

Appendix: Individual agreements

This document is partly based on the best practice example Graduate School Advising Agreement Guidelines of the University of Colorado.

Individual agreements should be documented and kept between the doctoral researcher and the supervisor. They are not shared with yDiv. Individual agreements should also be revisited during the annual appraisal interview or whenever needed.

1) Frequent meetings and documentation

The supervisor and doctoral researcher should agree on the frequency and length of meetings. Depending on which stage the doctoral researcher is in the PhD process, meetings may need to be more or less frequent as agreed upon by both parties.

Both doctoral researcher and supervisor should take notes during meetings. These notes will help clarify expectations and provide records for both parties. We recommend that the doctoral researcher sends a description of discussion topics and any agreements upon 'next steps' to the supervisor.

Individual agreements on the frequency of meetings and documentation

2) Lab work and teaching expectations (if applicable)

The supervisor should provide information on the expectations, practices, and requirements of the lab and/or faculty in order for the doctoral researcher to be successful in his/her lab work and/or teaching role. For lab work, this particularly includes lab book regulations.

Individual agreements on lab work and/or teaching

3) Publication expectations to complete the PhD

The supervisor and doctoral researcher should discuss topics and a timeline for the PhD publications. The following questions should be addressed: How many papers are expected by the supervisor? Do they have to be published, accepted or submitted before thesis submission? What are the thesis requirements of the faculty? What authorship rules will be applied? Which journals should be considered for submission? The supervisor and doctoral researcher should discuss how the papers and the thesis will be edited and submitted.

Advice for doctoral researchers: check the doctoral regulations of your faculty for information about thesis requirements (e.g., number and authorship of papers).

Authorships, author sequence, and corresponding authors should be discussed openly at an early stage of a paper. Supervisor and doctoral researcher should also discuss how the research data (generally raw data) and code on which the publications are based are archived. You will find more information about iDiv authorship and data policy in the iDiv code of conduct and scientific integrity (www.idiv.de/about-idiv/missions#c19223).

Individual agreements on publication expectations

4) Feedback process

The supervisor and doctoral researcher should discuss the feedback process. Should the doctoral researcher ask for specific feedback from the supervisor? How long will it usually take for the supervisor to provide feedback? Supervisors should clarify their expectations surrounding the level and quality of work and let the doctoral researcher know if they are progressing adequately.

Individual agreements on feedback process

5) Boundaries

Both supervisor and doctoral researcher should be clear about and respect one another's personal and professional boundaries. Boundaries are often shaped by our culture(s) and may be defined identically by supervisor and supervisee. Also, the power difference between the supervisor and supervisee could affect the working relationship.

The supervisor and doctoral researcher should decide how they prefer to communicate (e.g., email, text, phone call) and whether making contact by phoning or texting a personal number is appropriate.

Individual agreements on boundaries

6) Agreements in case of conflict

Both parties should try to resolve any conflict in an open conversation. If support is needed, the parties may turn to the yDiv graduate school coordinator or the iDiv counsellors (www.idiv.de/about-idiv/support-for-scientists/counselling). They will hear the case, and help parties find a solution. If desired, they can act as mediators. Furthermore, they can point to the right persons at the institution that formally acts as the employer. Each partner institution has their own Ombudsperson who will hear the case and provide advice. More information about Ombudspersons can be found in the DFG code of conduct.

The supervisor and the doctoral researcher can also approach a PAC member or other persons of trust that they feel comfortable talking to.

Individual agreements in case of conflict

7) Additional agreements (if applicable)