UNIVERSITÄT ZU KÖLN

HOW TO PLAN MY SUPERVISION?

Information for Prospective Doctoral Candidates

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Objectives:

Commitment / Liability

- Additional attention to problems, opportunities, and challenges in the research / doctoral process
- Avoidance of ambiguities, misunderstandings, and conflicts
- Continuity of communication

Additional perspectives, e. g.:

- Subject-specific and content-related input
- Organisational or strategic challenges in the context of doctoral studies (career planning, publication, etc.)
- Scientific integrity

Security

- Backup in the event of individual supervisors being unavailable: support in continuing the doctoral process

Provisions of the Doctoral Regulations:

Promotionsordnung der Humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät vom 10.09.2024 (Amtliche Mitteilungen 82/2024)

https://am.uni-koeln.de/e45267/data/records50493/AM_2024-82_PromO_HF_2024_ger.pdf

Provisions of the Doctoral Regulations:

Composition of the supervisory committee*

(§ 5 Abs. 1, a und b):
„[…] mindestens zwei nach § 4 zur Betreuung berechtigten Personen sowie einem Mitglied der Humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät, einer anderen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln oder einer anderen Universität oder Fachhochschule, das mindestens promoviert ist. Die Betreuung bezieht sich sowohl auf das Promotionsstudium als auch auf Forschungsarbeiten zum Zwecke der Abfassung der Dissertation und ggf. auf das Eignungsfeststellungsverfahren."

* Please note: The following translation may serve as a help, but only the German version of the regulations is legally binding!

(Section 5 (1), a and b):
"[…] at least two persons entitled to supervise doctoral projects pursuant to § 4 and one member of the Faculty of Human Sciences, another faculty of the University of Cologne, or another university or university of applied sciences who holds at least a doctorate. Supervision relates to doctoral studies as well as research work for the purpose of writing the dissertation and, if applicable, the aptitude assessment procedure."

Provisions of the Doctoral Regulations:

Responsibilities of the supervisory committee*

(§ 7 Abs. 2):
„Einmal jährlich findet ein zu dokumentierendes Gespräch zwischen der Betreuungskommission und der promovierenden Person statt. Dieses muss spätestens ein Jahr nach der Zulassung zum Promotionsstudium erfolgen und danach im jährlichen Rhythmus."

* Please note: The following translation may serve as a help, but only the German version of the regulations is legally binding!

(Section 7 (2)):
„Once a year, a documented supervisory meeting shall take place between the supervisory committee and the doctoral candidate. This must take place no later than one year after admission as a doctoral candidate and thereafter on an annual basis."

Provisions of the Doctoral Regulations:

Changes to the composition*

(§ 5 Abs. 8):
„Auf Antrag […] können die Betreuungskommission oder einzelne Betreuende gewechselt werden. Hierzu sind erneute individuelle Betreuungszusagen erforderlich. Die dem Promotionsausschuss vorsitzende Person entscheidet über den Antrag."

* Please note: The following translation may serve as a help, but only the German version of the regulations is legally binding!

(Section 5 (8)):
„Upon request […] the supervisory committee or individual supervisors may be replaced. This requires a new individual supervision agreement. The Chair of the Doctoral Committee shall decide on the request."

Provisions of the Doctoral Regulations:

Expert opinion / review*

(§ 13 Abs. 1):

„Die dem Promotionsausschuss vorsitzende Person bestellt zwei Gutachter*innen für die Begutachtung der Dissertation, die Promotionsrecht haben müssen und Mitglieder der Humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät sein sollen. In der Regel erstellen die betreuenden Personen […] die Gutachten über die Arbeit. Mindestens eine*r der Gutachter*innen muss das Fach vertreten, dem die Dissertation zuzuordnen ist. […] Zweitgutachter*innen oder weitere Gutachter*innen können auch einer anderen, ggf. auch auswärtigen Fakultät bzw. Hochschule angehören."

* Please note: The following translation may serve as a help, but only the German version of the regulations is legally binding!

(Section 13 (1)):

„The chair of the doctoral committee appoints two reviewers to evaluate the dissertation, who must be entitled to award doctorates and should be members of the Faculty of Human Sciences. As a rule, the supervisors […] prepare the expert opinions on the work. At least one of the reviewers must represent the subject to which the dissertation belongs. […] Second reviewers or additional reviewers may also belong to another faculty or university, including universities abroad".

