



by PhDs and Postdocs

Department of Geosciences

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organized by

Ph.D./Postdoc Representatives

(Department of Geosciences)

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Disclaimer

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FUNDING AND SALARY

1. What funding opportunities are provided by the university?

There are funding opportunities related to the [Excellence Strategy](#) within the University. (link accessed on 12.08.2024)

2. Is it possible to get information on funding options in Germany to continue my work here?

See general information provided by the [graduate academy](#). For support for junior researchers, click [here \(Funding for Junior Researchers\)](#) OR [here \(Funding for Postdocs\)](#). (link accessed on 12.08.2024). Moreover, the [research funding team](#) offers advice on the various funding formats and supports the application process.

Check out the [Funding Database](#) for external funding for research in Germany (link accessed on 12.08.2024)

There is also a homepage addressing foreign researchers who pursue to conduct research in Germany by the Ministry of Education and Research which answers many common questions and lists possible funding schemes: <https://www.research-in-germany.org> (link accessed on 23.08.2024)

3. I am on, for example, a 60% work contract, but I have to work 100%. What happens to the 40% percent of my salary?

For Ph.D. students in Germany, the promotion is considered “private work”. With the exception of scholarships, funding is usually project-based, and positions are at an E13 level. An E13 hourly wage cannot be reduced to account for the training aspect of an ongoing Ph.D. As a result, fewer hours (here 60%) are paid. The Ph.D. student's tasks within the project are not necessarily limited to their promotion. Therefore, it is expected that a Ph.D. candidate works a percentage for the funded project (here max. 60%) and uses the rest of the 100% to pursue their doctorate degree. For more information, check the [FAQ page](#) of the DFG website (link accessed on 12.08.2024).

4. Are there any guidelines for postdoctoral researchers interested in starting their own grants?

Guidelines can be different from one funding body to another. However, most of the funding bodies do provide the desired format for their grants. Official forms (i.e., what a grant should include) for DFG grants can be found on their webpage (click [here](#) for more information in English or [here](#) for guidelines in German) (links accessed on 12.08.2024).

More specifically, click [here](#) to access postdoc grant possibilities offered by Marie Curie actions (EU funded) (links accessed on 12.08.2024).

5. Does my third-party funding get prolonged in case of parental leave?

Contact the [Gender Equality Office/Gleichstellungsbüro](#) (partly in German) or [Family Office/Familienbüro](#) for more details (links accessed on 12.08.2024). Moreover, you can also sign up for their newsletter [here](#) for irregular information concerning the compatibility of studies with family and care responsibilities.

6. Are there limitations in the number of contracts or years that PhDs/postdocs can be temporarily employed by the university in Germany?

The Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz (WissZeitVG) provides the legal framework for fixed-term employment contracts for academic staff at universities in Germany. This special fixed-term employment law allows for temporary employment under specific conditions. Initially, it allowed for a maximum of 6 years of fixed-term employment before the PhD and another 6 years after the PhD.

Recent reforms, as of March 27, 2024, have introduced further changes. The maximum fixed-term period for postdocs has been reduced from 6 to 4 years, with an additional 2 years possible under certain conditions (e.g., caring for minor children or serious illness). This new 4+2 model aims to provide more stability and clarity for early-career researchers.

The current status is summarized on this page by the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF): <https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/shareddocs/faq/wisszeitvg-reform.html> (German only, link accessed on 23.08.2024).

This link leads to an [automatically translated version of the page](#).

Important note: The above information is just a general guide. The law can be differently applied in different German states or vary depending on the type of funding (e.g., third-party, scholarship, or university funding) and position (e.g. ‘akademischer Rats’-position or junior professorship). We strongly recommend that you seek advice from your faculty or a lawyer to clarify how the law applies to your situation.

