



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

How and why to do a PhD in Heidelberg?

Dr. Helke Hillebrand

Director Graduate Academy
Heidelberg University

Heidelberg, June 2023



Who are we?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

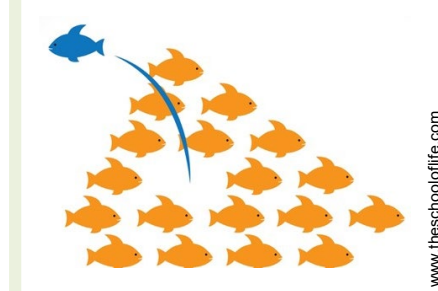
The **Graduate Academy** serves as

- A **central point of contact and support** for young researchers (PhD and postdoctoral level) and their mentors.
- A dedicated provider for efficient and effective tools for **tailor-made career development** towards supporting the transition into academic careers and facilitating the identification of ambitious career opportunities outside of academia.
- A facilitator to enable the **transfer of science into society**.

ORIENTATION



INDIVIDUALISATION



NETWORKING



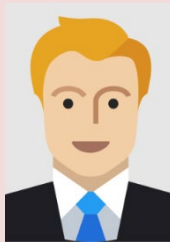
Information services & consultancy



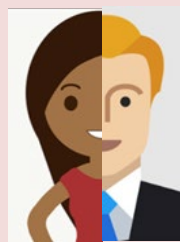
Janelle
Ramaley



Chiara
Rottaro



Daniel
Davies



N.N.



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Sponsorship for doctoral candidates



Elif
Avcu



Melanie
Spiegelhalter



Saltanat
Amantayeva

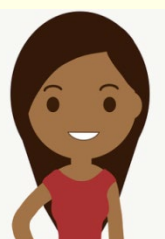
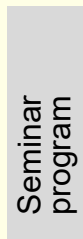


Silke
Hoffmann



N.N.

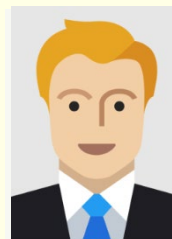
Career development support



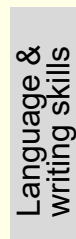
Melanie
Niese



Sarah
Herzog



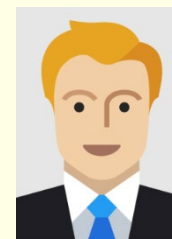
Lion
Kaminski



David
Jara



Stephanie
Renger



Sergio
Mukherjee

Communication & events



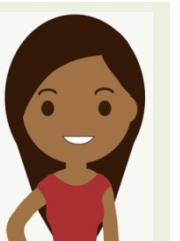
Dr. Claudia
Falk



Pablo
Naranjo



Nanina
Föhr



Alicia
Kopsch



Helke
Hillebrand



Silke
Hoffmann

Our mission



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

metadisciplinary skills!

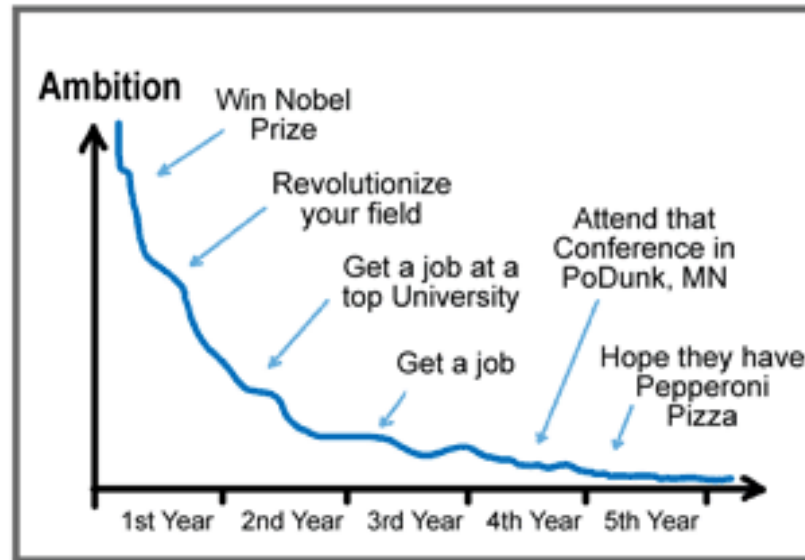
Serving excellent PhD candidates
carefully attended to
by 13 different faculties
across campus !



Cornerstones of the PhD lifecycle...