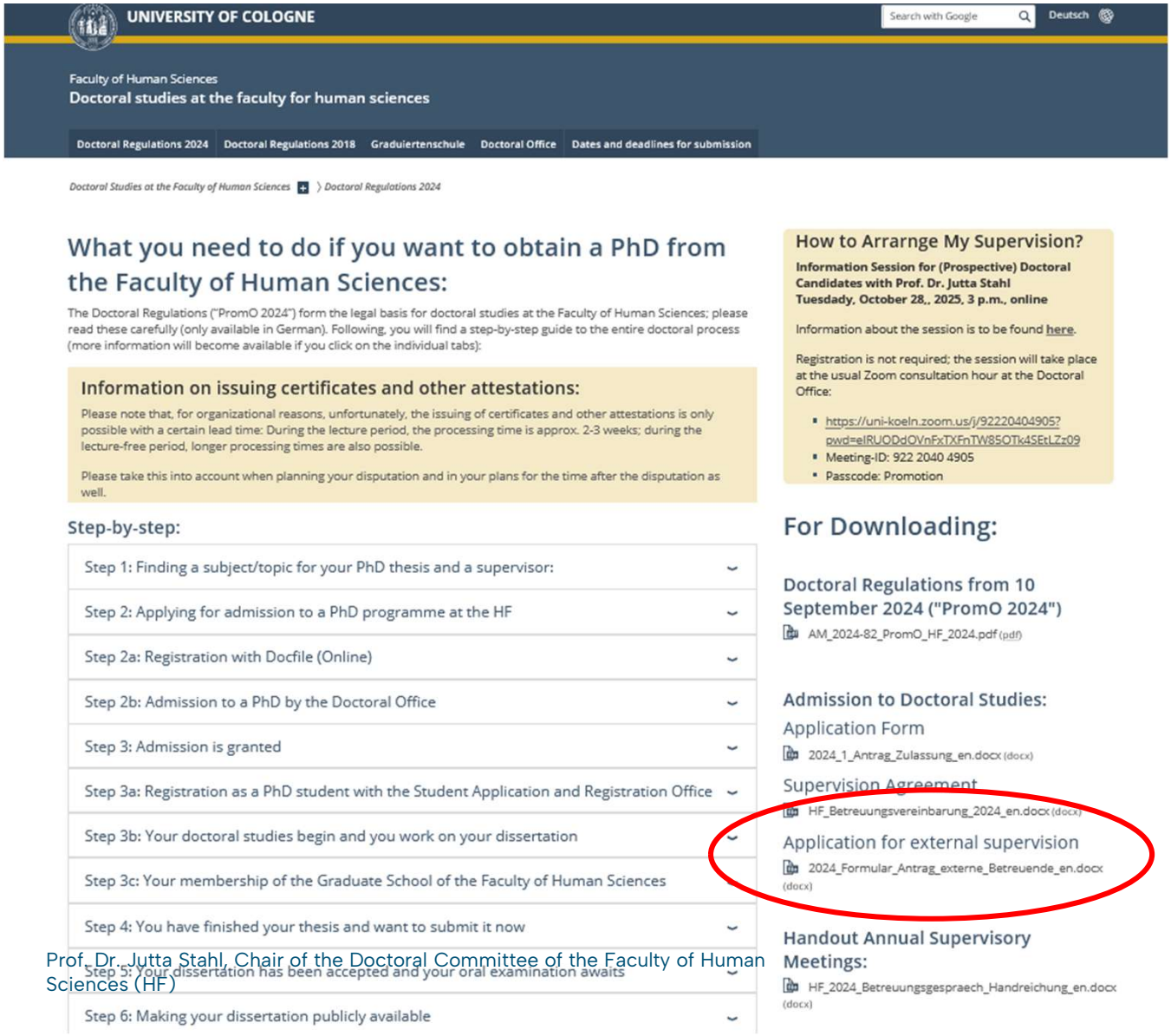
Practical Implementation:

Requirements for choosing the members of the supervisory committee

1. **Member:**
   - Must be entitled to award doctorates at the Faculty of Human Sciences (HF)
   - Must be in active service at the HF

   => (Junior-)Professor at the HF or private lecturer („Privatdozent“, abbr. PD), if employed at the HF
2. **Member:**
   - Must be entitled to award doctorates
   - May, but is not necessarily required to, work at the HF

