

Modernisation of the PhD:

SUPERVISION TRAINING AND SUPPORT

YEBO! Final Conference, 12 April 2021

Dr. Gunda Huskobra, Coimbra Group

Doctoral Studies Working Group & University of Jena

- Doctorate = independent academic achievement
- Supervision = promoting and supporting of independent research activities
- The focus is on quality, scientific relevance, feasibility and appropriate duration.



CHALLENGES IN SUPERVISION

Cooperative and structured forms of doctoral training

Supervision in a team / thesis advisory committees

Joint selection procedures

Multiple qualification goals

Career guidance

Mentoring

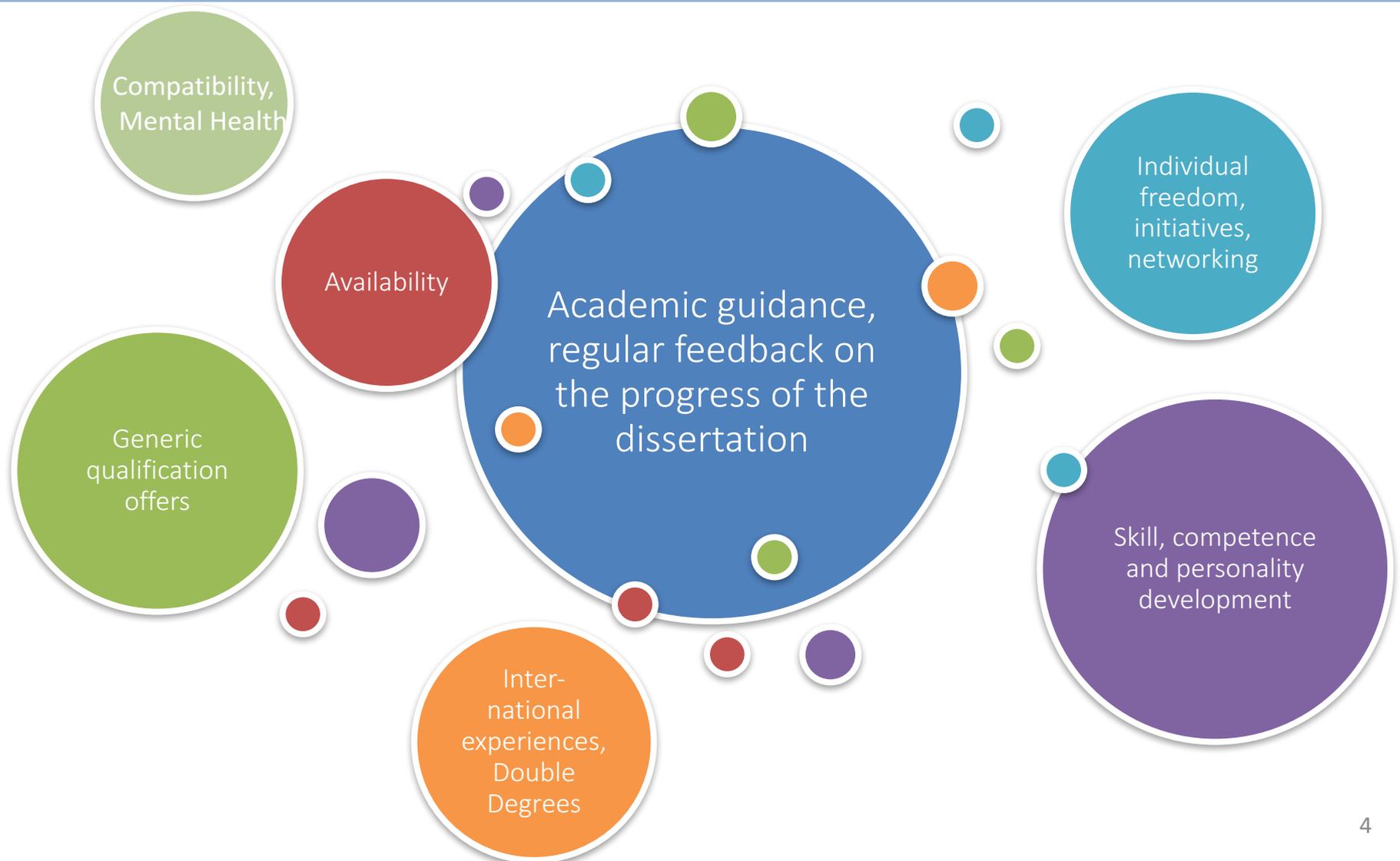
International mobility

National research system differences influence expectations on supervision

Language & intercultural communication

Non-research-related supervision needs

EXPECTATIONS ON “GOOD” DOCTORAL SUPERVISION



How to promote good doctoral supervision?

