

MODPHD Activity – Training 4_1 in Prishtina

Mentorship/supervision of PhD Students at JKU

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Issues

- Obviously, supervision plays a crucial role for the success of a PhD-study
- However, at JKU Linz, there is only little formal regulation of supervision
- University of Innsbruck (partner university) has more detailed regulations

„(...) The crucial role of supervision and assessment: in respect of individual doctoral candidates, arrangements for supervision and assessment should be based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (...)“ [Conclusions and Recommendations from the Bologna Seminar on „Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society“, set of ten basic principles \(Salzburg, February 2005\)](#)

„(...) As stressed in the fifth Salzburg Principle, supervision plays a crucial role. Supervision must be a collective effort with clearly defined and written responsibilities of the main supervisor, supervisory team, doctoral candidate, doctoral school, research group and the institution, leaving room for the individual development of the doctoral candidate. Providing professional development to supervisors is an institutional responsibility, whether organised through formal training or informal sharing of experience among staff. Developing a common supervision culture shared by supervisors, doctoral school leaders and doctoral candidates must be a priority for doctoral schools. Supervisors must be active researchers (...)“ [European Universities' Achievements Since 2005 in Implementing the Salzburg Principles, 2.3. Supervision \(Berlin, June 2010\)](#)

Supervision at JKU

- Students need supervisor (could, in principle, even be professor at another university)
- Vice rector for teaching must be informed of the topic of the dissertation and the acceptance by supervisor
- Usually, supervisor is at the same time the main person responsible for the assessment of the thesis. But second professor must review the thesis and grade it. Supervisor and student may be joint authors of a paper.
- Defensio in front of a committee of three professors (may include supervisor)
- In practice quality of supervision varies considerably. Students are not always aware of this when choosing supervisor. Obviously, good supervision needs regular meetings and the willingness to read and discuss students work, familiarity with employed methods.

Supervision at JKU

- In many cases, PhD-students when starting the program already have an affiliation as project assistants. Supervisor is also leader of the research project, is interested in high-quality research
- Historically, research assistants were frequently misused to just support research of the professor, at the expense of own time and training for research. Has been changing in the last decades. Culture of supervision is being developed.
- At JKU, presentation of students' work at seminars is very important, guaranteeing a larger audience for students to discuss own research (see next part of workshop)

University of Innsbruck

Dissertation agreement "online"

Contract stating topic, extent and format of dissertation, courses to be taken, time horizon, ...

Online tool assists and documents supervision

Some elements have to be entered by the supervisor (like dates or comments)

Others are entered by the student (abstract, time plan, ...)

Valuable tool for some formalization of the process of supervision and of the progress of the student.

Examples from UK

Handbook for PhD supervisors – LSE
10 Sections, 91 pages.

Responsibilities of the Supervisor - The University of Nottingham

Guide for Research Degree Supervisors 2014 ... - University of Leeds

Research supervision: Oxford University