Summary minutes

27th Round Table for the Advancement of Junior Scholars at TU Berlin, 20th June 2024

Topic: Good supervision culture - Supervision agreement

The TU Berlin Center for Junior Scholars (TUB-CJS), and the Vice President responsible for promoting junior scholars hold round tables to address topics relevant to junior scholars. The round tables are part of the Strategy for the Advancement of Junior Scholars at TU Berlin enacted by the Academic Senate in July 2018.

The 27th Round Table Discussion for Junior Scholars continued the discussion on good supervision culture that had been started with the 26th Round Table. This series of Round Tables is part of a project of the Berlin University Alliance (BUA) on good supervision culture. This project has the goal to bring together doctoral candidates and supervising professors to speak about the improvement of the supervision relationship. 27th Round Table focused on the supervision agreement, that has become mandatory with the latest changes to the doctoral regulations of the Technische Universität Berlin.

After a short introduction round, Dr. Weronika Karle (BUA, project coordinator Good Supervision Culture) and Dr. Simone Bartsch (CJS, Advisor Services Doctoral Candidates & Postdocs) showed selected data from two surveys, the 5th "WM Study" and Nacaps (National Academic Panel Study). As no difference in satisfaction was found between those with and without a supervising agreement in the data, focus was placed on the distinctions between various aspects that can be included in the agreement (e.g. good scientific practise or procedure in cases of conflict). Although the data cannot provide any arguments for a causal relationship, it does show that doctoral candidates who have discussed a supervision agreement with their supervisors feel more secure about the structure of their doctoral project and the circumstances of their work.

Unfortunately, Christian Schröder, Vice President for Education, Teacher Training, and Continuing Education, could not be part of the round table as intended. As last time, Prof. Dr. Annette Mayer, Head of the Center for Junior Scholars and speaker of the Steering Committee of Objective 4 Promoting Talent of the BUA, joined the discussion.

The general consensus about the supervision agreement was:

- The supervision agreement is not a universal remedy and cannot, on its own, save an already difficult supervisory relationship.
- It can be a good instrument to support both, supervisors and doctoral candidate, in building a good supervisory relationship. Moreover, it can also help you work on improvements, especially if circumstances change during the doctoral project.

The discussion was not limited only to the supervision agreement. Other points in the discussion were:

- Problems with workload in general e.g., extra (unplanned) teaching duties
- The advantages and merits of peer support
• The dependence of doctoral candidates on their supervisors - who are often also reviewers and bosses - and that this dependency continues to exist after graduating.
• The problems with the overlapping of different roles (scientist-teacher-supervisor-administrator and project coordinator)

Since this round table was the second to a series of round tables focusing on various aspects of good supervision culture, we hope to welcome you to the next round table soon.

The date will be announced in the near future.

Collection of links:

- Faculty Service Centers and ombudspersons for doctoral candidates
- Principles for Ensuring Good Research Practice at TU Berlin
- Doctoral agreement
- Overview of Advising Services and Complaints Offices at TU Berlin

Which aspects do you want to discuss with us on the next round table? Which aspects are missing? Please let us know! Either through this Evasys-Link to send us your message anonymously or just write us an Email <info@cjs.tu-berlin.de>.