Will training and institutional support help?

Institutional responsibilities of the university

- Guidelines for good supervision
- Monitoring and quality assurance
- Recognition of supervising activities
- Supervision and assessment
- Supervisor training
- Ombudsman

Individual responsibilities of supervisors

- Contents of good supervision
- Teams of supervisors
- Prerequisites for supervision
- Supervision agreement
- Dissertation topic and timeframe of a doctorate
- Regular meetings / status talks
- Introduction to the scientific community
- Qualification of doctoral candidates
- Good scientific practice
- Qualification of supervisors

Doctoral Supervision

Recommendations and good practice
for universities and doctoral supervisors

Berit Carmesin, Dr. Uta Hoffmann, Dr. Gunda Huskobra, Dr. Sebastian Huster,
Jo-Anna Küster, Dr. Jörg Neumann, Dr. Sigrun Wegener-Feldbrügge (eds.)

SUPERVISOR TRAINING AND NETWORKING

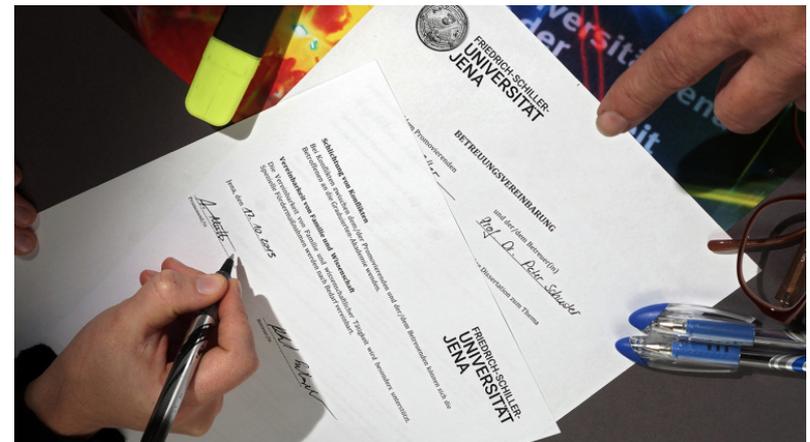
- **Information** on existing (central) support services for non-specialist topics addressed in the status talks (career counselling, generic qualification offers, PhD with children, well-being and mental health)
 - Offers for the **qualification** of supervisors (e.g. supervisor training, supervisor briefings, coaching programmes)
 - Promoting the **exchange** of experiences between supervisors (e.g. on instruments of support, current challenges, dealing with changing expectations)
- When is the right time for what?



SUPPORT: SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

- Instrument for transparent **structuring of the supervision relationship** between doctoral researchers and supervisors in terms of content and time
- Can be a prerequisite for acceptance as a doctoral candidate at a university
- Primarily a **discussion tool** to clarify formalities and mutual expectations (generally no enforceable "right" to supervision)

- Example University of Jena: Sample supervision agreement in editable format with "must" and "can" elements



- by accepting engagement in doctoral qualification programmes as part of the teaching obligation of lecturers
- by gratifications and awards
 - Discussion and decision of the assessment criteria, e.g. supervision of the dissertation, research infrastructure, integration into the (inter)national scientific community, career counselling
 - Nomination according to (partially) structured procedure
 - If possible, anonymous selection
 - Public award ceremony

➤ Example Universities of Durham, Granada and Graz:
Excellence in Supervision Awards



WHAT ELSE DOES IT NEED?

- Modernisation and professionalisation of doctoral supervision is a cultural change.
- It needs:
 - Time
 - A clear definition of individual and institutional responsibilities: Who does what?
 - Commitment from university management
 - An institution-specific choice of training and support instruments
 - Incentive structures for professional doctoral supervision (and possibly incentives for universities to establish structures)
 - Communication

