UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

Welcome to pursuing your PhD in Heidelberg!

Dr. Helke Hillebrand

Administrative Director
Graduate Academy
Heidelberg University

Heidelberg, October 2025

Who are we?

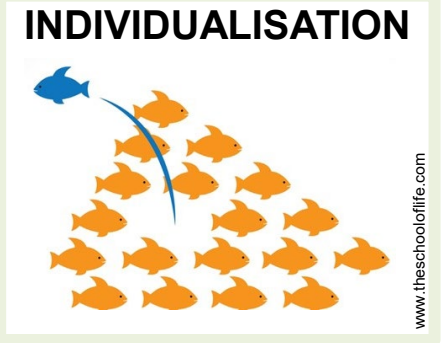
UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT SEIT 1386

The **Graduate Academy** is at work for **YOU** -
a central **point of contact** supporting
career orientation and **development**
for **early career researchers**.

• seminars • workshops • service on demand • lectures • e-learning tools • digital resources • language support • text production support • individual advice • visa support • 1-o-1 meetings • ombudsprogram • cotutelles • fellowships • heiDOCS2.0 • events • welcome pack • brochure kiosk • bulletin board • newsletter • instagram • working space • media room & training•

ORIENTATION

INDIVIDUALISATION



NETWORKING

Who are YOU?

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Where are you from?

What are you passionate about?

What do you most enjoy doing?

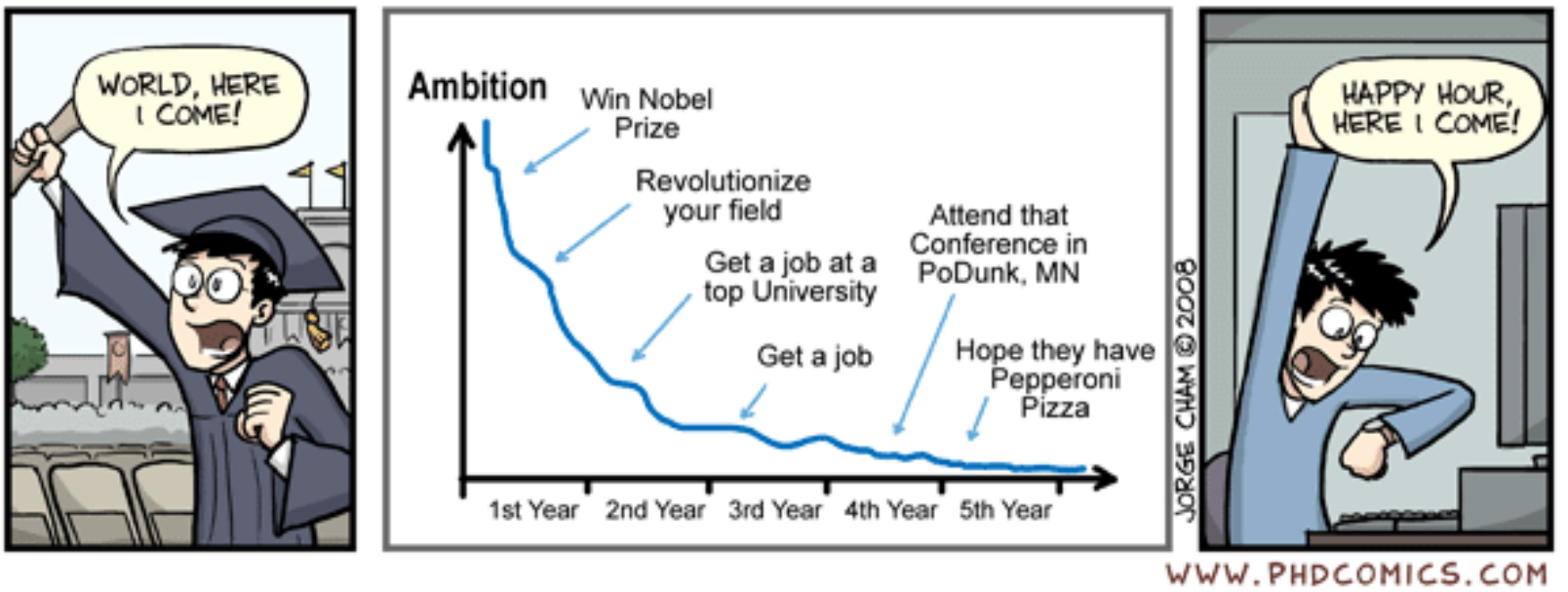
What is your way to enjoy science?

