

Tätigkeitsbericht der Studienvertretung Doktorat an  
der TU Wien laut §19a HSG und §20 HTU-Satzung

Activity Report of the Programme Representation of  
Doctoral Candidates at TU Wien in Accordance with  
the Austrian Law Regulating the Representation of  
Students (§19a HSG 1998) and the Articles of the  
Students' Representation at University Level (§20  
HTU-Satzung)

Studienvertretung Doktorat

Budgetjahr 2017/2018 (1.7.17 - 30.6.18)

## **Abstract**

The activities of the representatives of the doctoral candidates at TU Wien during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 are briefly summarised. They include counselling, meetings, workshops for doctoral candidates and much more. A short financial overview is given in this report.

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# 1 Introduction

In accordance with the Austrian Law Regulating the Representation of Students (Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz 1998, shortly HSG [4]) the main task of the Programme Representation of Doctoral Candidates (Studienvertretung) is the representation of the interests of all doctoral candidates at the TU Wien (see §18 HSG). In our case this comprises the counselling of doctoral candidates, participation in the curricular committee for the doctoral programme (Studienkommission für die Doktoratsstudien), contact to professors and the works council (Betriebsrat), writing official statements (Stellungnahmen), organising workshops, providing infrastructure and much more. The costs for workshops, infrastructure for counselling, etc. are covered by a part of the students' union fee (ÖH-Beitrag) [4] [6]. Due to the fact that every doctoral candidate has to pay this fee, we want to report the expenses and the activities of the programme representation, as stated in §19a HSG 1998 and in §20 HTU-Satzung (articles of the students' representation at university level [6]).

It is generally agreed upon that the representation of the doctoral candidates cannot reasonably be done by only five people as given by law [4]. The five elected students' representatives (Claudius Schmitt, Martin Meiringer, Thomas Kiefer, Johannes Kalliauer, Christoph Fröhlich [3]) have decided to work and make decisions together with all committed predocs. Due to this decision, all activities of the Programme Representation of the Doctoral Candidates have taken place within the Fachschaft Doktorat, which consists of approximately 10 predocs including the five official students' representatives. The members of the Fachschaft Doktorat are working as volunteers and thus without payment for their work within the Fachschaft Doktorat. All decisions of the Programme Representation have been made during the Jours Fixes of the Fachschaft Doktorat, where every doctoral candidate at TU Wien can participate. Hence the term "Fachschaft Doktorat" is used in the following instead of "Programme Representation of the Doctoral Candidates".

## 2 Activities

This section is the summary of the activities of the Fachschaft Doktorat during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

### 2.1 Counselling (Beratung)

One of the main activities of the Fachschaft Doktorat is counselling of persons who want to enrol on a doctoral programme and doctoral candidates at TU Wien. We offered opening hours, individual counselling and counselling via e-mail.

#### 2.1.1 Opening Hours

The opening hours of the Fachschaft Doktorat were every two weeks on changing weekdays at 5.30 p.m, where study-related counselling was offered. The exact dates and times were announced on our homepage. Additionally, each information e-mail sent do all doctoral candidates included information on the next upcoming counselling op-

tion. Approximately 30 doctoral candidates and 15 persons interested in enrolling on a doctoral programme made use of this offer.

### **2.1.2 Individual Counselling**

Beside the opening hours the Fachschaft Doktorat offered individual counselling of doctoral candidates. Nearly 20 people made use of this offer.

### **2.1.3 E-mail**

Most of the study-related counselling was offered via e-mail. On average there were around five e-mails per week sent to the e-mail address [fsdr@fsdr.at](mailto:fsdr@fsdr.at). The majority of the questions were from people from all over the world who wanted to enrol on a doctoral programme at TU Wien. The members of the Fachschaft Doktorat replied to all of them. Since roughly half of these inquiries can be perfectly answered by referring to our homepage, recent experiments resulted in an automatic reply algorithm that identifies and handles these queries. However, all automatic replies are still checked by humans to counter possible false positives.

