Structured Doctoral Program
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Contents

1. Concept behind the structured doctoral program

The objective of the doctoral program is to support the PhD research projects by research associates and stipend recipients employed at the Cluster of Excellence Image Knowledge *Gestaltung*. The fields of study offered reflect the specific structure of the Cluster of Excellence Image Knowledge *Gestaltung*. Alongside participants' grounding in their discipline, the focus is on exchanging knowledge in order to enable outstanding interdisciplinary PhD theses. The doctoral program is offered to doctoral candidates in the Cluster. It is also possible to complete an individual doctorate in the Cluster; doctoral candidates are not disadvantaged because they do not participate in the program.

In line with the duration of the Cluster, the doctoral program is a pilot project that is provisionally expected to run until 2017. For this reason, self-observation and process evaluation are integral parts of the concept. If evaluations identify potential for optimization, conceptual changes can be made during the term of the program.

The program focuses on guiding research associates and stipend recipients in the Cluster as regards the substance of their doctoral studies. They are funded by the Cluster in a base project for two years on average. Irrespective of whether extensions to base projects are granted internally, the plan is for the program to grant completion stipends of up to 12 months in order to support doctoral candidates whose base projects are not extended in the completion of their doctorates. In this way, funding is guaranteed for three years. Positions in the Cluster are generally advertised internationally. In addition, it is planned at a later point to provide openings for international external applicants, that is to say, applicants that want to participate in the doctoral program without having a position on a base project.

The doctoral program launched at the beginning of the 2014 summer semester. The program duration of 36 months starts in each individual case with the beginning of their appointment in the Cluster, their registration as a doctoral candidate or with the launch of the doctoral program. Work completed before the start of the doctoral program can be taken into account. The Doctoral Committee will decide on how work already completed is eligible to be taken into account.

2. Program objectives and structure

2.1 Program objectives
The objective of the doctoral program is the award of a doctorate that
- qualifies the holder from a disciplinary perspective for a subsequent career in his/her subject in which s/he completes his/her doctorate
- identifies and intensifies concrete interdisciplinary knowledge
- is completed within the program duration of 36 months

A certificate will be awarded for successful participation in the program.

2.2   Structure of studies

During the course of the doctoral program, 180 credit points (CP) must be awarded; of these, 150 CP are awarded for work on the candidate's dissertation (Module 1), 6 CP for the progress presentation (Module 2), and 12 CP respectively for Modules 3 (Practice) and 4 (Skills and Research). The CP for Modules 3 and 4 can be awarded for events in the compulsory electives in line with the doctoral candidate's own research focus.

Module 1: Research Project   150 CP Workload | 3750 hrs
Module 2: Progress Review / Reports   6 CP Workload | 150 hrs
Module 3: Practice   12 CP Workload | 300 hrs
Module 4: Research / Other skills   12 CP Workload | 300 hrs

Total: 180 CP Workload | 4500 hrs

2.3 The Doctoral Committee

The Doctoral Committee is formed of the Program Director, the Program Coordinator, one representative respectively from the natural sciences, the humanities and the design disciplines, and one representative from the ranks of the doctoral candidates. The Cluster's Arbitration Board can be called upon in case of conflict, and, if required, the Arbitration Board can be supplemented by the Doctoral Candidates' Representative. The Doctoral Committee decides on the acceptance of suitable applicants, the award of stipends, coordinates internal processes and can modify the curriculum if required.
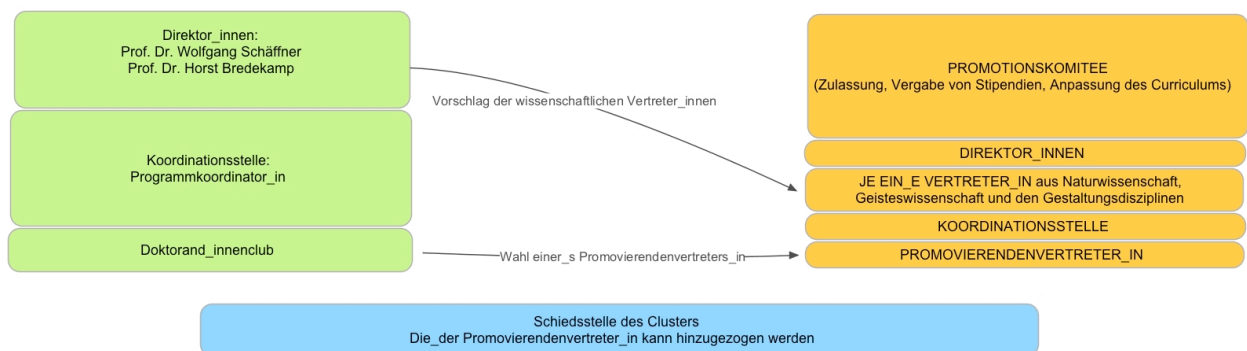

