RWTH Code for Doctoral Candidates

In order to achieve its goal of becoming "the place to be" for early-career researchers in Germany and to attract, recruit and maintain the best minds from Germany and abroad, RWTH has defined measures to continually further develop the qualification and supervision of doctoral candidates.

The basis for a high-quality doctoral degree process is a transparent supervision relationship between supervisor and doctoral researcher. The guidelines outlined in this code help to ensure high quality standards, provide orientation for those involved in the doctoral process, and represent a culture that values the responsible promotion of talent. Furthermore, the University strives to provide new impetus for both the discipline-specific and the non-subject-specific qualification of doctoral candidates.

RWTH sees itself as a learning organization which continually reassesses its strategic outlook on the promotion of early-career researchers, redefines objectives, and re-evaluates and further develops its measures and tools in close collaboration with the RWTH faculties. The faculties have the opportunity to further expand the present code.

Target Group

In terms of the present code, doctoral candidates are researchers who have been accepted to pursue doctoral studies and work on their doctoral research project at RWTH. For the purpose of this code, the type of doctoral program ("individual doctoral project" vs. participation in a "structured degree program") and the type of funding (employment, fellowship) are irrelevant.

Supervision

RWTH considers it essential that doctoral candidates benefit from appreciative, responsible and supportive scientific supervision and guidance under consideration of equal opportunity aspects. In order to ensure high-quality supervision, a supervision agreement is to be set up between supervisor and doctoral candidate. Doctoral candidates are to be advised by their supervisors on their independently conducted research project on a regular basis. Supervisors have the responsibility to support doctoral candidates in their career planning, engage in a lively exchange with them, and provide them with sufficient time and leeway for continuing education activities.

It is expected that supervisors at RWTH encourage doctoral candidates to participate in suitable qualification programs offered by RWTH. In order to align the candidate's qualification activities with the doctoral research project as best as possible, supervisor and candidate should agree on which qualification offerings to choose. All qualification activities completed by the doctoral candidate are officially documented.

Good Scientific Practice

Scientific integrity is a core value of the University. For this reason, RWTH places particular emphasis on familiarizing early career faculty with the principles of good scientific practice and ensuring that these are adhered to. Further important areas of responsibility for researchers include Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and Research Data Management (RDM).

Support of Early Career Researchers and Career Planning

The doctoral dissertation constitutes the first independent research achievement. The period of doctoral research is a decisive phase for the qualification of early-career researchers. For this reason, the support of doctoral candidates is at the core of the University's talent management activities. The goal is to provide doctoral researchers with excellent conditions for their scientific development. However, the candidate her- or himself is responsible for making the doctoral project a success. RWTH provides the best possible support in this endeavor.

Typically, during the doctoral period, the foundation for the future career of the researcher is being laid. To offer transparent and reliable career paths for junior researchers is also decisive in attracting international early career researchers to RWTH. For this reason, RWTH strives to optimally support doctoral candidates in the career planning process, both for positions within and outside of academia, and provide them with the relevant qualifications. The various career development programs are open to all doctoral candidates at RWTH.

Business Start-Up Support

Doctoral researchers who have developed a business model based on their research activities and who are interested in setting up their own business have the opportunity to receive guidance and support from the University's advisors. Experts from the responsible department and the [Entrepreneurship Center](#) answer questions regarding the protection of intellectual property and strategies for commercial exploitation. Furthermore, they provide information on entrepreneurship funding opportunities such as the [EXIST](#) Business Start-up Grant.

Qualification

In addition to undertaking scientific research, it is important for doctoral candidates to continue to develop expertise in their field and gain skills outside of their key research area. In all of its research areas, RWTH is able to provide outstanding expertise and excellent infrastructures to create forward-looking, cross-disciplinary educational offerings and thus to enhance the competencies of early-career researchers.

The [RWTH Center for Young Academics](#) offers qualification programs that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of researchers at different career stages. These programs help develop general skills and competencies and support the researchers' career development. Doctoral candidates have the opportunity to participate in the programs offered by the [Center for Doctoral Studies (CDS)](#), which focus on imparting non-subject-specific professional skills. These include programs created to enhance the researchers' [teaching skills and teaching-related competencies](#). Participants receive a certificate of participation. All programs meet professional quality standards as set out in process descriptions, procurement directives, assessment schemes, and evaluation criteria lists.

Equal Opportunities and Family-Friendliness

RWTH is committed to the objectives set out in the "Diversity Charter," a corporate initiative to promote diversity in companies and institutions. Equal opportunity principles are applied in the selection, supervision, support, and assessment of doctoral candidates, who are treated fairly and equally under positive consideration of individual characteristics such as gender, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, and identity.

We at RWTH strive to enhance the compatibility between family and career or studies. For this reason, the University has been participating in the certification process of the "audit

familiengerechte Hochschule" (Family-friendly university audit). Having gone through two re-auditings, the University has developed and implemented various different target agreements on objectives. Doctoral candidates are advised on family-related issues and benefit from the broad range of support services offered by the Family Services Center (e.g. childcare services).

In addition, the University offers a mentoring program for women doctoral candidates that is tailored to their particular needs and interests.

RWTH strives to optimize the communication, and thus the visibility, of its programs and support services for doctoral candidates. It aims at successively providing all offerings in German and English so as to support all doctoral candidates – both from Germany and from abroad – in the best possible way.

Further Information

Vice-Rectorate for Human Resources Management and Development
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/cbgk/lidx/1

Doctoral Studies at RWTH/Supervision Agreement
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/doctorate

Doctoral Candidates at RWTH
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/ptbc/lidx/1

Center for Doctoral Studies (CDS)
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/eka/lidx/1

Career Development Workshops at the Center for Doctoral Studies (CDS)
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/ohzk/lidx/1

Career Advising for Researchers
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/careeradvising

Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/global/show_document.asp?id=aaaaaaaaaayexqu

University Committee for the Investigation of Scientific Misconduct
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/qjvg/lidx/1

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) – Humtec Technology Center (HumTec)
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/qiir/lidx/1

Research Data Management
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/hnhg/lidx/1

RWTH Aachen Research Data Management Guidelines
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/ncfw/lidx/1

Workshops on Responsible Research and Innovation and on Research Data Management
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/ebog/lidx/1 and http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/ngqk/lidx/1

RWTH Center for Young Academics
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/psbp/lidx/1

Promotion of Teaching Skills at the Center for Excellent Academic Teaching (ExAct)
https://exact.rwth-aachen.de/ (DE)

Mentoring for Women Doctoral Researchers
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/fwgz/lidx/1

Equal Opportunities Office
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/wnu/lidx/1

Integration Team – Human Resources, Gender and Diversity Management (IGaD):
http://www.igad.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/evny/lidx/1

Entrepreneurship Center
https://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/fkiq/lidx/1

Family-Friendly University – Advising and Support
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/xfa/lidx/1

Research Funding
http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/oia/lidx/1