## **2.2 Meetings of the Fachschaft Doktorat and Doctoral Candidates**

### **2.2.1 Jour Fixe**

Every four weeks the Fachschaft Doktorat had a Jour Fixe. This is an open meeting where all decisions are made and future actions are coordinated. Every doctoral candidate at TU Wien was invited to join these meetings. The day of the week is evenly distributed between Monday and Wednesday and changes with each meeting. This ensures broad participation and avoid the implicit exclusion of students with personal or professional obligations. The information regarding date, time and location of each upcoming Jour Fixe was published at the website [www.fsdr.at](http://www.fsdr.at). Additionally, some of the Jours Fixes were separately advertised in information e-mails sent to all doctoral candidates.

### **2.2.2 Stammtisch**

The Fachschaft Doktorat offered a so-called Stammtisch at irregular intervals in order to connect doctoral candidates from different research areas and faculties. A Stammtisch is a meeting in a restaurant or pub, where we get together and talk about issues related to doctoral studies. The information regarding date, time and location of each Stammtisch was published at the website [www.fsdr.at](http://www.fsdr.at).

## **2.3 Activities in Self-Governing Bodies at TU Wien (Arbeit in Kollegialorganen der TU Wien)**

The curricular committee for the doctoral programme had two meetings on 25 October 2017 and 6 April 2018. Apart from the ongoing process of identifying the most valuable parts of the existing curriculum, the committee discussed the potential participation of TU Wien at a joint Erasmus+ programme and the potential of creating joint PhD

programmes with the Landsteiner University Krems to intensify ongoing collaborations in the field of biomedical engineering.

## **2.4 Providing Infrastructure for Doctoral Candidates**

The Fachschaft Doktorat has a small office in Geniegebäude, Getreidemarkt 9 and one small storage room in Freihaus, Wiedner Hauptstraße 8-10. The office and the storage room were used for counselling, meetings, organisation tasks, IT infrastructure and every day representation work.

## **2.5 Information and Service**

One important task of the Fachschaft Doktorat is providing information for doctoral candidates. Thus, our website was maintained, information mails were sent, and our Facebook presence was further improved.

### **2.5.1 Website Maintenance**

The Fachschaft Doktorat has a website, [www.fsdr.at](http://www.fsdr.at). Beside the revision of existing content we also have provided new information for all doctoral candidates. For instance, recent changes of the remission of tuition fees (UG § 92 Abs1 Z5, see [5]) triggered a number of queries regarding the benefits of active enrollment.

### **2.5.2 Information via email**

We sent three information e-mails to all enrolled doctoral candidates at TU Wien to inform them about news and upcoming events regarding their doctoral study at TU Wien.

### **2.5.3 Social Media**

The Fachschaft Doktorat also commenced activities on the social media platform Facebook. A Facebook page [2] was maintained to connect doctoral candidates at TU Wien, and provide them with up-to-date information. As our Facebook presence is evolving, it gained popularity as a direct communication channel to get in touch with FSDR. While initially intended as a platform to promote our activities, it seems that Facebook is now competing the study-related counselling offered via e-mail. However, the total number of queries is still comparatively low. The Facebook group [1] attracted little interest from PhD students and was deactivated.

## **2.6 Training of the Members of the Fachschaft Doktorat**

Two training seminars for the members of the Fachschaft Doktorat took place from 24 to 26 November 2017 and from 2 to 4 March 2018, respectively. The goals were improving the knowledge of current legal norms, discussing the current situation of doctoral candidates and getting ideas for the further work as representatives of doctoral candidates. In particular it is our objective to transfer formal and informal knowledge from advanced and senior members to newcomers at Fachschaft Doktorat.

The discussed topics included possible improvements on the curriculum and guidelines, current employment situation of the doctoral candidates at TU Wien and further work in the curricular committee etc.. Measures to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) were discussed, evaluated and implemented.

As last period, new recruitment options and methods to increase our outreach were discussed. Moreover, some in-depth maintenance work on our homepage was performed and parts of our internal information systems were rebuilt from scratch.

## **2.7 Projects**

Besides the above mentioned every day work, the Fachschaft Doktorat organised and participated in projects like two orientation programmes and information events. Unlike last year, we were able to organize a L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X-workshop for predocs again. Additionally, an external lecture on plagiarism was organized by Fachschaft Doktorat.

