

Guidelines for the employment of doctoral researchers at GEOMAR¹

GEOMAR employs doctoral researchers. GEOMAR makes a point of welcoming individual, social and cultural diversity in the selection of its employees. The appointment of doctoral researchers is therefore based on transparent and clearly defined processes that take particular account of equal opportunities and diversity. GEOMAR cooperates with the Kiel University (CAU) in the education of the doctoral researchers: All the doctoral procedures and related regulations are under the jurisdiction of the University². Nevertheless, GEOMAR assumes responsibility for all doctoral researchers at GEOMAR, and thus follows the guidelines for the implementation of doctoral projects by the Helmholtz Association.

Through GEOMAR the doctoral researchers are given access to a structured graduate education within a graduate school. Currently, these are the Graduate Centre of the CAU and FYORD (Foster Young Ocean Researcher Development - joint early career support program by CAU and GEOMAR), as a long-term joint institution of the CAU and GEOMAR. The Graduate Centre and FYORD are open to all GEOMAR doctoral researchers, and GEOMAR encourages all doctoral researchers to become members. FYORD not only fulfills all the functions of a graduate school, but also offers, a course programme and a strong scientific network. The supervision of doctoral researchers is regulated in the Framework conditions for supervising doctoral researchers at GEOMAR (annex 1). The GEOMAR framework conditions include, amongst other things, the naming of the supervising scientist, the subject supervisors and the preparation of a work plan as well as half-yearly meetings of the doctoral supervision committee (doctoral researchers, supervisors, and co-supervisors) to review the work plan.

GEOMAR considers a doctoral project to be a professional activity. Most doctoral researchers should therefore have an employment contract with GEOMAR (financed through the GEOMAR budget or third-party funding) with a few receiving scholarships from external sources. GEOMAR is committed to creating uniformly good working conditions for all doctoral researchers, unless there are explicit legal or contractual regulations to the contrary.

Doctoral theses at GEOMAR should be completed within three years. The doctoral supervisors are required to set realistic goals and provide the appropriate supervision to achieve this result. At the same time, GEOMAR acknowledges that the average time to complete a doctorate is currently longer. Nevertheless, a doctoral thesis should only take more than four years in exceptional cases.

It is the declared goal of GEOMAR that all doctoral researchers receive continuous, adequate and reliable funding until the completion of their doctoral degree at GEOMAR. Therefore, GEOMAR provides doctoral researchers with employment contracts in salary group 13 with 75% of the regular working hours; this rule is only deviated from in justified exceptional cases. Such

¹ These GEOMAR doctoral guidelines contain extensions and clarifications of the current Helmholtz doctoral guidelines

² Vgl. <https://www.mnf.uni-kiel.de/de/promotion-habilitation/prom> (Promotionsordnung der mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Kiel)

exceptions only apply in the case of coordinated collaborative research projects, which are funded by the DFG and which are not coordinated by GEOMAR but by other research institutions. In this case, the guidelines of the funding agency apply to the remuneration.

The submission of the dissertation to the university is considered the completion of the work at GEOMAR.

The duration of initial contracts for doctoral researchers should be based on the duration of the doctoral project, and should therefore be, if possible, three years. Renewal contracts may have shorter terms, especially if they are for the completion of the doctoral thesis.

It is the responsibility of the principle supervisor to explain to the potential doctoral researchers the funding conditions for working at GEOMAR before entering into the supervisory relationship. In addition, GEOMAR expects the principle supervisor and the doctoral researcher to agree on a possible extension of the funding in adequate time before the end of the guaranteed three-year period of funding (see above). It is the responsibility of the principle supervisor to offer this discussion - which does not replace but supplements the regular supervisory discussions of the doctoral committee – at an appropriate time. In this discussion, the principle supervisor should inform the doctoral researcher about the possibilities for follow-up funding and the requirements that must be met. GEOMAR expects the principle supervisor to seek funding actively for the doctoral researcher until the completion of the doctoral thesis or at least to support the doctoral researcher to the best of his/her ability, if it is agreed that the doctoral researcher will actively seek the funding her/himself.

Creating and maintaining a positive working environment is one of GEOMAR's declared goals. For this reason, permanent and independent contact persons (ombudspersons) are to be appointed to mediate and provide support in conflict situations between the principle supervisor and the doctoral researcher in case the conflict cannot be resolved jointly.

GEOMAR makes every effort to support doctoral researchers with families as much as possible. This includes, if possible, flexible working hours and childcare facilities, which are made available and/or accessible to doctoral researchers as well as to all other employees. In addition, in the case of family-related absence during the doctoral studies (e.g. parental or care leave), the duration of the funding is extended by the period of absence of the doctoral researcher. The respective measures are described in GEOMAR's Equal Opportunities Plan³.

Doctoral researchers are expected to take advantage of offers from the graduate schools for further qualification and, approximately two years after starting their doctoral studies, to hold a discussion with their supervisors concerning their career planning in and/or outside the scientific field. The supervisors should also support the doctoral researchers in developing their own network within the scientific community. This includes enabling doctoral researchers to participate in subject-related conferences as far as possible.

³ https://www.geomar.de/fileadmin/content/zentrum/Gleichstellung/GEOMAR_GEP_2022-26.pdf

To achieve the goals outlined here, the Human Resources Department of GEOMAR also supports both doctoral researchers and supervisors. In this regard, the personnel department will develop adequate administrative measures within the scope of the existing possibilities – in discussions with the directorate, the staff council, the equal opportunities, and the representation of the doctoral researchers. The Administrative Director will report on this progress on a regular basis, initially semi-annually and thereafter annually.

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