. All of the hours mentioned so far are to be understood as averages, in that it may well be advisable to agree on phases where on the one hand, the focus is on protected research time, and on the other, where the focus is on completing work that does not form part of the protected research time. Any agreements of this kind should be clearly set out between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor, preferably as part of the annual employee appraisal. In this regard, it may well be difficult to clearly assign activities to protected research time or to the remaining hours in the working day. For example, it is hardly possible to decide whether attending a guest lecture at the institute should be seen as being within the protected research time because of its relevance to the candidate's PhD project or within the remaining working hours because of the attendance expectation of the institute's director. There are also grey areas where doctoral candidates are involved in the supervision of theses that are thematically related to their PhD project, or where doctoral candidates carry out research activities for their division from which not only they but also other members of the division benefit. Against the background of uncertainties such as these, the guidelines formulated in this paper always require there to be a consensus-oriented interpretation

between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor, with the aim of achieving a balance of interests. The question of the extent to which such a balance has been achieved should be explicitly addressed in the annual employee appraisal.

(2) Doctoral supervision

- a. All members of the Faculty's Doctoral Committee, i.e., all full, associate and adjunct professors, assistant and SNSF professors, habilitated lecturers and habilitated post-doctoral researchers, where this is their primary occupation, are eligible to supervise PhD projects within the framework of the Faculty's structured doctoral program.
- b. Doctoral candidates are assigned to a supervisor on the basis of a successful application for an advertised doctoral position, by the supervisor approaching suitable students, or by a potential supervisor being approached by interested eligible candidates. Admission to a doctorate requires the explicit consent of a supervisor; there is no legally enforceable right to admission to a doctorate at the Faculty of Human Sciences. Once the admission requirements have been positively assessed by the Dean's Office, admission to a doctorate also requires the conclusion of a doctoral agreement between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor. The doctoral agreement must be uploaded by the doctoral candidates to the doctorate administration in KSL within one year of commencing the doctorate.
- c. By entering into a doctoral agreement, the Faculty undertakes to ensure continued supervision of the PhD project even in cases where the original supervisor leaves their post at the University of Bern, whether by moving to another university or to a non-university position, or as a result of disability or death. The close relationship that exists with a supervisor during the doctoral studies does not therefore mean that the successful completion of the PhD project is inevitably linked to this person.
- d. Successful doctorates are based on a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship between doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor. In addition to supervising the PhD project and allocating additional tasks that doctoral candidates are to complete during their doctorate, the supervisor is their first point of contact when it comes to questions of orientation in the university landscape, networking in the scientific community, planning a university or non-university career, or clarifying any problems relating to the doctorate or employment. At the same time, the supervisor has the important task of informing candidates early enough that they are unlikely to successfully complete their PhD project and then advising them on alternative career paths if needed. During the supervision process, both supervisors and doctoral candidates should aim to communicate in a timely manner but should at the same time show understanding that other responsibilities may delay an immediate response to inquiries.
- e. In order to provide additional support with content-related questions, doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor can come to an agreement – possibly also informally – that other researchers be involved in the supervision. This can also be the person who will be the second reviewer of the dissertation or – if foreseen – the third. Regarding additional support for the doctoral project in career-related – but not in content-related – questions, the respective supervisor will be joined by a mentor, in the spirit of “a second pair of eyes”, to be chosen by the candidate no later than twelve months after the start of the doctorate.

- f. As a rule, the supervisor also acts as the first reviewer of the dissertation submitted for the PhD viva. All members of the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Human Sciences are eligible to be second reviewers. In addition, the supervisor can apply to the Dean to allow professors or habilitated members of other faculties or universities to act as second reviewers. However, it should be noted that at least one of the two reviewers must be a member of the Faculty Council.
- g. Depending on the nature of the PhD project, it may be advantageous to involve the second reviewer in the content-related supervision earlier or later. The first case has the advantage that doctoral candidates have a second point of contact to discuss content-related questions at an early stage. The second case is advantageous when internationally renowned researchers can be recruited for the second review, on the basis of excellent publications that have already been published. The strategic decision as to whether to involve a second reviewer earlier or later should be made by mutual agreement between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor.
- h. In exceptional cases, it may be advisable to involve a third person in the review of the dissertation. Third reviewers must hold a doctorate but do not necessarily need to be habilitated or hold a professorship. The involvement of third reviewers would appear to be particularly advantageous if they were closely involved in the doctoral supervision and are therefore in a position to assess the dissertation from a content perspective but are not eligible to be second reviewers for formal reasons. This is particularly likely to be the case if doctorates are completed in collaboration with universities of applied sciences or universities of teacher education or if – in the interests of advancing the Faculty's own early-career researchers – post-doctoral researchers who are not habilitated but have the intention of pursuing a university career have made a substantial contribution to the supervision. The supervisor has to apply to the Dean for approval of a third reviewer.