What do you expect from your PhD?

Any plans for the future?

WORLD, HERE I COME!
www.phdcomics.com

Cornerstones of the PhD lifecycle…



Cornerstones of the PhD lifecycle…

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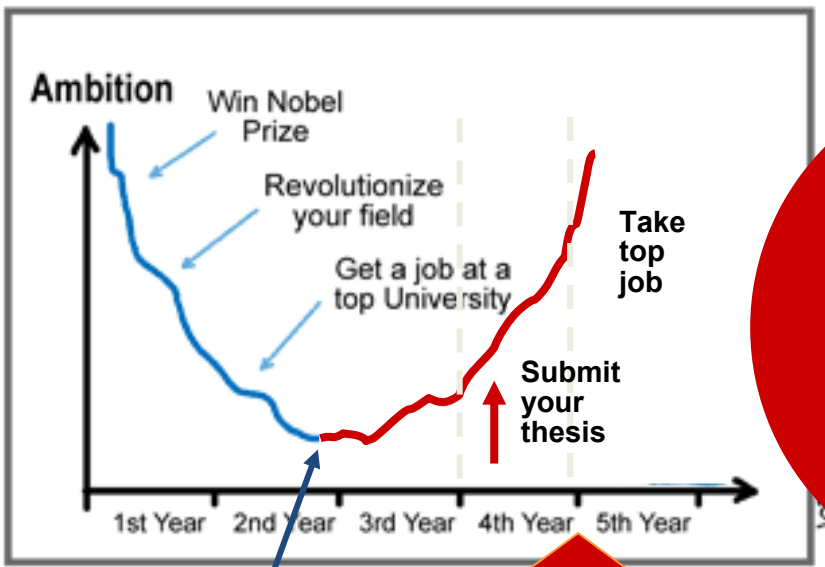

Successfully fight your 2nd year depression

Our target audiences in numbers

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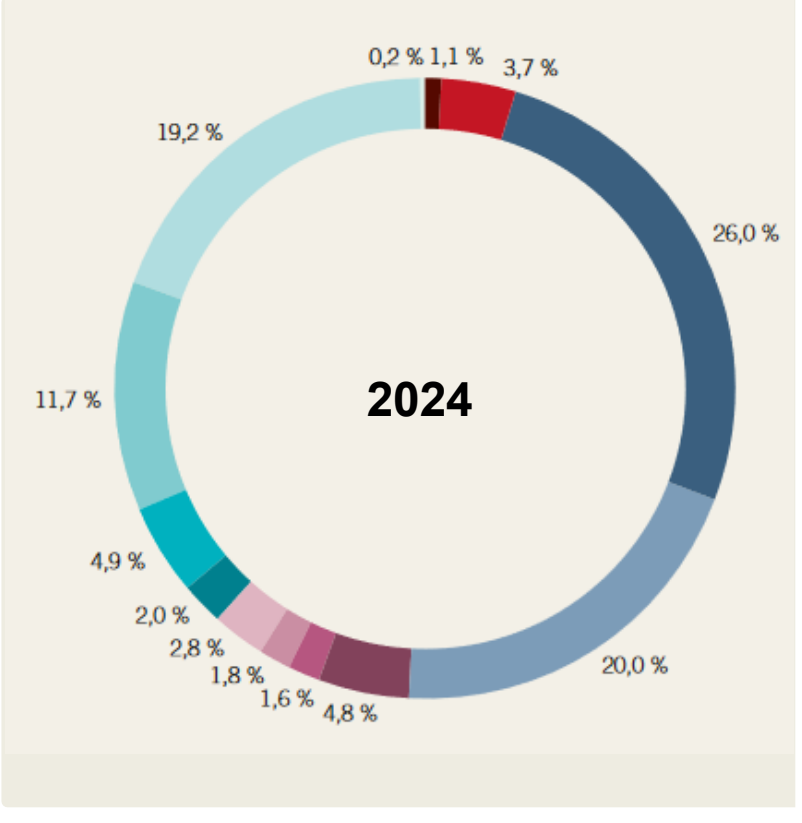
- On average, about 1200 doctorates per year
  - Diversity matters: About 30% international PhD researchers
  - Gender balance: About 50% female and male graduates
- It takes on average 4.3 years to complete a Doctorate (w/o Dr.med.)