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



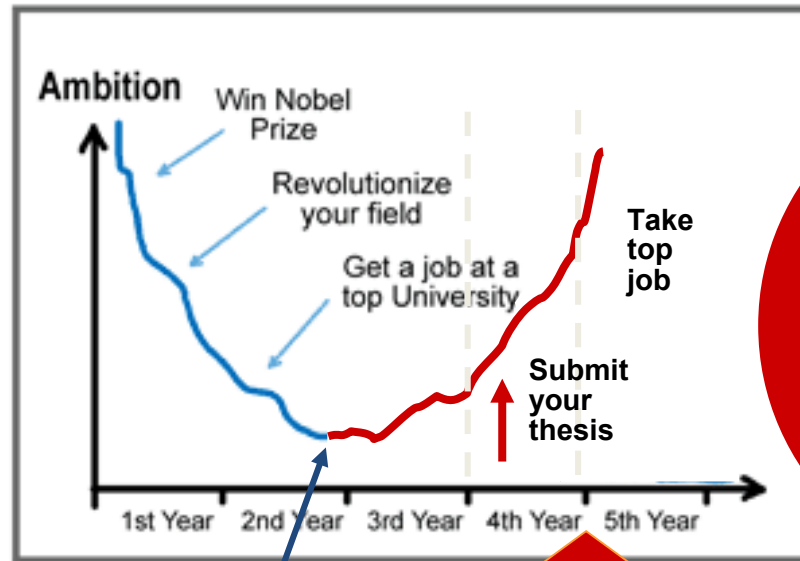
JORGE CHAM © 2008

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Cornerstones of the PhD lifecycle...



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Successfully fight your
2nd year depression

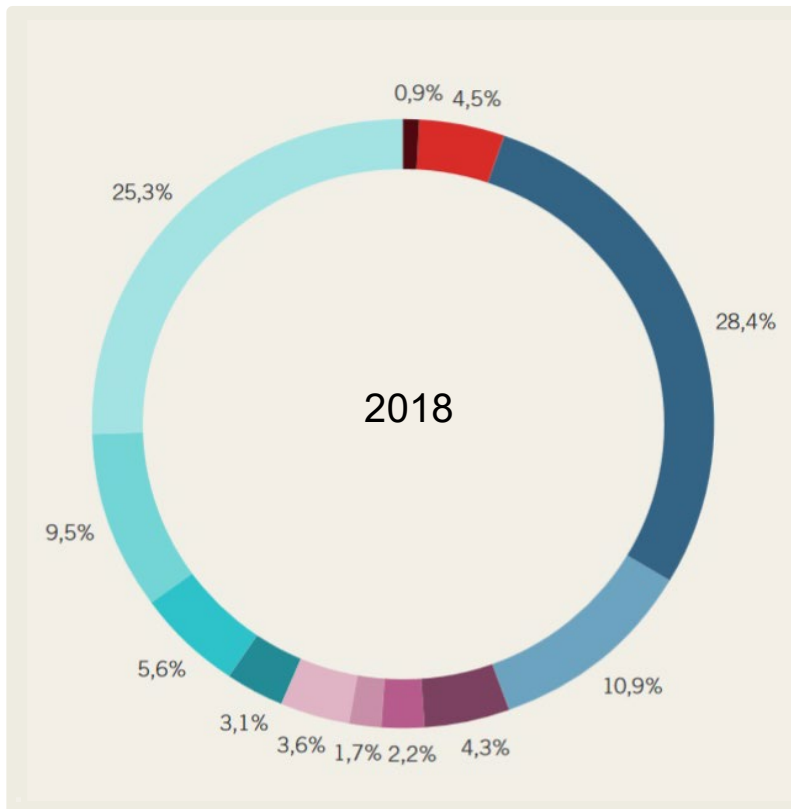
Our target audiences in numbers



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

■ About 1200 doctorates per year

- Diversity matters: About 30% international PhD candidates
- Gender balance: About 50% female and male graduates



12	Theologische Fakultät
54	Juristische Fakultät
367	Medizinische Fakultät Heidelberg
140	Medizinische Fakultät Mannheim
64	Philosophische Fakultät
34	Neuphilologische Fakultät
15	Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften
28	Fakultät für Verhaltens- und Empirische Kulturwissenschaften
19	Fakultät für Mathematik und Informatik
58	Fakultät für Chemie und Geowissenschaften
103	Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie
270	Fakultät für Biowissenschaften

Doctoral community Heidelberg University



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- About 8700 doctoral candidates steady state (incl. Dr. med.)
- Heidelberg doctoral community is the largest in Germany
- Four major Graduate Schools
(Life Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Humanities & Social Sciences)
- More than 40 structured PhD Programs
(DFG, Excellence Cluster, EU-ITN, LGFG (MWK), participation in IMPRSs and Helmholtz International Graduate Schools, else)

Heidelberg University in international comparison

<http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/university/rankings/>

Heidelberg University ranks 3rd in Germany - Shanghai Ranking 2020

University ranks 57nd worldwide and 18th in Europe (July 29, 2022)

Heidelberg University ranks 2nd in Germany - QS World University Ranking 2021/2022

University ranks 63th worldwide and 18th in Europe (June 9, 2021)

Ruperto Carola among the world's top 50 - THE Ranking 2022/23

University ranks 43rd worldwide, 13th in Europe and 3rd in Germany (October 12, 2022)

Heidelberg University ranks 5th in Germany – THE Global University Employability Ranking 2020

University ranks 73rd worldwide and 32th in Europe (November 23, 2022)

Who are YOU?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Where are you from?