Figure 1: Organigram of the doctoral program

3. Admission procedure

3.1 Admission and selection criteria
- Candidate's academic suitability
- Academic quality of the PhD research proposal
- Employment as a research associate or stipend recipient in the Cluster
- Interdisciplinarity of the PhD research proposal
- Feasibility completing the PhD project within the program duration of 36 months

3.2 Application procedure

Research associates and stipend recipients can apply for the structured doctoral program. The doctoral program uses the online platform provided by the *Humboldt Graduate School* (HGS) to receive applications.

Candidates are to submit the following documents:
- Certificates (graduation certificates)
- CV in table format
- Confirmation of agreement from the proposed advisor
- Suggestion for further advisors
- Covering letter »Interdisciplinarity«, 2 pages
- Research proposal (5 pages maximum) for the PhD project with timetable

3.3 Admission procedure

Selection

After applications are received, they are assessed by the members of the Doctoral Committee on the basis of the criteria set out in 3.1. The committee decides whether to invite applicants to a workshop or to refer the application back for revision (with notes). Rejected candidates have the option to resubmit their application. Suitable applicants are invited to attend a half-day workshop followed by individual discussions, during which their suitability for the doctoral program is

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assessed. After the workshop and individual discussions, the committee meets again and decides whether to accept or reject applicants. The Doctoral Committee decides on the acceptance of suitable applicants.

Admission

The selected applicants are informed in writing of their acceptance onto the program. With their admission into the program, the doctoral candidates and the committee declare that they agree with the jointly agreed advisory panel (main advisor and at least one secondary advisor). The applicant's admission is valid as soon as a candidate-advisor agreement that is binding for both sides is in place, and the faculty has officially admitted the applicant as a doctoral candidate. Only when the relevant faculty has issued written confirmation can the applicant be accepted onto the doctoral program. Failure to uphold the candidate-advisor agreement by doctoral candidates or the advisory panel can lead to exclusion from the doctoral program and the HGS. Doctoral candidates and advisors undertake to uphold the rules of good academic practice.
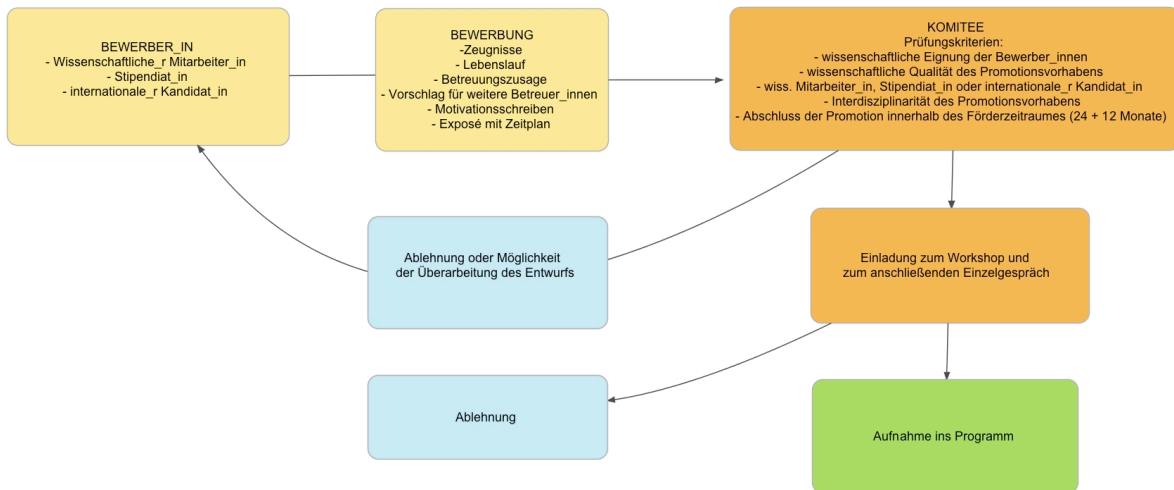

Figure 2: Application and admission process

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4. The program's framework and special features

4.1 Freedom to determine the research focus

The content of the events in the compulsory electives Modules 3 and 4 is not stipulated for the most part. This enables doctoral candidates to set their own curriculum. In this way, the doctoral program takes into account the heterogeneity and disciplinary diversity of PhD research projects in the Cluster, and avoids compulsory events that are not constructive for their particular PhD research project. Instead, doctoral candidates have the freedom to determine their own focus of interest.