7. Are Ph.D. candidates students or employees in Germany?

At the University of Tübingen, Ph.D. candidates have to enroll as students (since March 2018; here for [reference](#), last accessed 12.08.24). Ph.D. candidates are considered as researchers but enrolled as students to ensure their insurance status (according to written communication of Kirsten Sonnenschein, Graduate Academy 10.2020). However, the enrollment process is not entirely mandatory if you have a work contract of at least half the regular hours of a full-time employee. On that, the declaration of exemption is required.

8. How is your salary determined?

At the university, you are usually employed by the State of Baden-Württemberg. The salary for public service can be [calculated online](#), depending on the employee's tax class, working time, and work experience. The salary for a Ph.D. student is usually 65 and 100% E13 depending on their field of research (e.g., [according to DFG](#) (in German)) (links accessed on 12.08.2024).

9. Can funded Ph.D. contracts be extended after 3 years? If so, under what conditions?

This fully depends on the project and source of funding. Please also see the point on the maximum duration of contracts above.

Ph.D. & Postdoc Work

In addition, to the questions outlined below please also see [this presentation](#) from Prof. Paul Bons (02.2023) for questions concerning the rules and requirements for a doctoral dissertation and habilitation. The information provided in the presentation is not legally binding but a help to understand the in parts complicated legally binding German version of the doctoral and habilitation regulations of the Faculty of Science.

10. What is a Habilitation?

The *Habilitation* is almost like a second doctorate, though it is not a degree and the aim is to qualify for a professorship. It is a four to six-year period of independent research, teaching, and administrative responsibilities that culminates in writing either a monograph or several articles of outstanding quality (click [here](#) for reference, last accessed 12.08.2024). Also, see [here](#) for more information from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (accessed 12.08.2024).

11. When is a Habilitation possible?

Requirements for a habilitation can be found in the “[Habitationsordnung](#)” of the Faculty of Science (“Mathematisch-Naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät” in German) (link accessed on 12.08.2024).

12. What is a doctorate degree (in Germany)? Is it the same as a Ph.D.?

In Germany, doctoral degrees are conferred by universities or higher education institutions with equivalent status. This process is known as Promotion. Doctoral degrees are obtained through a specific process, during which an individual demonstrates his or her **ability to carry out independent research**. If the required examinations have been passed and all the formal prerequisites are met, the university or the faculty authorized by the university to award doctoral degrees confers the academic degree of Doktor supplemented by the appropriate field, e.g., Dr. rer. nat. or Dr. theol. Some universities also offer the academic degree of Ph.D. However, most doctoral degrees are not equivalent to the Ph.D. commonly known in other countries like the US. In informal documents and when discussing with colleagues, using the word Ph.D. is ok but with few exceptions, not when translating the title for official documents.

13. What are the general requirements for Ph.D. completion?

Please see [Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Science](#) (link accessed on 12.08.2024) for all the regulations concerning a successful completion at the University of Tübingen. Note that there is a separate document regarding supervisors and reviewing committees that can be accessed on the website under the downloads section.

14. What are the legal rights of Ph.D. students or Postdocs when publishing articles with professors? Who has ownership over the data produced by Ph.D.'s/Postdocs in collaboration with professors?

Please refer to [this link](#) (in German, accessed 12.08.2024) for more information. In general, the University owns the data, and the Professor (PI) shares some rights. Moreover, check the [University site](#) for more details such as open access and publication regulations.

15. When should I start to write my Ph.D. dissertation? How is this structured?

You can start writing your dissertation whenever you want. We suggest speaking to a Postdoc mentor from the same field and discussing this with your supervisor.

16. What should I do if my advisor and I do not agree on the number of publications a doctoral degree requires?

To obtain a doctoral degree from our faculty, journal publication is not necessarily required. The requirements for a doctoral degree are summarized in the [Promotionsordnung](#) (download under 'Information' 'Information Sheet for Doctoral Candidates and PromO-Rules and Guidelines for Doctoral Studies 2015'). However, for a true cumulative dissertation, the Ph.D. Committee ([Postgraduate Affairs Board](#)) requires at least two manuscripts accepted for publication. Nevertheless, the supervisor decides what is enough for a dissertation (find the document 'Recommendations for Cumulative Dissertations' under 'Information'). Alternatively, a monograph can be written (no publication required) but the supervisors have to approve the format. In addition, there is the option for a monograph including co-authored chapters (already published or in prep. publications). If your supervisor insists on a cumulative thesis with more than two publications and you think more publications are not necessary to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree, you should contact the [Promotions-Ausschuss/Postgraduate Affairs Board](#) (links accessed 12.08.2024).

