

## Guidelines for the promotion of young scientists at the BTU Cottbus (doctorate qualification)

### Preamble

Research and scientific education are of crucial importance for maintenance and ongoing improvement of the quality of academic education. In this context the doctorate has a special significance.

In a joint statement of the Rector's Conferences of Austria, Switzerland and Germany on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2004 it is stated (quotation):

The doctorate is the proprium of the university. Its content and structure lie solely in the responsibility of the university. It provides opportunities for the awarding institution to build a profile. The selective recruitment of suitable doctoral students combined with measures to promote research and young researchers makes it possible to initiate a "continuing process of quality improvement".

The degree certificate which holders of a doctorate receive serves as proof that they are qualified to engage in independent science and research. This involves acquiring and imparting scientific competence appropriate to the process of accelerating scientific progress and to the ever greater interaction taking place between science and research, on the one hand, and the public and society, on the other. The goal is to form a continuously effective capability with which quickly changing topics and ever more complex questions can be defined in a cross-disciplinary approach and can be addressed and solved by means of relevant methodology. The doctoral dissertation – as indispensable proof of independent research performance – remains the core element of the doctorate.

The doctorate serves as preparation for research-oriented posts in the labour market within and outside the university. The universities meet the diversity of requirements defined by this labour market when they design and structure the doctorate, thereby following the principle of already applying the Master's phase to offer discipline-specific differentiation. In so doing, they consider the needs of the various segments of the labour market as well as special discipline-specific factors.

As far as the future development of the doctorate in European higher education and research is concerned, the German, Austrian and Swiss university associations are of the opinion that the following aspects should serve as key guidelines:

- the development of structures which ensure the research-led formation of methodological, disciplinary and interdisciplinary skills and competencies at a level extending beyond that of Master's programmes
- the delivery of independent research, presentation and publication skills and competencies
- the delivery of key qualifications (the ability to analyse and to communicate, subject-specific experience abroad, independence and autonomy)
- an appropriate limit on the time to doctorate (as a rule, three years)
- intensive support and supervision of doctoral students,
- the use of curricular elements to complement independent work.

The institutional structure and design of the doctorate must be set autonomously by the faculties of the BTU as part of their profile building activities to ensure that they are actively able to position themselves competitively in national and international scientific communities. In order to accompany this process the Commission for Research and the Young Scientists of BTU has developed guidelines for the promotion of the young scientists. The guidelines allow a subject-specific design for which the young scientists also have assumed responsibility. The faculties are called upon to support and advance this process.

Based on § 2 clause 1,2 in connection with clause 1 No. 2 of the Law on the Universities of the State of Brandenburg (Brandenburg Law on Higher Education) of 20 May 1999 the Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus has given itself according to the decision of its Senate from 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2004 the following guidelines:

1. The success of a doctorate project strongly depends of the committed supervision of the doctoral students through the professors. This is supported through regular talks (as a rule, once a month). Especially in critical phases of the doctorate (beginning, change of topic, end) the supervision becomes more intensive.
2. The professors conclude an agreement with the doctoral students in mutual interest in which schedule and amount of work are fixed and the mode of supervision is agreed upon according to the topic. The task schedule is refined regularly by the doctoral students after consultation with the professors.
3. Professors and doctoral students ensure the binding establishment of interdisciplinary doctoral colloquia. At the colloquia the doctoral students give insight into the progress of their dissertation. In addition to that, advanced training will be offered to the doctorate students in fields such as specific methods of scientific work, didactics of higher education, interdisciplinary work, international research cooperation, handling and managing of projects with external funding.
4. Within the faculties at least one working team each will be established (e.g. a professor and three scientific assistants) to promote young scientists. The working teams commit themselves to implement and establish the recommended measures, work closely with the doctoral colloquia, postgraduate colloquia, and postgraduate admissions boards, and give an annual report to the Commission for Research and the New Generation of Scientists.
5. The working groups for the promotion of the new generation of scientists or the interdisciplinary doctoral colloquia receive semi-annually reports from the doctoral students on the progress of their work, preferably publications, lectures and reports and give recommendations for further proceedings if necessary.

6. The professors promote the independent and self responsible scientific work of the doctoral students and their publishing activities. Until submission of the dissertation at least one publication is to be completed that meets international standards. The participation at national and international congresses is promoted and financially supported.
7. The doctoral students aspire to a close connection between their own research and vocational training, supported by the professors.
8. For establishing the scope needed for self-contained scientific work, excessive burdening of doctoral students with tasks over and beyond their qualification-oriented work should be avoided. Doctoral students who are scientific staff members of BTU and who hold a position that provides a basis for further qualification and is financed out of the BTU budget, may use at least two-fifths of their contracted hours for their dissertation project.
9. The professors strive towards the establishment of doctoral or postgraduate colloquia and support doctoral students in fundraising for the promotion of postgraduates (through DFG or other sources of external funding) as well as in application for scholarships and sponsoring.
10. The promotion of young scientists at the BTU is assessed annually by the doctoral students. Based on these results, further proposals are made, if required, to improve the promotion of young scientists at the BTU Cottbus.

Cottbus, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2004

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