What are you passionate about?



What do you most enjoy doing?



What is your way to enjoy academia?



What is your career dream?



What do you expect from doing/gaining a PhD?





UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

What's in for you?

1. Graduate Academy services
2. Managing a PhD



What do we offer today?

Core activities Graduate Academy:

- Information services & consultancy
(Beratung)
- Sponsorship for doctoral candidates
(Förderung)
- Career development support
(Seminarprogramm/ Karriereentwicklung)
- Writing and text production support G/E
(Sprachberatung und Textproduktion D/E)
- Service on demand for faculties & structured programs: Supporting the advancement of excellent PhD framework conditions (e.g. *heiDOCS*)






UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



Graduate Academy offerings (I)

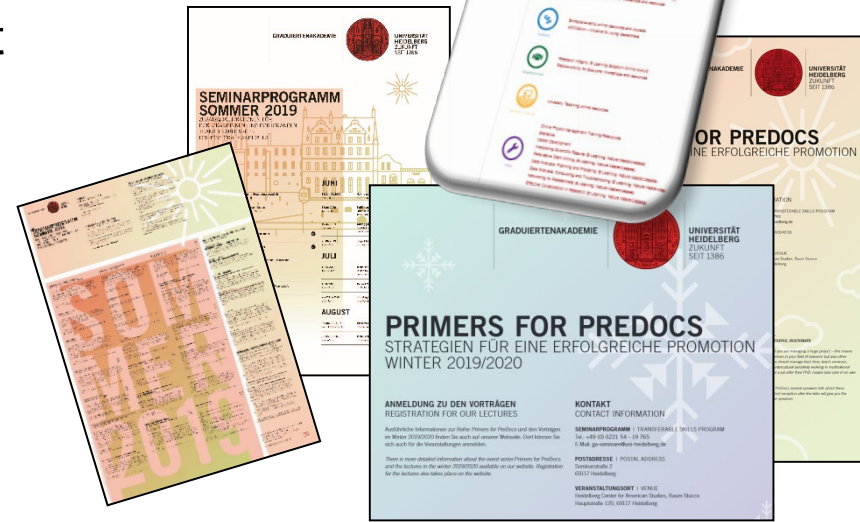


UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- Consultations   
- Welcome events & welcome packs
- Seminar and workshop program
(ca. 60 courses p.a. in D & E)
- Primers for Predocs
- Digital (e-learning) resources
- Language and text production support
- German language courses
- Summer Schools (SHS, LERU, HISS)

Themes
Personal skills / Self management
Communication skills
Digital future – technologies - skills
Open Science
Transfer & Entrepreneurship
Research Ethics
University teaching
Enabling tools

NEW!



Digital resources



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG | ZUKUNFT SEIT 1386

GRADUATE ACADEMY

- Home
- News
- Graduate Academy
- Doctoral Studies in Heidelberg
- Advising and Support
- Funding
- Career Development**
- International doctoral training
- Supervision
- Download Center

SEMINAR-
PROGRAMM
E-LEARNING

Contact | Deutsch

University > Institutions > Graduate Academy > Career Development >

Digital resources for self-study



SELF-MANAGEMENT

Intercultural Awareness
Imposter Syndrome
Procrastination
Mental Health Support



TRANSFER

Entrepreneurship online resources and courses
eDOCation – Initiative for young researchers



COMMUNICATION

Online Open Source Journal Club Initiative
Scientific Writing and Publishing (E-Learning: Nature
Advancing Your Scientific Presentations (E-Learning)
Narrative Tools for Researchers (E-Learning: Nature
Focus on Peer Review (E-Learning: Nature Mastercl



RESEARCH ETHICS

Research Integrity: E-Learning Epigeum Online Module
Reproducibility for Everyone: Workshops and resources



DIGITAL SKILLS

Digital Future / Technologies / Digital Skills online re:
Programming skills
Digital Humanities
Machine Learning
Web Design



UNIVERSITY TEACHING

University Teaching online resources



OPEN SCIENCE

Online Open Science information and training resour
Online Open Source Journal Club Initiative: Reprodu
Reproducibility for Everyone: Workshops and resou



TOOLS

Online Project Management Training-Resources
Statistics
Career Development
Interpreting Scientific Results (E-Learning: Nature Masterclasses)
Persuasive Grant Writing (E-Learning: Nature Masterclasses)
Data Analysis: Planning and Preparing (E-Learning: Nature Masterclasses)
Data Analysis: Conducting and Troubleshooting (E-Learning: Nature Masterclasses)
Networking for Researchers (E-Learning: Nature Masterclasses)
Effective Collaboration in Research (E-Learning: Nature Masterclasses)