(3) Mentorship

- a. In the view of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Human Sciences, good practice in the supervision of early-career researchers at doctoral level also includes giving doctoral candidates the opportunity to obtain independent third-party opinions on the progress of their doctorate. This view is reflected in the Faculty's Doctoral Regulations as mandatory mentorship in an institutionalized form.
- b. Doctoral candidates must select a mentor no later than twelve months after starting their PhD project and register this mentor in the doctorate administration in KSL, unless they are students at a graduate school with stipulations different to these, or doctoral candidates in an individual doctorate with agreements different to these. The mentor should also be named in the doctoral agreement.
- c. The central function of the mentorship is to provide doctoral candidates with an additional source of advice on career-related issues – over and above the supervisor, who should still remain the first point of contact in this respect, as well as provide advice on content-related questions. This advice could also relate to the time after the doctorate, but explicitly concerns the doctorate itself, i.e., all questions of time management, publication strategy, networking in the scientific community, etc. However, questions con-

cerning the content of the PhD project should be avoided, since these should be clarified between the doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor. Mentors are also the first point of contact to discuss any problems regarding supervision, employment or working relationships.

- d. Doctoral candidates are free to choose their mentor. Formally, anyone who has a doctorate and whose PhD project was completed at least two years before the date of selection are eligible. Depending on how the criteria are weighted, members of the Faculty Council, either from the supervisor's institute or another institute of the Faculty, are particularly recommended as mentors. Additionally, other possible mentors are university members outside the Faculty of Human Sciences or outside the University of Bern, doctorate holders directly involved in the candidate's intended professional field, former doctoral candidates of the supervisor, etc. In special cases, the second reviewer may also be suitable as a mentor but must then ensure that the two functions are performed as separately as possible.
- e. If necessary, doctoral candidates can seek advice regarding the choice of mentor from the Faculty's *Advisory Center for Early-Career Researchers*. The supervisor should only comment on the choice if the doctoral candidates expressly requests assistance in making the choice. Once the choice has been made, the doctoral candidates should inform the respective supervisor of the chosen mentor.
- f. The members of the Faculty's Doctoral Committee agree to undertake up to ten mentorships at the same time. They are free to increase this number at their own discretion. The Dean's Office informs the Faculty's *Advisory Center for Early-Career Researchers* of the number of mentorships undertaken by each member of the Doctoral Committee. In exceptional cases, members of the Doctoral Committee may be exempted by the Dean from the obligation to take on ten mentorships. A general exemption from this obligation applies to members of the Doctoral Committee whose employment contract with the University of Bern is due to expire within the following three years, and to members of the Doctoral Committee who are employed on a fixed-term basis, i.e., in particular, assistant professors, SNSF professors and habilitated postdoctoral researchers. In view of its relevance for their own track record, it is nevertheless recommended that this group voluntarily take on a few mentorships, selected based on thematic fit.
- g. Doctoral candidates are advised to aim for a reliable long-term mentorship. Nevertheless, they are free to change mentors during the doctorate even possibly several times, without having to give reasons. Such a change may become necessary because of a breakdown in the relationship of trust or due to a change in focus of the PhD project. There may also be practical factors, for example the unexpected departure of a mentor from their university post. The Dean's Office must be informed of the change.
- h. In justified cases, the mentorship can also be terminated by the mentor. If the mentor is a member of the Faculty of Human Sciences, it is expected that the termination of the mentorship be justified in writing not only to the doctoral candidate but also to the Dean's Office.
- i. Doctoral candidates and the respective mentor are free to agree on the details of the nature of their exchange. Since the supervisor is the person responsible for clarifying questions regarding the content of the PhD project and should also remain the first point of contact regarding career-related questions, the necessity of contact between

the doctoral candidates and the respective mentor should generally be limited to problems that arise in which the doctoral candidates feel that additional advice would be helpful. In the vast majority of cases, it should therefore be sufficient if meetings between doctoral candidates and the respective mentor take place at intervals of several months. However, more frequent meetings – especially in phases where there is increased need for advice – are in no way ruled out.