17. I am currently outside Germany. Will I be able to defend my dissertation on Zoom?

Yes, online examinations are now allowed. Please keep in mind, that an online examination has to be registered in advance by handing in a [specific form](#) (download under form and policies and oral exam, link accessed on 12.08.2024).

18. Are we insured if we work outside business hours and/or on the weekends? If a work-related accident happens, will the insurance company take responsibility?

For work accidents, click [here](#) (link accessed on 12.08.2024).

JOURNAL ARTICLES

19. What can I do if I cannot access an article?

The University library provides access to the [online archives of the most important publishers](#) and has a range of [services on interlibrary exchange and loans](#) (link accessed on 23.08.2024).

20. What are the online journals the University library has access to?

The catalog of the [Electronic Journals Library](#) is found here (link accessed 12.08.2024).

21. Will there be a local library in GUZ?

As of now (12.8.2020) and according to the university librarian, there will be no library in the GUZ.

SUPERVISION

22. I rarely meet with my advisor. What are the university rules for this?

For Ph.D. candidates, only one meeting per year is mandatory (see [supervision agreement](#); under the 'Forms and Policies' - 'Application for Acceptance' link accessed on 12.08.2024).

23. What can be done when disagreements occur and no other advisors are involved in the project?

Depending on the type of disagreement, one of the faculty Ombudspersons can be contacted (click [here](#) for more information; link accessed on 12.08.2024).

In case of misconduct in science, click [here](#). (link accessed on 12.08.2024). There is a list of Ombudspersons for download on this website.

24. If you have complaints about professors' remarks and behaviors, especially with regard to power harassment (not sexual harassment), who can you address while remaining anonymous? If a report has been initiated, what kind of actions can we expect? Can professors be accounted for?

Please see our answer to question 32. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against professors (and civil servants in general) if there is sufficient evidence of misconduct.

Depending on the severity of the misconduct, the following penalties may be imposed: reprimand, fine, reduction of salary, downgrading, and removal from the position (click [here](#) for source in German; link accessed on 12.08.2024).

25. In case of conflict with an advisor, what neutral parties do we have access to for addressing such issues?

Please see: [Conflict Mediation Commission](#) (in German; accessed on 12.08.2024).

26. Is it legal that my supervisor does not pay me for writing my thesis/publications?

Normally, one is not paid for writing a thesis. If your project description, however, includes the publication of papers, the hours spent writing papers should be paid by the project. You can also refer to our answer to question #3.

27. Is it possible to change supervisor? How?

It is possible at any time to change supervisor. All involved persons have to agree on the change. Please hand in the form “**Application for Acceptance as Doctoral Candidate and Supervision Agreement**” again with your new supervisor and put a note on it, saying that this is not a new application but a supervisor change. (see page 2 of the document ‘Information Sheet for Doctoral Candidates’ that you find [here](#), link accessed on 12.08.2024).

WELL-BEING

28. What kind of assistance can I get at the University of Tübingen?

For general things, there is the Central Advisory Board (Zentrale Beratungsstelle) which provides individual support on learning aids, studying / working with a chronic illness or disability, individual challenges, mental health, studying / working with a child, examination-related matters, leave of absence, and many other aspects...

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/1934> (link accessed on 23.08.2024)

29. Is there any emergency mental health service provided by the university?

Contacting the Clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy in Tübingen (Tel. 07071 / 29-82311) or dialing 112 is referred to as a point of contact for emergencies by Counselling of the Studierendenwerk Tübingen-Hohenheim. There is also a telephone counseling service (see [source](#); accessed on 12.08.2024).