   => Retired professors, professors from other faculties or other universities may also be selected as supervisors by mutual agreement.
   For external supervisors: Please also submit an „Application for external supervision“!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Doctoral Regulations 2024
What you need to do if you want to obtain a PhD from the Faculty of Human Sciences:
The Doctoral Regulations ("PromO 2024") form the legal basis for doctoral studies at the Faculty of Human Sciences; please read these carefully (only available in German). Following, you will find a step-by-step guide to the entire doctoral process (more information will become available if you click on the individual tabs):
Information on issuing certificates and other attestations:
Please note that, for organizational reasons, unfortunately, the issuing of certificates and other attestations is only possible with a certain lead time: During the lecture period, the processing time is approx. 2-3 weeks; during the lecture-free period, longer processing times are also possible.
Please take this into account when planning your disputation and in your plans for the time after the disputation as well.
Step-by-step:
Step 1: Finding a subject/topic for your PhD thesis and a supervisor:
Step 2: Applying for admission to a PhD programme at the HF
Step 2a: Registration with Docfile (Online)
Step 2b: Admission to a PhD by the Doctoral Office
Step 3: Admission is granted
Step 3a: Registration as a PhD student with the Student Application and Registration Office
Step 3b: Your doctoral studies begin and you work on your dissertation
Step 3c: Your membership of the Graduate School of the Faculty of Human Sciences
Step 4: You have finished your thesis and want to submit it now
Step 5: Your dissertation has been accepted and your oral examination awaits
Step 6: Making your dissertation publicly available
How to Arrarnge My Supervision?
Information Session for (Prospective) Doctoral Candidates with Prof. Dr. Jutta Stahl
Tuesdady, October 28,, 2025, 3 p.m., online
Information about the session is to be found here.
Registration is not required; the session will take place at the usual Zoom consultation hour at the Doctoral Office:
https://uni-koeln.zoom.us/j/92220404905?pwd=elRUODdOVnFxTXFnTW85OTk4SEtLZz09
Meeting-ID: 922 2040 4905
Passcode: Promotion
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AM_2024-82_PromO_HF_2024.pdf (pdf)
Admission to Doctoral Studies:
Application Form
2024_1_Antrag_Zulassung_en.docx (docx)
Supervision Agreement
HF_Betreuungsvereinbarung_2024_en.docx (docx)
Application for external supervision
2024_Formular_Antrag_externe_Betreuende_en.docx (docx)
Handout Annual Supervisory Meetings:
HF_2024_Betreuungsgespraech_Handreichung_en.docx (docx)

Practical Implementation:

Requirements for members of the supervisory committee

3. Member:

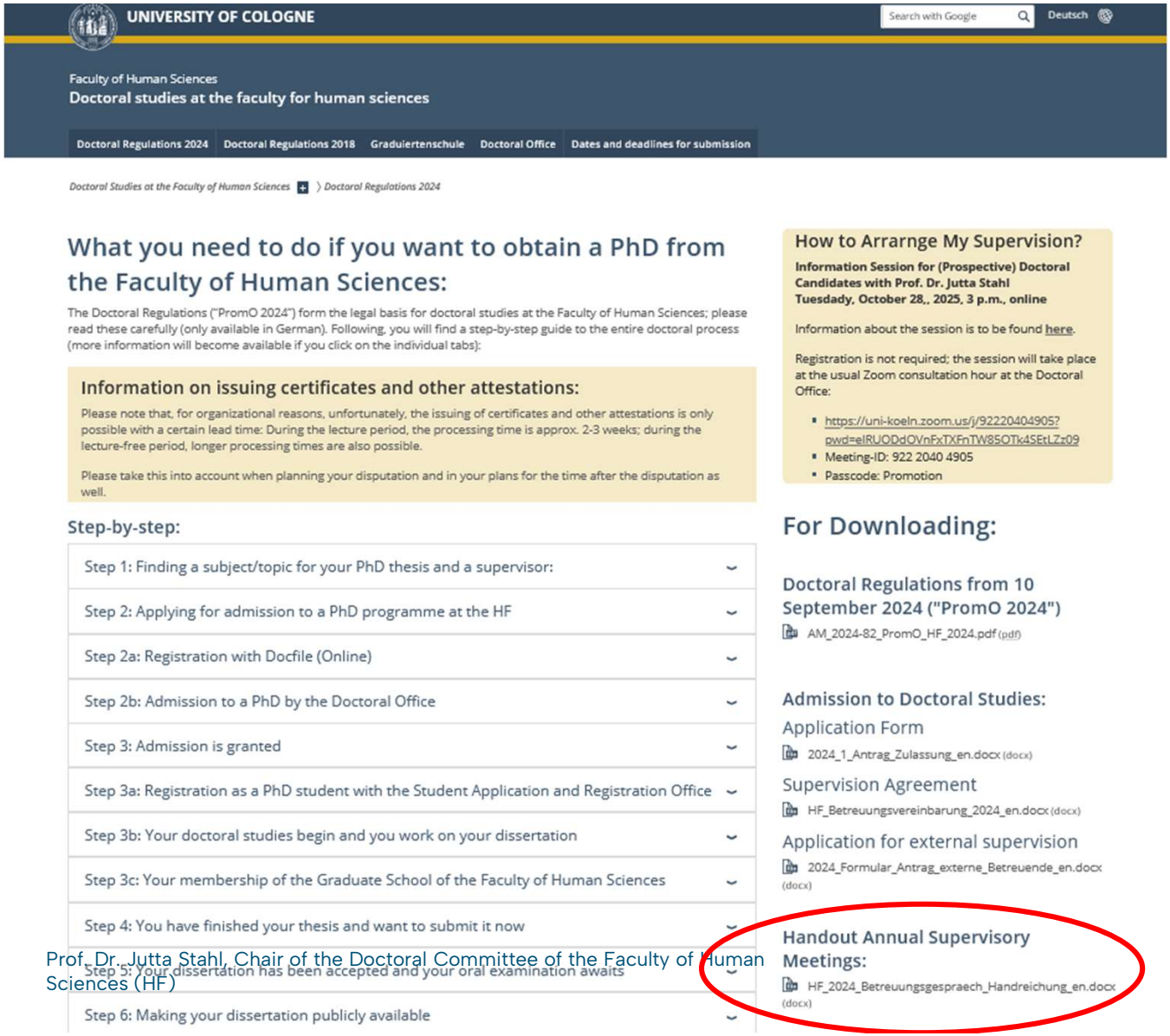
- Must hold at least a doctorate
- Must be employed at an academic institution at the time of admission to the supervisory committee

