



Innovative Policies for Fostering Academic Careers in Switzerland

Policy Highlights

Graduate Campus UniFr

Motivation

The University of Fribourg already had various offers for doctoral students, but they were all organised decentrally in the faculties, departments, and various offices. There were also major differences in how the supervision of doctoral students was organised. Satisfaction surveys among doctoral students and doctoral supervisors revealed potential for improvement in this area.

Action

The aim of the Graduate Campus is, on the one hand, to provide a platform for the existing programme for doctoral students and, on the other hand, to expand the programme for doctoral students to improve the framework conditions for doctoral studies. Various events and workshops for doctoral students and supervisors have been created for this purpose.

The Best Practices for Doctoral Studies were adopted by the Rectorate at the end of 2023 and clarify the framework conditions for doctoral studies and the supervision of doctoral students. They are divided into different chapters and cover all phases of doctoral studies, from recruitment and actual supervision to defence and further career planning. In addition to the best practices, further guiding documents (some of which are still in the pipeline) have been developed, such as an example of a doctoral agreement, a guide to employment and labour rights and obligations in a doctoral relationship.

Learning

The needs and experiences of all stakeholders must be considered. At the Graduate Campus of the UniFR, we worked closely with the faculties and departments and conducted satisfaction surveys to obtain the opinions of enrolled and exmatriculated doctoral students as well as active doctoral supervisors. The best practices were sent out for consultation in a multi-stage process and the feedback from the various stakeholders was incorporated.

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