Free access to e-learning resources



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

epigeum Research

Research Integrity UK version

Research Integrity has been comprehensively rewritten and restructured to deliver the most up-to-date training on the principles, practices, and responsibilities that apply to every researcher throughout the research lifecycle – reflecting the revised Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

www.epigeum.com

epigeum Research

Advancing your Research Career: Strategies for Research Leadership

Support researcher career development at your institution with flexible and interactive training

Epigeum, part of Oxford University Press, creates innovative online training programmes for universities and colleges around the world. Our new course, Advancing your Research Career: Strategies for Research Leadership, supports early and mid-career researchers in taking a strategic and reflective approach to advancing their research career.

www.epigeum.com

via Moodle

Coming soon

epigeum About Epigeum

Statistical Research Methods

In Development To be published: May 2024 Approximately 5 hours of Core activities

Strengthen your core skills & extend your understanding in statistics to deliver research excellence at all levels

via uni-hd e-mail

a natureresearch service

MENU nature masterclasses

Professional development training for researchers – via online courses and workshops

Request a quote

Free access for researchers from low income countries

We've partnered with Research4Life to offer free access to researchers from low income countries.

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/karriere/digitale_weiterbildung/e-learning_en.html



Graduate Academy offerings (II)



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- Cotutelles: Negotiating contracts for dual affiliations incl. supervision with international partners 📄
- Brochure Kiosk – see <http://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/downloads/>
(Graduate Academy downloads)
- Newsletter (please subscribe on our homepage)
- ★ Instagram www.instagram.com/ga_uniheidelberg
- Bulletin board (seeking partners for research, scientific or language co-operations;
https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/aktuelles/index_en.html#board)
- Jour fixe Doktorandenkonvent
- Coordinating the Ombudsprogram for doctoral candidates

NEW!



Sponsorship for doctoral candidates – *status quo*



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- Fellowships for doctoral candidates (Landesgraduieratenförderung; LGF)
 - Individual 3-year fellowships
 - Completion fellowships (3-6 month)
- Short term fellowships (heiDOCS; else)
 - Travel stipends (courses, conferences, collaborations, field trips)
 - Stipends for printing costs (contribution)
 - Short term fellowships towards completion of PhD
- Support towards identification of suitable (external) fellowships for (international) doctoral candidates
- Support towards establishing a meaningful application/ exposé writing





UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

How to manage a PhD?



What is a PhD?

Philosophy Doctor

Doctor of philosophy
doctor philosophiae

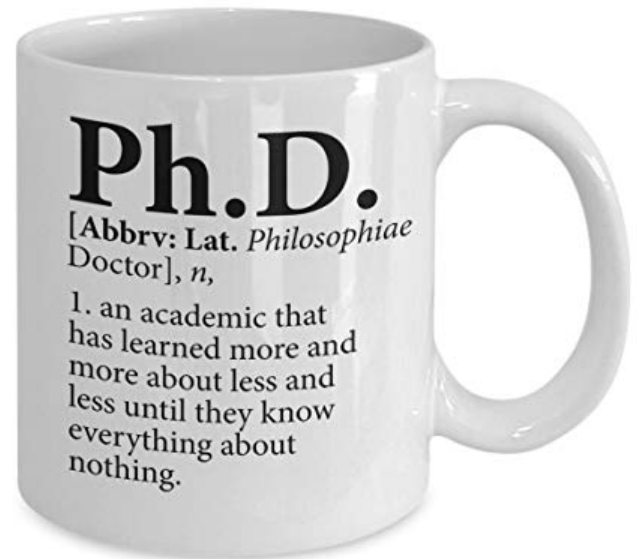
PhD / Ph.D. / Dphil / Doctorate
BR AM Latin Germanism



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Doctor of philosophy - Definition

- **Oxford Dictionary:** the highest college or university degree, or someone who has this.
- **Wikipedia:** is the highest university degree that is conferred after a course of study by universities in most English-speaking countries.
- **Amazon.de:**