30. What can I do when my advisor fails to protect me from an abusive coworker?

There are 4 steps recommended by the University concerning cases of mobbing, sexual harassment, or discrimination. These steps can be found [here](#) (download the file 'Richtlinie Partnerschaftliches Verhalten an der Universität Tübingen' (Guidelines on Cooperative Behavior)) On the German website there is also a brochure about sexual harassment.

These steps are:

- **First Stage:** Attempt of direct clarification of the conflict situation by the parties/affected persons themselves. For this purpose alone, the advice provided by a body mentioned under "Step 3" can take place.
- **Second Stage:** The persons concerned have the option to inform their immediate or next higher superior (e.g., head of the institute, dean), who is also responsible for an appropriate working atmosphere. In order to support parties taking this step, each faculty has a list of non-academic staff members that volunteer as specific contact persons for such cases.
- **Third Stage:** Complaint to one of the following institutions/counseling centers depending on the underlying issue: Personnel Department (human resources), Staff committee, Gender Equality Office, Psychosocial counseling center for employees, Psychotherapeutic counseling center for students, Company medical service, Representative body for severely disabled persons, Commission for Ethical Conduct in Science.
- **Fourth Stage:** If no solution could be found at level 3, the person/party affected can bring the case to the attention of the Rectorate Commission for cooperation. This step may happen with or without the help of the above-mentioned institutions.

Note - You can always contact the [representatives for PhDs and PostDocs](#) as well as Equal Opportunities in the Geosciences department (under 'Advice and Help' - 'First point of Contact within each Department' and see poster) (link accessed 12.08.2024).

31. What can I do when my supervisor behaves unprofessionally (e.g., excessive criticism, looking down on me and my project, etc)?"

See our answers to question 32 for the steps you can take.

32. Is there an expert to talk to about issues related to mental health?

You can contact the [Psychosocial Counseling Service for University](#) (Contact person available for English counseling: Dr. Annette Mauch, Qualified social worker) (link accessed on 12.08.2024).

Students can contact the [Counselling of the Studierendenwerk Tübingen-Hohenheim](#) (link accessed on 12.08.2024). For a list of other counseling services, click [here](#). (link accessed on 12.08.2024)

33. What steps should a victim of harassment take and what resources are available to help with facing harassment of any kind?

For sexual harassment, see the steps listed by the [Gender Equality Office/Gleichstellungsbüro](#) (link accessed 12.08.2024).

There is also an awareness team of voluntaries which can be contacted at any time if you feel harassed, treated unfairly, discriminated against, or do you feel your boundaries have been violated?awareness@ifg.uni-tuebingen.de

34. Is there any mentoring program at the university?

For women check the [Mentoring and Training program](#) from state-funded LaKoG under Förderprogramme (in German link accessed on 12.08.2024) and check services offered by the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

OTHER

35. Why are some of the University homepages not translated into English?

We contacted the Dekanat and informed them that it would be helpful to have all the information also in English.

36. Is it necessary to be habilitated to serve as a secondary or tertiary Ph.D. supervisor?

According to the Information Sheet for Doctoral Candidates at the Faculty of Science at the University of Tübingen, the primary supervisor has to be a full-time professor. The secondary supervisor can either be a professor or a professor who teaches at a polytechnic college (*Fachhochschule*), a junior professor, a retired professor, an assistant professor, an honorary professor, or visiting professor. (for reference, click [here](#) ,Forms and Policies‘ , Information sheet for Doctoral Candidates. Link accessed on 16.10.2024). However, there are exceptions. E.g. the principal investigator of an ERC or Emmy Noether may be the main supervisor of Ph.D. candidates in your project. The university/Deanery should be contacted to discuss such specific cases.

37. Where can I seek help as an international scholar?

See [information](#) by the Welcome Center (link accessed on 16.10.2024).