=> Postdocs, private lecturers („Privatdozent“) or professors at the HF, other faculties, other universities or non-university resesarch institutions may be elected as the third member of the supervisory committee by mutual agreement; an additional application is **NOT** required

Practical Implementation:

Supervisory meetings

- No later than 1 year after admission as a doctoral candidate, then at least once a year
- If posssible, with all members of the supervisory committee together
- Key topics to be set individually and according to individual needs
- **Mandatory:** Simple documentation (form), to be submitted to the doctoral office (Upload at Docfile)
- **Voluntary, by mutual agreement:** detailed minutes; **NOT** to be submitted to the Doctoral Office
- Possible overlap with personnel development dialogues (PDD):
  Combination permitted by mutual agreement, provided that topics that do not belong in the context of the PDD will be discussed separately in another context.
- **=> „Handout for Annual Supervisory Meetings“**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Practical Implementation:

Please note:

Members 1 and 2 of the supervisory committee **MAY** be proposed as reviewers later, when the dissertation is to be submitted.

However, when proposing reviewers, **you are NOT required** to propose the members of your previous supervisory committee.

The doctoral regulations allow you to make no proposals for reviewers at all or to propose persons other than your supervisors as reviewers.

The only condition is that one of the reviewers must be a member of the Faculty of Human Sciences who ist entitled to award doctorates.

Functions in the Supervisory Committee: (Minimum Requirements)

Subject-specific expertise

Other supervisory skills, e.g.:

- Advice on methodological issues, dealing with trial participants or specific resources (equipment, scientific collections, etc.)
- Advice on planning a scientific career
- Orientation on different aspects of the doctoral process
- Guidance on issues of scientific integrity
- Advice on strategic planning for doctoral studies (identifying opoortunities and obstacles, etc.)

Contact person in situations of conflict or crisis (Postdoc)

- NO mediation or attempts at reconciliation in conflict situations, but rather availability for discussing the experiences and information on support options

Functions in the Supervisory Committee:

Please note:

Clear agreement among all parties involved on how the supervisory functions are to be distributed.

Functions in the Supervisory Committee: (Changes in Composition)

Development of the doctoral project and (unexpected) changes during the process are normal.

Adjustments to the supervisory committee may be useful or necessary, e.g.:

- Expansion through additional supervisors
- Replacement of individual supervisors
- Replacement of the entire supervisory committee

Procedure:

- Communicate as openly as possible with the supervisors
- Obtain confirmation of supervision from additional or new supervisors (using the „Supervision Agreement“ form)
- Submit an application to the Chair of the Doctoral Committee (informally by email to: Promotionen-HF@uni-koeln.de)

The Doctoral Office will be happy to help you with any further questions:

https://hf-promotionen.uni-koeln.de/en/doctoral-office