

# MISSION STATEMENT

## Structured Doctoral Supervision at the UFZ

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### AIM OF THE STRUCTURED DOCTORAL SUPERVISION AT THE UFZ

The Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ is an international competence center for integrated environmental research. It identifies options for the harmonization of societal development and the maintenance of the natural life support systems to the benefit of humankind and nature.

A specific focus of the UFZ is the **structured doctoral supervision** consisting of four elements:

- 1 **Supervision of the doctoral project**
- 2 **Career development**
- 3 **Training and**
- 4 **Quality assurance.**

The **aim** is the successful completion of the doctoral graduation at a university through excellent research within an adequate timeframe.

We attach particular importance to the following **aspects** of structured doctoral supervision:

Fostering **cooperative and respectful working relationships, promoting environmental awareness and responsibility**, as well as the **ability to do interdisciplinary work** in an international and intercultural environment, in order to find solutions for complex environmental problems. The training programme allows the **development of an individual profile** and prepares for career paths in science and other professional fields. This includes the ability to think and **act responsibly in a transdisciplinary context** as well as the **reflection of ethical aspects in the own scientific work**.

### QUALITY CRITERIA

The quality of the structured doctoral supervision becomes apparent in the **scientific quality of the dissertation** and the creation of **added value for the society**. Scientific quality is expressed primarily in the successful completion of the doctoral project and the scientific im-

part of its results. The doctoral project shall be completed within a reasonable timeframe. To create added value for society, our doctoral researchers will be equipped with the skills to work competently on complex environmental topics, adequately communicate the knowledge acquired, and take on leadership roles in a wide range of environment-related areas.

To reach these aims, it is important to us that our doctoral researchers gain professional competence and the ability to apply the acquired knowledge, can work independently and are highly motivated. Therefore, we are committed to provide our doctoral researchers with **excellent supervision** in a **stimulating environment, superb and modern research infrastructure, and training opportunities** for disciplinary and transferable skills while allowing reconciliation of **work and private life**.

### PROVIDED RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The UFZ commits to provide financing of doctoral projects for a period of three years and aims to treat all doctoral researchers equally, regardless of their funding source. The UFZ guarantees a consistent structured doctoral supervision at all UFZ locations and provides an adequate framework and administrative tools. It ensures the unhindered access to and the effective use of scientific-technical infrastructure, enables the participation in the UFZ graduate school HIGRADE, and provides the necessary personal and financial resources. It promotes access to internal, national and international cooperation networks. Scientifically relevant information, services and advice are provided through effective information and communication structures, and interdisciplinary exchange is actively promoted. For this purpose, the UFZ strives to establish German and English as equal languages. The UFZ creates the framework conditions for equal, family-friendly, open-minded and respectful collaboration

### SUPERVISION OF DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

**Our understanding of excellent supervision** is based on the following three principles: the needs and expectations

of the doctoral researcher, the needs and expectations of the advisors, and a clear code of conduct. The rights and obligations of the doctoral researchers and their advisors are described in detail in the “*Regulations for Doctoral Researchers and Advisors at UFZ*”.

Doctoral researchers at the UFZ are being supervised by an advisory committee. The tasks, competences and responsibilities of the advisors are defined in written form at the beginning of the doctoral project in the “*Supervision Agreement*”. The advisors see themselves as role models and partners during the doctoral researcher’s scientific training. This includes authentic and honest conduct, as well as integrity. The **advisors** embody commitment and motivation and have the fundamental professional and personal competences as well as the time required to guide doctoral researchers. The advisors promote independent, goal-oriented working to allow completion within an appropriate timeframe and support obtaining additional expert input e.g. from other departments and disciplines. Advisors are committed to the general rules of the UFZ on good scientific practice, the crucial importance of doctoral training and career development, but also respect a good work-life balance, provide freedom with regard to scientific content and take responsibility. Particularly in unexpected situations, advisors are available within a reasonable time for consultation and support the doctoral researchers in finding solutions.

**Doctoral researchers** are aware of the significance of the doctoral degree as proof of their ability to carry out independent scientific work. They work goal-oriented, self-motivated and independently on the completion of their doctoral project. They are responsible for the timely reporting of the status of their project, including any occurring problems. Doctoral researchers actively work on developing their skills, engage in scientific discussions and contribute their knowledge and enthusiasm to their field of research. They are committed to the basic rules of good scientific practice and the “*Regulations for Doctoral Researchers and Advisors at UFZ*”.

The **relationship between doctoral researchers and their advisors** is conducted on equal footing and based on mutual respect and trust. It is characterized by responsibility and loyalty. At the beginning of the doctoral

project, both parties agree on a clear code of conduct for the individual supervision and this is made transparent and documented in the “*Supervision Agreement*”. Regular, timely feedback in an open constructive dialogue is a distinguishing feature of the relationship. The content of these discussions will include: the progress of the project, career development and the quality of the working relationship between doctoral researchers and their advisors. Agreements are made in a binding and final manner. Realistic project planning and a regular critical evaluation of the progress of the dissertation project ensure a timely completion of the dissertation within a reasonable time frame.