### **2.7.1 Information Events**

Due to the fact that the Fachschaft Doktorat represents the interests of doctoral candidates all over TU Wien, it is very important to offer possibilities for meeting each other and talking about current problems and ideas to solve them. Two of this possibilities were the Winterfest on 1 December 2017 and the Sommerfestl on 4 May 2018, both organised by Fachschaft Doktorat. These were small parties at the rooftop terrace of Campus Gußhaus (Neues EI, Gußhausstraße 27-29) and the adjacent Kontaktraum. Approximately 300 doctoral candidates and professors attended these parties.

### **2.7.2 Orientation Programme**

Fachschaft Doktorat organised two Orientation Programmes for doctoral candidates enrolling in winter term 2017 and in summer term 2017/2018 on 1 December 2017 and on 4 May 2018, respectively. These information events offers a first introduction to university life for doctoral candidates at TU Wien.

### **2.7.3 WinA+ Programme**

The so-called WinA+ Programme is an effort of the university's human resource department to provide additional training to selected PhD candidates that are employed at TU Wien. As part of this programme, we provided basic information on the structure of PhD studies at TU Wien.

### **2.7.4 Lecture on Plagiarism**

On 29 June 2018, a lecture on plagiarism was organized by FSDR. The lecture was held by Meinhard Novak, a Viennese attorney and expert on plagiarism, copyright and related topics.

### **2.7.5 L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X- Workshop**

For the publication of scientific work, especially in the technical field, LaTeX is the first choice for professional typesetting and text formatting. Thus, Fachschaft Doktorat offered a L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X-workshops for predocs on 23 March and 6 April 2018. While the first day

covered basics and the most common features of LaTeX (text structure and formatting, formulas, graphs, tables, etc.), the second day was dedicated to slightly advanced issues such as the handling of bibliographies to gain all necessary knowledge to compose scientific papers in L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X. All together, around 50 students to the opportunity to participated in these workshops.

### 2.7.6 Movie screening: PhD Movie 1 & 2

The PhD movies and cartoons by Jorge Cham are renown for their tragicomical portray of life as a PhD student. In particular, the two movies have become instant classics among PhD candidates. Thus, Fachschaft Doktorat chose to screen both parts once again on May 24th. About 25 doctoral candidates attended the movie screening. Additionally, this event provided a good opportunity for doctoral candidates to get in touch in an informal atmosphere.

### 2.7.7 Friends of FSDR

The network “Friends of FSDR” was founded in order to stay in touch with doctoral candidates that are minded to participate in activities of Fachschaft Doktorat. The network consists mainly of a mailing list, which is used to inform participants on current and upcoming activities of Fachschaft Doktorat. The number of members on this mailing list was extended significantly. For the future, this list might be used not only as pure information channel, but also to solicit volunteers for specific tasks (e.g., support for workshops, contribute to our information events, etc.) or to collect quick feedback on urgent issues.

## 3 Budget

All students (this includes doctoral candidates) are members of the ÖH (Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft - the official representation of students at the national level). Every student has to pay the students’ union fee (ÖH-Beitrag). 15% of the fee remain at national level. The rest of the money goes back to the local representations, in our case the HTU Wien (Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft an der TU Wien - the official students’ representation at university level). The latter distributes the money according to its articles to the students’ representations, the departments of the HTU, representations at faculty level, etc. [4, 6].

The budget of the Programme Representation of Doctoral Candidates at TU Wien (Fachschaft Doktorat) was approximately 14000 EUR of which approx. 44% was spent. Money was used for the following items: providing the food and the non-alcoholic drinks served during counselling and at the information events (approx. 500 EUR), to train the members of the Fachschaft Doktorat (approx. 4900 EUR) and for maintaining our IT infrastructure (approx. 500 EUR). The rest is going back to the HTU Wien where it is used to set up reserves.

## 4 Conclusion and Outlook

At lot of work has been done during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. Besides the every day work like counselling for doctoral candidates, writing statements,



participating in the curricular committee etc., the Fachschaft Doktorat also organised two orientation programs to guide new and prospective doctoral candidates. One of our most significant challenges for future terms is to attract new volunteers to retain the quality of our daily operation. To that end, options towards an extended network of “Friends of FSDR” might be a viable option.

For further information about the work in the Fachschaft Doktorat, please contact us via email: [fsdr@fsdr.at](mailto:fsdr@fsdr.at).

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Vorsitzender der Studienvertretung Doktorat

Christoph Fröhlich

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