

## Supervision Agreement for Doctoral Projects in the Graduate School of Life Sciences

The GSLS provides the framework to conduct a structured doctoral research project (hereafter referred to as 'doctoral project'). The GSLS adheres to the principles of mutual responsibility, transparency, accountability and respect for diversity. Original scientific work is essential for a doctoral project. All rules and regulations are intended to serve this purpose. The doctoral researchers are thus better prepared for their future careers inside and outside academia. Being mutually aware that the doctoral project is to take up a significant part of the working time of the doctoral researcher, the involved parties declare to follow the GSLS principles and to adhere to the mutual obligations described below, which may be updated over the course of the qualification project if the situation demands.

### 1. Parties to the Agreement

	Name	Date/signature
<b>Doctoral researcher</b>		
<b>Primary supervisor</b>		
<b>Supervisor 2</b>		
<b>Supervisor 3</b>		
<b>Supervisor 4 (where applicable)</b>		
<b>Supervisor 5 (where applicable)</b>		

### 2. Thesis Topic

The title specified below is a working title subject to change. Only if fundamental changes are made that constitute a change of topic must this be documented in an update to the present supervision agreement.

**Provisional doctoral project title:**

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### 3. Outline

The outline shall contain information regarding the time schedule including the anticipated date of completion. If applicable, details of other doctoral projects are briefly outlined below:

**Begin of project:**

**Planned thesis submission:**

**Other projects within the framework of doctoral research (if applicable):**

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#### 4. Research and Training Plan (Qualification measures)

A detailed individual research and training plan will be agreed upon at the formal start-up meeting within three months of the doctoral project start date. The Supervision Agreement should be signed at the latest during this meeting. The written start-up meeting report and this supervision agreement will be submitted to the GSLS office (signed by all parties). The plan will be reviewed and further developed by the doctoral researcher and the thesis committee in obligatory annual meetings, reports of which will also be submitted to the GSLS office. The reports comprise a review of research and training of the previous period and plans for the future. Forms for the reports are available for download from the GSLS website.

#### 5. Funding

The doctoral qualification project will be financed:

- ☐ through a fellowship or scholarship
- ☐ through employment at the University
- ☐ from project funds (project duration: \_\_\_\_\_; if the duration is shorter than the duration of the doctoral qualification project, please provide details on envisaged follow-up funding: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ from other sources (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Responsibilities and Obligations

##### a) The doctoral researcher

- shall take personal responsibility for the intellectual planning, timely execution, trouble shooting and critical evaluation of the doctoral project(s), commensurate with the goal of becoming an independent scientist
- shall document all laboratory activities (lab book) and ensure the documentation complies with equal standards set within the research group
- pursue his/her work and research activities in accordance with the arrangements made with the thesis committee
- enrol at the University of Würzburg in one of the two GSLS doctoral study programmes, either aiming at the degree “Dr. rer. nat.” or the degree “PhD”
- fulfill the training requirements according to the selected doctoral study programme, specified in the Research and Training Plan, including: weekly group meetings and literature seminars, at least a monthly seminar of the research training group, one retreat or summer school per year, three international meetings with active participation until graduation (poster, oral presentation) and one choice per semester from a wide range of elective offers (transferable skills, methods courses, contributions to teaching and other GSLS activities), totalling a minimum of six courses plus possible additional activities; in addition, one peer reviewed, international first author publication prior to graduation is required
- arrange the regular formal thesis committee meetings in which he/she will report on the progress of both the doctoral project(s) and completion of the individual research and training plan. These reports shall also identify any problems or delays the candidate may have encountered during his/her work
- in the case of receiving funding from external sources or pursuing his/her activities in the context of an employment relationship, he/she may be subject to instructions or regulations from the funding sources.