	Fakultät
11	Theologische Fakultät
36	Juristische Fakultät
253	Medizinische Fakultät Heidelberg
195	Medizinische Fakultät Mannheim
47	Philosophische Fakultät
16	Neuphilologische Fakultät
18	Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften
27	Fakultät für Verhaltens- und Empirische Kulturwissenschaften
19	Fakultät für Mathematik und Informatik
48	Fakultät für Chemie und Geowissenschaften
114	Fakultät für Physik und Astronomie
187	Fakultät für Biowissenschaften
2	Fakultät für Ingenieurwissenschaften
973	Summe

©: Universität Heidelberg Jahresbericht 2022

Doctoral community Heidelberg University

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- About 9000 doctoral candidates steady state (incl. Dr. med.)
- Heidelberg doctoral community is the largest in Germany
- Four major Graduate Schools
  (Life Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Humanities & Social Sciences)
- More than 40 structured PhD Programs
  (DFG, Excellence Cluster, EU-ITN, LGFG (MWK), participation in IMPRSs and Helmholtz International Graduate Schools, else)

Heidelberg University in international comparison

http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/university/rankings/

Heidelberg University ranks 3rd in Germany - Shanghai Ranking 2024
University ranks 50th worldwide and 14th in Europe (August 15, 2024)

Heidelberg University ranks 3rd in Germany - QS World University Ranking 2025/6
University ranks 80th worldwide and 27th in Europe (June 19, 2025)

Ruperto Carola among the world's top 50 - THE Ranking 2025/2026
University ranks 49th worldwide, 13th in Europe and 3rd in Germany (October 10, 2025)

Heidelberg University ranks 5th in Germany – THE Global University Employability Ranking 2025
University ranks 69th worldwide and 29th in Europe (November 14, 2024)

Our mission

Metadisciplinary skills!

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Quality standards

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Quality standards for doctoral training at Heidelberg University:

- Global recruitment of highly qualified candidates
- Transparency of admission criteria and procedures
- **Best possible supervision of doctoral candidates**
- **Adherence to the principles of good scientific practice**
- Transparency of the review process
- **Fostering interdisciplinary competencies**
- **Provision of relevant academic and professional qualifications**
- **Fostering academic independence and internationalization**

The daily business at Graduate Academy

Key considerations

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- **Overarching philosophy**
  - ⇨ Foster early independence
  - ⇨ Nurture self management & lifelong learning competencies

- **Servicing more than 9.3k doctoral researchers across all faculties**
  - ⇨ How to create an appropriate impact for the individual CV?
  - ⇨ How to guarantee for scalable high quality offerings?
  - ⇨ How to maximize impact of precious face-to-face time?

- **Applying a few key principles**
  - ⇨ Optimize **investment** of resources for all
  - ⇨ Optimize **time commitment** for doctoral candidates
  - ⇨ Intensify **modularization** of course contents
  - ⇨ Provide **selected e-learning modules**
  - ⇨ Propose integrated **training progression paths** (career stage & goal)
  - ⇨ Offer s**elf-assessment** tools

PhD poll – fit for purpose?

(in German & English; 25.04.- 31.05.2023)