4.2 Diversity of advisors

Support from a team of at least two advisors with expertise in different disciplines offers the benefit of direct guidance that is as an interdisciplinary interface for knowledge. The objective is to offer innovative PhD research projects both disciplinary expertise and a diversity of methodologies and perspectives from other subject areas right from the outset in order to ensure that capabilities for research and making connections are aligned with the goals of the Cluster of Excellence. External figures, for example, from industry and the economy can also form part of the advisory team. International researchers are involved in teaching and guidance in the program through invitations as guest lecturers, amongst others. The relevant doctoral regulations in accordance with which the candidate is awarded a doctorate determine the team of advisors that are involved in examining the doctorate (assessment, panel).

4.3 Diversity, internationalization, equal opportunities, compatibility with family life

The outstanding academic quality of the PhD research proposal is the primary criteria for selection. In addition, for quality assurance, the diversity of a year's cohort with regards to their academic and professional career paths is to be ensured in order to enable doctoral candidates in the program to collaborate across disciplines. The Cluster recommends that candidates undertake part of their studies abroad (funded by the program) to establish international contacts with young researchers. The Cluster's objective of increasing the proportion of women to 30% is also to be taken into consideration.

The Cluster also plans to admit international applicants into the doctoral program. Here too, the basis for a successful application is the outstanding quality of the PhD research proposal and the ability to integrate into the Cluster's interdisciplinary structures.

The doctoral program sets out clear requirements on the events that must be attended. However, doctoral candidates are granted the maximum flexibility as to how the required work is to be undertaken. In this way, the program is highly compatible with family life.

4.4 Doctoral Candidates' Club

The Doctoral Candidates' Club is self-organizing; research groups can be developed from it, or workshops on specific topics organized. The Doctoral Candidates' Club has its own budget.

4.5 Support and conflict management

The Coordinator is available to advise doctoral candidates on all questions regarding completing a doctorate. In the event of conflict, there is the option to call upon the Cluster's Arbitration Board together with the Doctoral Candidates' Representative. In addition, the HGS conflict consultation hour offers a professional and independent means of mediating conflicts with the support of trained coaches and advisors. In addition, a wide range of soft skills courses are available and offer doctoral candidates support in many areas.

5. Module descriptions

5.1 Module 1: Research Project

The doctoral candidate's independent research project, including, amongst other things, determining the current state of

research, research, reading, laboratory work, data collection, evaluation, materials research, prototyping, model building, and writing up.

5.2   Module 2: Progress Review

Doctoral candidates discuss the progress of their PhD research project with their advisory panel every quarter. Once a year, doctoral candidates produce a status report (1 page) on the progress of their PhD research project (1 CP). Also once a year, the Cluster holds a poster presentation for all PhD research projects (1 CP).

5.3   Module 3: Practice

The events in Module 3 require active involvement from doctoral candidates. By independently organizing seminars and workshops, for example, they can acquire not only subject knowledge but also key skills for their subsequent career.

5.4   Module 4: Research

The events in Module 4 allow doctoral candidates to acquire targeted knowledge in professional skills, to deepen soft skills that are relevant to their career and to make interdisciplinary connections with the Cluster's structures and forms of knowledge.

6.   Forms of events

Doctoral Candidates' Club

The Doctoral Candidates' Club is a self-organizing, regular meeting for all doctoral candidates and enables them to exchange ideas on their own research. It is an opportunity for social contact and to embed professional connections. In addition, research groups can be formed here, and colloquiums or symposiums organized. It can also form the basis for launching study groups with different focuses to discuss related issues and intersections in methodologies, for example. The Doctoral Candidates' Club has its own budget with which guest lecturers and professional development can be funded. The doctoral candidates decide jointly how the budget should be spent.

Learning With...

Learning With... is a series of internal events within the Cluster that is offered by the research associates and stipend recipients to all members of the Cluster. It sheds light on different fields of knowledge, which can be used productively for internal further development. An event lasts approximately 1.5 hours. The Cluster's diversity is reflected in the substantive content of the events, which contribute significantly to interdisciplinary connections. Everything that figures in the Cluster's research areas can provide the content offered at a Learning With... event. This ranges from learning different computer programs to training on workshop machinery to theoretical topics from the disciplines represented in the Cluster. It offers research associates and stipend recipients the chance to gain their first experience of teaching within the Cluster.