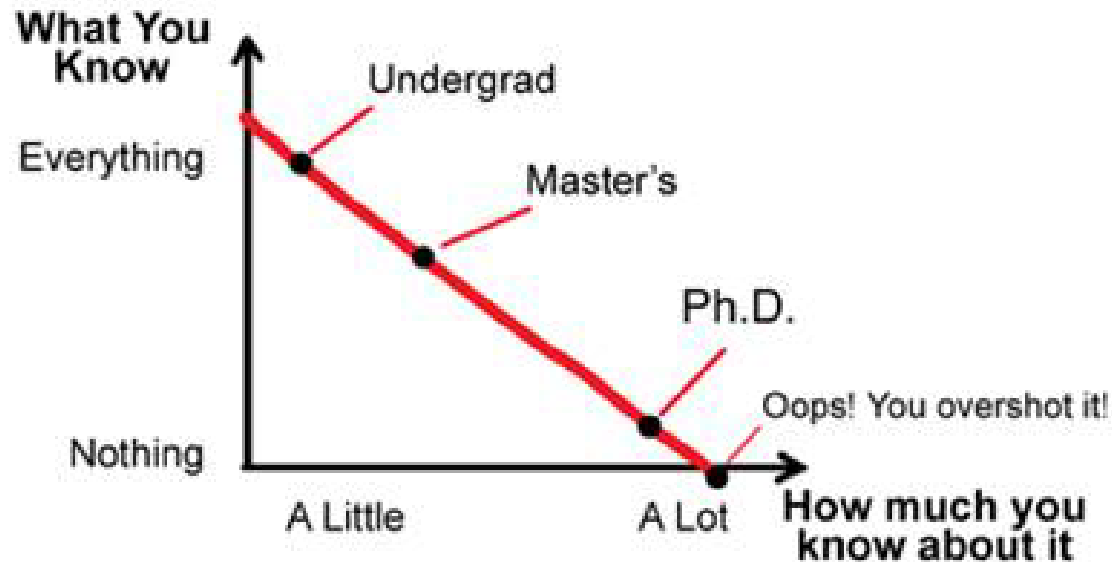


How much of an academic career do I want?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

What You Know vs How much you know about it



What does a PhD entail?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

The degree is conferred for producing **independent, original research** that expands the limits of current knowledge (can be published in a peer-reviewed journal).

- Identifying a PhD-worthy **research question**
- Pursuing original independent **research**
- Writing a **dissertation** (thesis) about the new findings
- **Submitting** the dissertation
- **Defending** the thesis (against experts in the field)
- **Publishing** the findings
- Being **promoted** to PhD (award of the title)
- Using the **title** Doctor (as awarded!!!)
 - In non-English-speaking countries, variants such as "Dr. phil.", "Dr. rer. nat.", "Dr. med." are in use.
 - In English spoken countries often abbreviated "Dr" or "Dr." or with post-nominal letters such as "Ph.D.", "PhD", or "DPhil" (depending on the awarding institution).
 - Never use both, the title and post-nominals, at the same time!

The proper etiquette associated with this usage of the doctoral degree may also be subject to the professional ethics of the own scholarly field, culture, or society

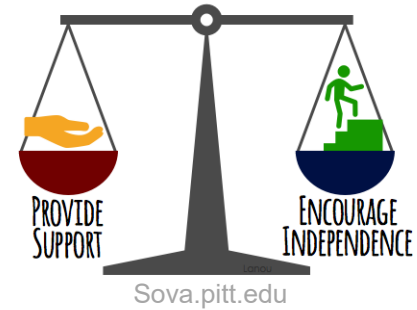
What is special about doing a PhD?



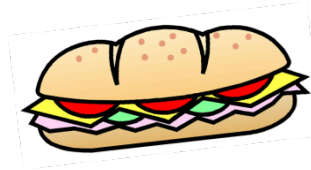
UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- You are not a student any more
- At Heidelberg University: PhD research is the first phase of a professional research experience and NOT(!) a third cycle of studies

- Independence (various degrees of)



- Life in a sandwich position



- Preparing for growth and leadership



What is expected from me when entering into PhD research?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



Exhausted or ready for taking off?

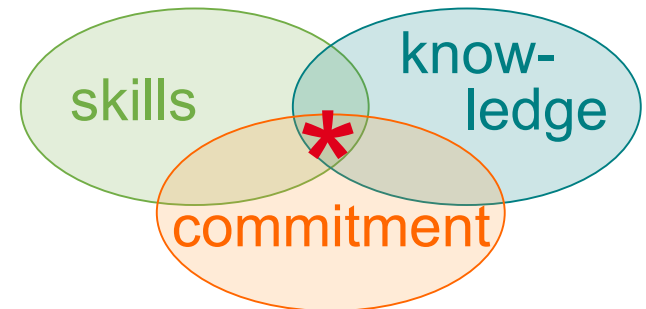


What is expected from me when doing PhD research?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- Passion to perform ✓
- Taking pleasure in (interdisciplinary) thinking, in writing and in contributing
- A profile matching a supervisor's / mentor's expectations regarding the requirements of a specific project
- Enthusiasm, curiosity, dedication, creativity, diligence ...
- Becoming a valuable team member!



* where excellence originates ...

Why to do a PhD?

Good reasons (not) to do a PhD...