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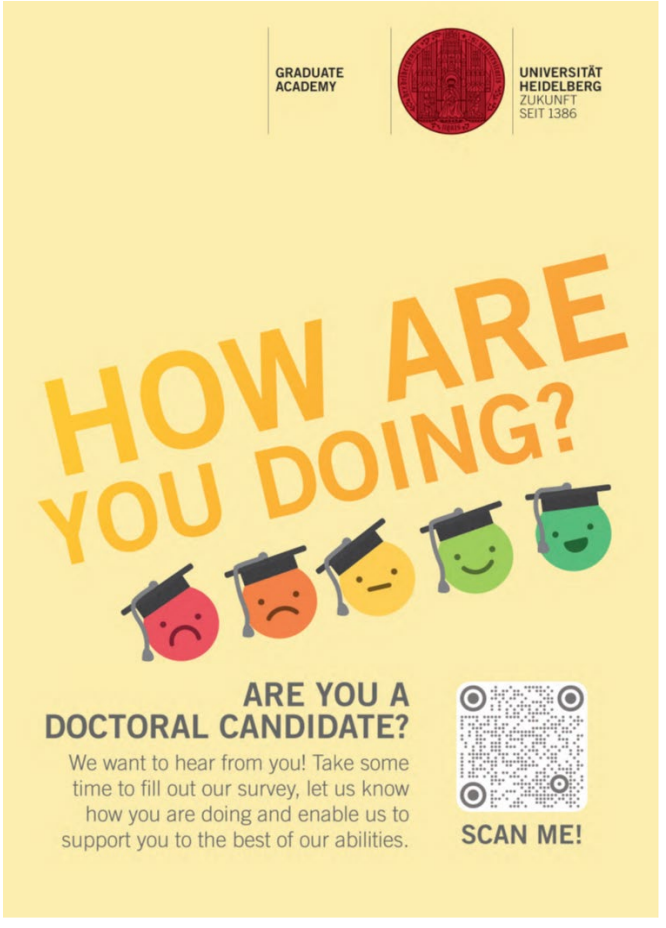

Topics of the pilot study:

Part 1

- Questions about the person
- General conditions for the doctoral project
- Supervision, research situation, TAC
- Working situation/working space and time investment
- Competencies and qualification needs
- Career perspectives/mobility
- (Mental) wellbeing
- Comments

Part 2

- Research questions for validation

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What's in for you?

1. Graduate Academy services
2. Managing a PhD

What do we offer today?

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Core services Graduate Academy:

Advising & Support

Advising & support
(Beratung)

Sponsorship programs

Sponsorship for doctoral candidates
(Förderung)

Academic program & Professional orientation

Academic program & Professional orientation
(Akad. Programm & Karriereorientierung)

Events

Events
(Veranstaltungen)

Information & Networking

Information & Networking
(Infomaterialien & Vernetzung)

Service on demand | Projects & Partnerships | Infrastructure KLF*

Supporting the advancement of excellent PhD framework conditions
Unterstützungsangebote für die Verbesserung der Rahmenbedingungen der Promotion

Graduate Academy in context

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Vice-Rector Quality Development & Sustainability

Advising & Support	Academic program & Professional orientation	Sponsorship programs	Events	Council for Graduate Studies
Information & Networking	Service on demand	Projects & Partnerships	Infrastructure KLF*	heiDOCS Committee

* Käthe Leichter Forum, KLF (https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/klfzentrum/index_en.html)

Graduate Academy offerings (I)

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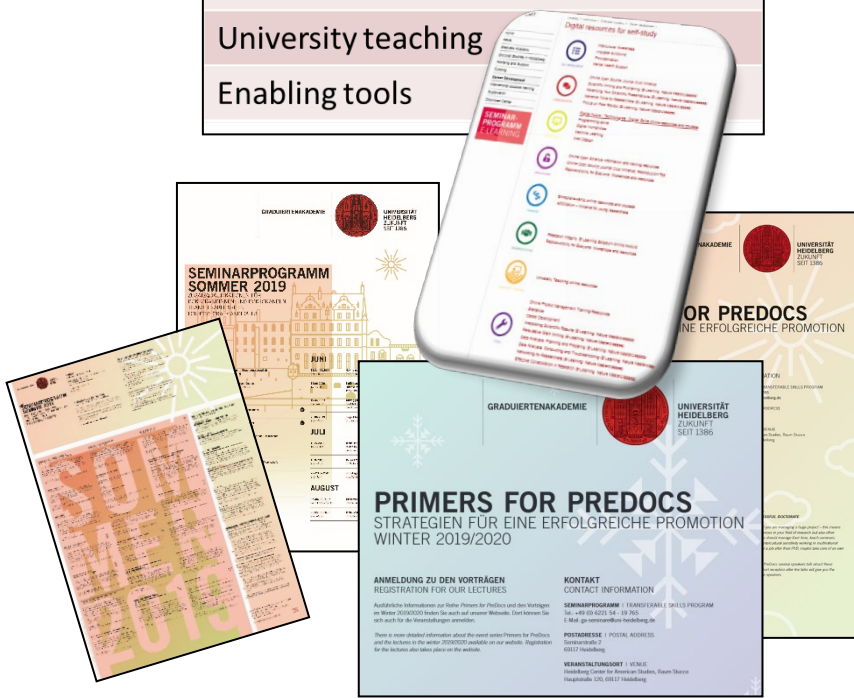
- Consultations