WiMi Workshops

The WiMi Workshops are organized independently by different research associates and stipend recipients every three months. All research associates and stipend recipients work together on specific topics and questions within the Cluster. The different fields of disciplinary expertise produce innovative questions on the topic in focus and shed light on new, previously unconsidered angles. In addition, the workshop format promotes communication and collaboration between research associates and stipend recipients in different base projects.

Participating in conferences / poster presentations

Doctoral candidates are expected to actively take part in the current debates in their discipline. This can take the form of a paper at a conference or a poster presentation.

Publication

Publication, e.g. an article in a specialist journal or an essay in a collection.

Teaching

Gaining practical teaching experience is a key skill for an academic career. The doctoral program coordination office supports doctoral candidates in organizing a teaching post or a teaching assistant post. Training in university didactics is offered in preparation for these roles.

CZ reports

The Cluster newspaper is an internal newsletter for all members of the Cluster and reports on a weekly basis on current events, new staff, and stipend recipients, and offers reports on processes and topics from the different disciplines. As such, it is the Cluster's central communications tool. The content is largely produced by members themselves. It offers doctoral candidates a safe space to gain publication experience and at the same time enhances internal communication.

Free Format

In consultation with the Doctoral Committee, other activities that support doctoral candidates with their research are possible (e.g. organizing workshops, lecture series, conferences, reading circles, etc.).

Lecture series (Ringvorlesung)

Each year, the Cluster offers a lecture series on its research focus points. Attending this lecture series gives doctoral candidates an insight into the broad spectrum of disciplines represented in the Cluster and can enable connections for their PhD research project.

LunchTalk

LunchTalk is a weekly meeting for all members of the Cluster and enables them to exchange ideas internally and discuss with selected guests. The talks cover activities in all fields of knowledge and research. The informal nature of the LunchTalk enables hierarchical and communication barriers to be broken down.

Interdisciplinary Controversy

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In this lecture series, a key topic is controversially discussed by representatives from different disciplines. In addition to providing insights into the research undertaken by representatives from different disciplines, the subsequent discussion round enables active involvement in cross-disciplinary debate.

Individual seminars and lectures

Doctoral candidates can benefit from the diversity of Berlin's educational landscape. Attending selected seminars on topics connected to their PhD research projects strengthens specialist skills and contributes to improving the quality of their dissertation.

Soft skills courses

Different soft skills courses are offered jointly with the Humboldt Graduate School. Doctoral candidates can select from the existing range of courses on offer, or they can organize their own. At the Berliner Zentrum für Hochschullehre (Berlin Center for University Teaching), they can also take professional development courses, for example, in teaching skills.

Participating in the Summer University

The Summer University is an international, one- to two-week event on the Cluster's focus topics. It offers doctoral candidates a chance to make international contacts and to participate actively in its design.

7. Example study plan

	min. CP	max. CP	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total CP
Module			1	2	3	4	5	6	180
Research Project			25	25	25	25	25	25	150
Progress Presentation			1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Review & Poster	6	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Practice			1	3	3	0	5	0	12
Offering a Learning With... : 2 events offered = 1 CP	1	3	1						1
Offering a WiMi Workshop: 1 workshop = 1 CP	1	2		1					1
Active conference participation: 1 paper/poster = 5 CP							5		5
Publication: 1 article = 5 CP									0
Teaching / teaching assistant post: 1 semester = 3 CP				3					3
CZ report: 5 reports = 1 CP		1			1				1
DC: organizing a workshop: 1 workshop = 1 CP									0
Free Format: to be agreed with the committee				1					1
Skills and Research			2	2	4	2	2	0	12
Participating in the lecture series : 5 sessions = 1 CP	1	2	1						1
LunchTalk: 12 talks = 1 CP	1	3	1						1
Interdisciplinary Controversy: 8 controversies = 1 CP	1	1				1			1
Attending WiMi Workshops: 6 workshops = 1 CP	1	1					1		1
Attending Learning With...: 8 events = 1 CP	1	1					1		1
Seminars & lectures: 1 semester = 2 CP				2					2
Soft skills courses: 25 hrs = 1 CP						1			1
Participating in the Summer University: 1 week = 4 CP					4				4
DC: reading circle: 1 semester = 1 CP									0
Free Format: to be agreed with the committee									0
Total CP per semester			29	31	33	28	33	26	
CP excluding the Research Project			4	6	8	3	8	1	
Hourly workload excluding the Research Project			100	150	200	75	200	25	

CP = Credit Point
DC = Doctoral Candidates' Club