- j. A meeting between doctoral candidates and the respective mentor must take place in person at least once a year, i.e., even in cases where the doctorate is being optimally supervised and the candidate does not personally feel the need for any additional advice. In these cases, the mentorship meeting may be limited to a brief mutual assurance that the PhD project is on the right track.
- k. It is the doctoral candidate's responsibility to provide documentation showing that the mentoring has been duly completed. This documentation must be included with the registration for the PhD viva. In its briefest form, this documentation would simply be a declaration signed by the mentor – where there has been a change: the last mentor – stating that the required minimum number of mentoring meetings have taken place, i.e., at least three mentoring meetings in a four-year doctorate. The mentor is free to provide more comprehensive information about the mentoring process to the Dean's Office. The documentation and any statement by the mentor are enclosed with the documents submitted to the members of the Faculty's Doctoral Committee for their decision on the PhD viva registration.
- l. In addition to exchanges with their mentor, doctoral candidates are also advised to seek advice from other suitable people – in the spirit of "peer mentoring". However, from an administrative point of view, only the mentor the Dean's Office has been informed of can formally confirm that the mentoring has been completed as required.
- m. During the mentorship, the mentors should primarily see themselves as personal advisors to the doctoral candidates. Consequently, in the event of disagreements between doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor, the mentors have no mediation function and certainly no executive function. Should it become apparent during exchanges between doctoral candidates and the respective mentor that direct contact between the supervisor and mentor would be beneficial, an attempt to establish direct contact is nevertheless permissible, be it in the form of a three-way meeting or a two-way meeting between the supervisor and mentor. If conflicts arise due to a poor evaluation by the supervisor of the doctoral candidate's performance, for example during the annual employee appraisal, the advisory function of the mentor may also involve making doctoral candidates aware that the poor evaluation may be factually justified.
- n. If conflicts between doctoral candidates and the respective supervisor prove to be unresolvable within the framework of the mentorship, the first point of contact for the doctoral candidates would be the Faculty's *Advisory Center for Early-Career Researchers*, possibly with the involvement of the mentor. If the conflict proves to be unresolvable even after involving the Advisory Center, the next step would be to consider contacting the University's Ombuds Office or other university or non-university advisory centers.

(4) Advisory Center

- a. The Faculty's *Advisory Center for Early-Career Researchers* is composed of two members elected from among the ranks of the Faculty Council at the faculty assembly. One is the *Faculty Representative for Early-Career Researchers* and the other is another member of the Faculty Council with extensive experience in the supervision of early-career researchers and who is preferably a different gender to the *Faculty Representative for Early-Career Researchers*. Long-term appointments are sought to ensure a high level of continuity in the advisory activities.
- b. The Advisory Center can be supplemented by up to two further people nominated by representatives of the intermediate staff from their circle. Their election must be confirmed at the faculty assembly.
- c. The task of the Advisory Center is primarily to support PhD projects in relation to questions that could not already be clarified in the context of doctoral supervision or mentoring. Questions from doctoral candidates about their own project are welcome, as are those from supervisors or mentors about how to best fulfill their respective tasks.
- d. The Advisory Center should be contacted by doctoral candidates especially regarding conflicts with their supervisor that have proven unsolvable within the framework of the mentorship. However, as in the case of the mentor, the Advisory Center has no executive function. Therefore, should the Advisory Center's efforts to resolve the conflict prove unsuccessful, it may advise contacting other university or non-university advisory centers or the University's Ombuds Office for further assistance with the problem.
- e. Doctoral candidates, supervisors or mentors interested in counseling can – observing the guidelines specified on the Advisory Center website – contact one of the members of the Advisory Center of their choice. The members of the Advisory Center are bound to secrecy and, apart from an anonymized report to the Faculty, are under no obligation to provide information to anyone. Access to files is only granted with the consent of the persons concerned.
- f. At the end of each academic year, the members of the Advisory Center report on their work – in anonymized form – to the Dean's Office and at the faculty assembly, possibly including general recommendations for the supervision of PhD projects in the Faculty. If necessary, the members of the Advisory Center are also responsible for submitting proposals to update this paper for approval at the faculty assembly.