- Excited about learning and solving problems
- In love with thinking, writing & freedom of thought
- Enthusiastic about doing research
- Genuinely interested in the subject area
- Want to set the stage for life-long learning
- Want the title
- Deemed important for my career aspirations
- Want to become a professor



- Interested in the training programme
- Admire my supervisor
- Curious about the university doings



- I was always a successful & diligent student
- No better job in sight



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

How to prepare for a PhD? (I)



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- Talk and listen to your peers

- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-07332-x>

Article by recent PhD graduate Lucy A. Taylor sharing the advice she and her colleagues wish they had received (06/11/2018):
Twenty things I wish I'd known when I started my PhD.



- Test your abilities (validated tests only!)

- <https://www.academics.de/angebote/promotion-test-soll-ich-promovieren>

Academics in collaboration with Heidelberg University (Institute for Psychology) developed a test for assessing personality traits, skills and qualifications relevant for a successful PhD (*see also link on GA-web*).



- <https://myidp.sciencecareers.org/> A free, web-based career-planning tool that was created to help PhD candidates and postdocs in the sciences define and pursue their career goals.



- <https://www.bachelorprint.de/promotion>

Checklists by Schneider & Molitor (on-line or book) - basis for the 2004 nation-wide THESIS-Study)

- Talk to your previous academic advisor(s) & mentor(s)



How to prepare for a PhD? (II)



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

- What is the subject area/research question you are interested in?
- Identify your “doctorfather” or “doctormother”
- Agree on a PhD-worthy research topic
- Set-up your personal funding plan
- Get a copy of your faculty’s “Promotionsordnung” – become acquainted with the specific rules and regulations
- Sign a “supervision agreement”
- Register with heiDOCS – and create your personal copy of the on-line PhD file
- Apply for admission as a PhD candidate with your faculty
- Register with Heidelberg University as a PhD-candidate (Immatriculation for PhD candidates)
- Focus on your research and your skills portfolio!



How to finance a PhD?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



- Your PhD is financed by integration into your (university) supervisor's team:
 - Departmental position, (most likely) integrated in research and teaching at your department
 - Third party funding available to your supervisor
 - You pursue an "external" PhD
- You are pursuing a job outside of your PhD project
 - You hold a contract somewhere within the university (e.g. "Geprüfte Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft")
 - You have a job elsewhere
- You hold a fellowship/ you are preparing to apply/ applying for a fellowship
- You are naturally born rich 😊

How to structure a PhD?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Individual PhD

Structured PhD

Typical characteristics

- Single supervisor
- Thesis subject solely agreed upon with supervisor; may or may not be embedded in broader context
- No obligatory course work
- No formal definition for time-to-submission

co-tutelles, research abroad;
conferences &
summer schools;
meta-disciplinary skills training &
Graduate Academy

Typical characteristics

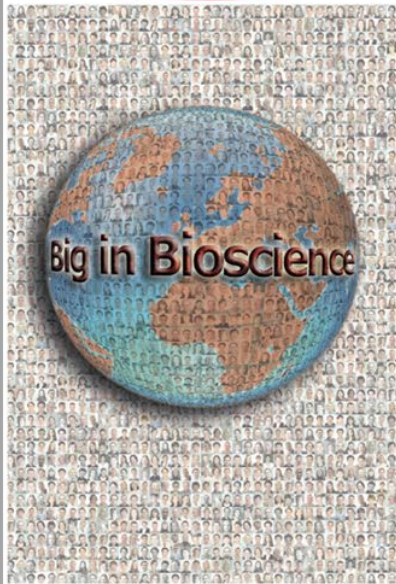
- Multiple supervisors/mentors (thesis advisory committee (TAC))
- Research topic is embedded in a doctoral program [Promotionskolleg (5-10), Graduiertenkolleg (*up to* 25), Graduiertenschule (≥ 100)]
- Requires formal application/admission
- Overarching funding/funding rules
- Programs define (disciplinary) training curricula
- Programs are set for 3-4 years of PhD research until submission
- Regular performance reviews

Heidelberg University's big 4



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Biosciences



Math/Comp



Physics



Humanities & Social Sciences



For an overview on all structured doctoral programmes go to:

