

Doctoral procedures at Chemnitz University of Technology

Chemnitz University of Technology pledged itself to support as well as challenge its young academics and strives to create optimal conditions for all researchers at the Chemnitz University of Technology.

Paragraph number 40 of the Saxon Higher Education Autonomy Act (Sächsisches Hochschulfreiheitsgesetz) constitutes the legal basis for doctorates. Further details such as e.g. requirements of a doctoral thesis and its procedures are governed by the doctoral regulation of the respective faculty.

Admission requirement to become a doctoral student at Chemnitz University of Technology is an eligible academic degree (diploma, master- or magister degree from a university or state examination; bachelor degree from a university provided that the candidate is approved during an aptitude testing procedure; equivalent degree from an international university.) Universities and universities of applied sciences collaborate in a cooperative process.

Significant mile stones in the process of pursuing a PhD at Chemnitz University of Technology are shown on the website of the Centre for Young Scientists (Zfwn):

https://www.tu-chemnitz.de/zfwn/download/pdf/promotion/Promotionsverlauf_Meilensteine.pdf

The different doctoral procedures are:

1) Individual traditional doctorate

and

2) Structured doctoral programme.

The choice for one of these procedures depends on the chosen topic, whether or not a suitable doctoral programme or postgraduate school exists at the faculty in question and on the personal researching and working habits.

For both doctoral procedures the Centre for Young Scientists (Zfwn) and the International Office offer support in case of multidisciplinary challenges. The International Office supports international doctoral students with the apartment search, insurance issues and the integration in the new environment.

1) *Individual traditional doctorate*

The individual doctorate is the traditional way to pursue a PhD with the doctoral student choosing a research topic jointly with his or her supervisor. The doctoral student is expected to work independently and innovatively on the chosen research topic while mentored by his or her doctoral supervisor.

Furthermore, a supervision agreement between the doctoral student and the supervisor can be made by mutual agreement (see number 2).

In case the candidate chooses the individual procedure he or she ought to contact the relevant faculty regarding the research topic. The first step is to find a supervisor willing to guide the doctoral procedure. In accordance to the respective doctoral regulations, the candidate might have to meet certain requirements specific to the respective faculty before starting the doctoral procedure (e.g. application for authorisation of the doctorate, admission on to a list of doctoral students).

The difference relative to the structured doctoral programme (see below) is that the doctoral student has no structured programme besides his or her doctoral thesis and is therefore not obligated to participate in educational courses. The doctoral student's main focus lays on the research topic itself. Taking pleasure in scientific work and the ability to self-organise are the best conditions to do an individual traditional doctorate at the Chemnitz University of Technology.

2) *Structured doctoral programme*

Similar to the individual traditional doctorate, to start a structured doctoral programme a supervisor has to be found. In accordance to the respective doctoral regulations, the candidate might have to meet certain requirements specific to the respective faculty before starting the doctoral programme (e.g. application for authorisation of the doctorate, admission on to a list of doctoral students).

In the structured or focused doctoral programme the doctoral student undergoes a structured education and qualification programme. The advantage of such a programme is that a relatively short timeframe is set for the doctoral programme, usually about 3 years long. The programme is therefore very compact and time efficient. The involvement in a support concept and the early contact with the scientific community counteracts an isolated research by encouraging networking.

In addition to the research on the own topic, a coordinated studying programme has to be completed. Specific importance is attached to teamwork and - if possible - practical relevance. Furthermore, the doctoral student and the supervisor reach a supervision agreement which records research and learning goals as well as a detailed timetable (including discussion sessions and a reporting system) in writing.

The structured doctoral programme can either be individual or take place in a doctoral college or doctoral programme.

a) *Individual structured doctoral programme*

This version of the doctoral programme can be done without a membership in a doctoral college. The study programme complies with the faculties guidelines. Courses, seminars and events about key competencies, research and leadership skills offered by the ZfWN can be attended as well.

b) *Structured doctoral programme*

This version of the PhD programme includes a structured education and qualification of the doctoral students within of a doctoral college, a graduate college or a graduate school. The doctoral students undergo a study programme which is a structured support programme in itself consisting of education and qualification seminars matching the focus and goals of the college. The supervision of doctoral students in such a programme is often done by more than one person (usually two) joint together as a supervision committee.

In the beginning of the doctoral programme the supervisor(s) and the student develop a joint plan for the doctoral programme including the participation in education and qualification seminars as well as regular presentations of research (interim) results. Overall, the plan regulates the basic conditions and agreements for the doctoral programme while leaving enough room to the student for an individual organisation.

Trainings for key competencies, research and leadership skills are coordinated by the ZfWN. Additional qualifications such as career relevant skills, academic key competencies helpful for the process of pursuing the PhD as well as developmental skills for the time after the doctoral programme can be gained in these seminars. In addition to this offer, the faculties or departments organise specialised events like doctoral colloquia, conferences from and for young academics etc.