#### **b) The primary supervisor**

- Shall provide suitable workspace, consumables and equipment to execute the project
- Shall ensure clear and equal standards are upheld regarding the documentation of all laboratory activities within the research group
- document funding plans for the subsistence of the doctoral researcher for three years
- design the project for a 3-4 year completion time aiming to yield publishable results
- provide a side project in case the initial project proves intractable within the projected time
- take timely action to secure additional funding in case the thesis committee has concluded that the thesis project may take longer than three years
- provide continuous formal and informal review and advice throughout the thesis project and until graduation, independent of the question of financial support for the doctoral researcher
- shall undertake to actively support the agreed research and training plan
- affiliate the doctoral researcher with a suitable research training group
- provide weekly group meetings
- encourage early scientific independence of the doctoral researcher (examples: encouragement to apply for fellowships, encouragement of scientific activities organised by doctoral researchers) and promote his/her integration into scientific networks
- encourage and expedite the timely publication of results
- advise and support the doctoral researcher with respect to future career plans

#### **c) All members of the thesis committee**

- shall be available no less than once a year to discuss progress reports with the candidate and take part in the formal progress meetings (start-up and annual)
- undertake assistance in the supervision of the doctoral candidate under the applicable regulations e.g. through advising the doctoral researcher and the primary supervisor in project-related questions
- support the doctoral researcher towards scientific independence with their evaluation, expertise and networks
- help to make sure that the candidate has adequate resources at his/her disposal

### **7. Good Scientific Practice**

The University of Würzburg has enacted “Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice and Procedures Concerning Scientific Misconduct” and established a “Standing Commission for the Investigation of Scientific Misconduct” as well as a group of Ombudspersons. These guidelines can be found on the websites of the University of Würzburg<sup>1</sup> and the Graduate School of Life Sciences<sup>2</sup>. The DFG (German Research Foundation) provides overarching guidelines which all universities and non-university research centres are obliged to implement. Further information on the most up-to-date version of these guidelines can be found on the website of the DFG. In addition, the GSLs requires the doctoral researchers to take part in its mandatory course on “Responsible Conduct of Research/Good Scientific Practice” within the first six months of their project (counts as one elective from the Research and Training Plan).

All parties to the agreement shall undertake to adhere to the principles of good scientific practice as stipulated above and, where applicable, supplementary regulations formulated by other institutions, funding sources or publication organs that may be involved in the project.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/research/service/good-scientific-practice/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.graduateschools.uni-wuerzburg.de/life-sciences/doctoral-researchers/training/good-scientific-practice/>

## **8. Family Commitments of the Doctoral Researcher**

The thesis committee shall take into account family commitments of the doctoral researcher and, in particular, his/her need to reconcile work and family life. Expectant mothers and fathers should agree, well enough in advance, with the thesis committee on measures to help them reconcile work and family life. In addition to the competent women's representative, a third party trusted by the candidate and/or the supervisor(s) may be invited to join this conversation.

The primary supervisor and where applicable additional supervisors will ensure that activities of the research group are organised in a way to support doctoral researchers with children. This includes e.g. the timing of group meetings or the allocation of lab duties.

GSLs doctoral researchers have unrestricted access to the full spectrum of services provided by the Family Office of the University. The GSLs and the Gender Equality Academy of the University of Würzburg are also able to act in an advisory capacity should particular challenges regarding lab work during pregnancy arise.

## **9. Cases of Conflict**

Conflicts other than regarding scientific misconduct shall be dealt with in the following ways:

- (i) Thesis committee and doctoral researcher will first try to resolve problems internally. This also applies in cases where a change in the composition of a thesis committee is considered.
- (ii) If internal discussion fails or other reasons exist to ask for external advice directly, the section speakers shall be addressed. If regulatory matters are concerned, the section speakers may involve the GSLs office, the Extended Board and/or the Common Graduation Commission of the GSLs.
- (iii) In case any of the bodies mentioned above are deemed biased, conflicting parties can directly seek advice from one of the Ombudsperson of the GSLs. Doctoral researchers may also approach the Doctoral Researchers' Council for support. In case the conflict has a special gender or any other diversity aspect, the respective named representatives of the GSLs and the women's representative of the University of Würzburg may be involved.

With mutual consent of all parties to the agreement, the supervision relationship may be terminated prematurely at any time. Each party to the agreement shall be entitled to unilaterally terminate the supervision relationship for good cause. Any serious breach of the present supervision agreement may constitute such good cause. Prior to a termination of the supervision relationship for good cause, an ombudsperson should be consulted.

## **10. Copies / Coming into Effect**

The present supervision agreement is executed in three copies, one for the main supervisor, one for the doctoral researcher, and one for the GSLs office. It shall come into effect upon the start date of the doctoral project.