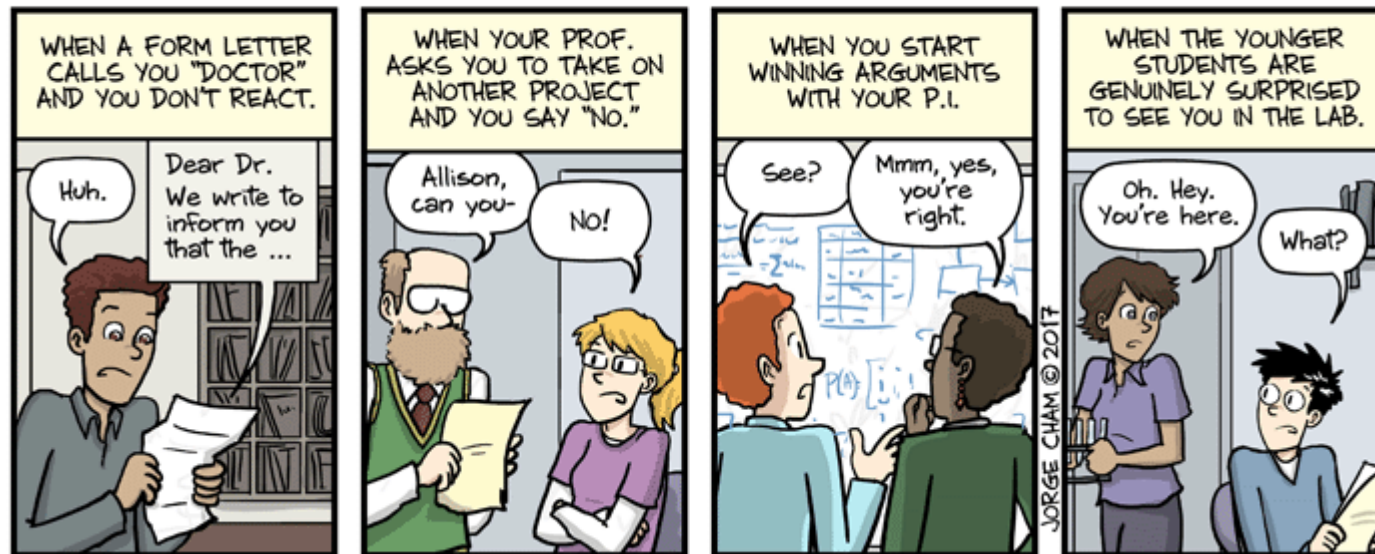
<https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/promovieren/promotionsprogramme.html>

How do I know I am ready to graduate?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

SIGNS YOU'RE READY TO GRADUATE



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM



What is expected from me after the PhD?

What is a PhD good for?



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

What will you gain?

Resilience

Endurance

Critical thinking

Self esteem

Intrinsic motivation

Can do-attitude

Courage

Leadership skills

Respect

Friends for life

...

What will society expect from you?

Resilience

Endurance

Critical thinking

Initiative

Motivation and advice

Accountability

Courage

Insightfulness

Trustworthiness

...

**DON'T
QUIT !**



Entering the labor market with a PhD



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

What will be easier ?

- Avoiding routine
- Life long learning
- Work-life integration
- Freedom of thought
- Taking responsibility
- Visibility
- Securing leadership positions
- ...

What will be harder ?

- Securing your first position
- Over qualification risk
- Work-life balance
- Higher expectations
- Visibility
- You follow the job market
- ...

What are myths ?

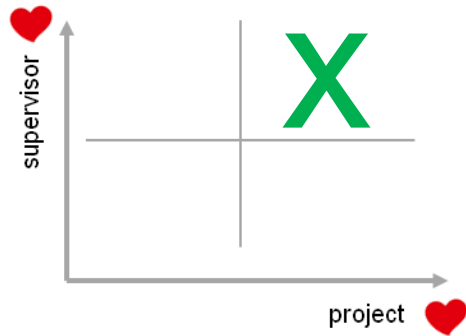
- Making more money
- Broader choice of jobs
- Job security
- ...

How to manage a PhD?

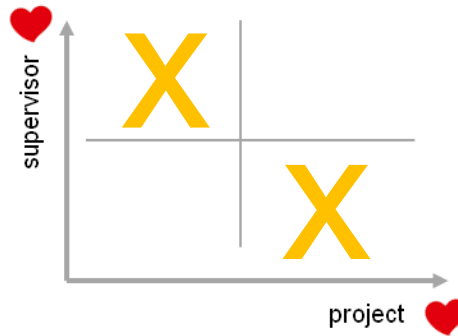


UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

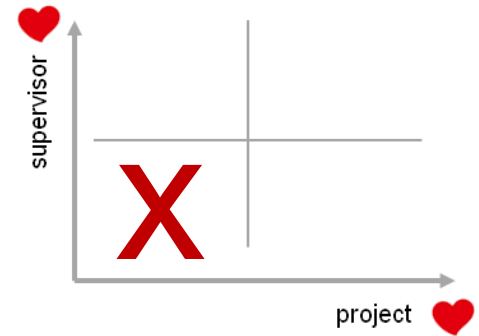
Happiness, satisfaction, resilience, work-life balance



Great –
■ keep going,
■ nurture
■ and enjoy!



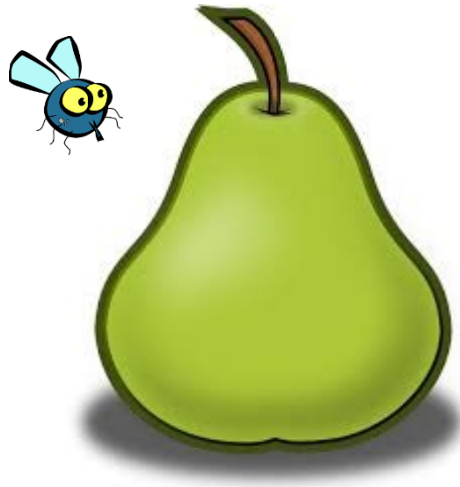
Fix it –
■ talk to people
■ identify sinks
■ keep observing!



Drastic change is
much needed –
■ talk to people
■ think about plan B!



Whom to contact if anything goes pear-shaped?



Avoid the fly



turning into a big white elephant...



**UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG**
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



... communication is key!

Avoid the fly



turning into a big white elephant...



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Talk (*selectively!*) to

- your supervisor
- your 2nd supervisor/mentor/TAC members
- your peers or the postdoc you work with
- the student representative(s)
- the PhD program coordinator
- **us – contact the Graduate Academy**
- the department head / Dean of Graduate Studies
- the equal opportunity office (Gleichstellungsbüro)
- the ombudsperson

... and start talking early on; communication is key!



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

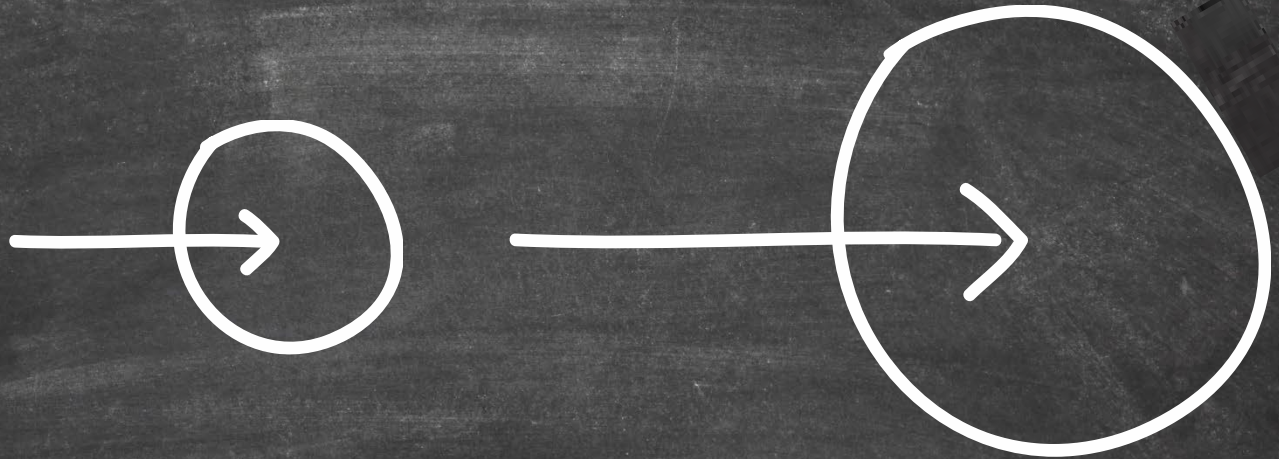
What is a PhD?



2023

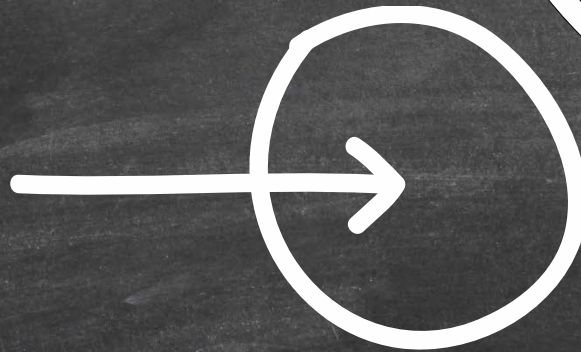
2027

your
comfort
zone



Adapted from <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CRvORSqUEAAED5t.jpg>

**your
comfort
zone**



**Where the
magic happens**

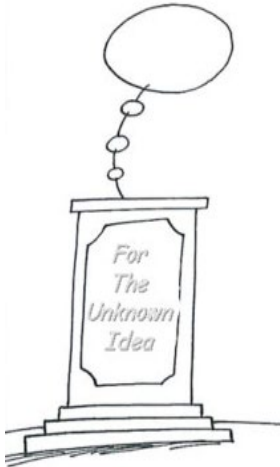
Adapted from <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CRvORSqUEAAED5t.jpg>

Get in touch – stay in touch!



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

There is always
space for YOUR ideas:



© Manfred Bofinger & Ming Fai Chow

To PhD or not to PhD ?

—

if this is the question,
please, do not hesitate
to take an appointment!

<http://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/>
graduiertenakademie@uni-heidelberg.de
leitung@uni-heidelberg.de
helke.hillebrand@uni-heidelberg.de