Themes
Personal skills / Self management
Communication skills
Digital future – technologies - skills
Open Science
Transfer & Entrepreneurship
Research Ethics
University teaching
Enabling tools

- Welcome events & welcome packs
- Seminar and workshop program (ca. 60 courses p.a. in D & E)
- Digital (e-learning) resources
- Language and text production support
- Guided writing groups
- Media room



- Working space

SEMINARPROGRAMM 2025–II

ZUSATZQUALIFIKATIONEN FÜR
DOKTORANDINNEN UND DOKTORANDEN
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
FOR DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

01./02.07.2025 9 am–1 pm	Career Development Dr. Sascha Vogel	
01.–03.07.2025 11–13 Uhr	Der Einsatz von KI-Programmen in der Forschung und für das Publizieren Prof. Dr. Martin Papenheim	
08.07.2025 10–13 Uhr	Health Promotion Dr. Mona Kellner	
16.07.2025 9 am–5 pm	The Powerful Voice Francesca Carlin	
16./17.07.2025 9:30 am–4.15 pm	Good Scientific Practice Dr. Julia Verse	
22.07.2025 9 am–3 pm	Slidewriting & Storylining Dr. Markus Burger	
09./10.09.2025 9 am–4 pm	Thesis Defense Training Dr. Jan Schmidt	
11., 18. & 25.09.2025 1–5 pm	Introduction to Programming with Python Boyana Bonesa & Kevin Leiss	
16./17.09.2025 9 am–5 pm	Conference Presentation Julie Stearns	
22.09.2025 9–17 Uhr	Konzentrierter arbeiten Dr. Dirk Hausen	
23./24.09.2025 9–14 Uhr / 9–17 Uhr	Disputation – Vorbereitung auf Vortrag und Verteidigung Dr. Malte Engel	
06./07.10.2025 9 am–4 pm	Getting Started Dr. Jan Stamm	
08.10.2025 9–17 Uhr	Wissenschaftliche Schreibwerkstatt Dr. Anselm Spindler	
09./10.10.2025 9 am–4.30 pm / 9 am–12.30 pm	Scientists Need More! Prof. Dr. Daniel Merkens	
14./15.10.2025 9–13.30 Uhr / 30 min p. P.	Karriereplanung: Wirtschaft oder Wissenschaft? Bianca Sievert	
16./17.10.2025 9–15 Uhr	Logik und Argumentation Dr. Jonas Zahn	

21./22.10.2025 9 am–1 pm	Writing for a Non-Scientist Audience Dr. Bradley van Paridon	
23.10.2025 10–12.30 Uhr	Karrierewege zur Professur RA Laurentius Oles	
28.10. / 11.11.2025 10 am–5 pm / 10 am–2 pm	Intercultural Communication Lenka Woll	
28./29.10.2025 13–17.30 Uhr / 9–12.30 Uhr	Was kann, was will ich eigentlich? Dr. Hartmut Unger	
31.10.2025 9 am–5 pm / 11./12.11.2025 30 min p.p.	Academic Poster Design Dr. Susanne Berger	
03., 10. & 17.11.2025 13–17 Uhr	Einführung in die Programmierung mit Python Boyana Bonesa & Kevin Leiss	
04./05.11.2025 9–17 Uhr	Grundlagenwissen BWL Ingo Schüler	
06.11.2025 9 am–1 pm	Effective Visual Communication of Science Dr. Jernej Zupanc	
06., 13., 20., 27.11. & 04.12.2025 5–7 pm	Open-Source Document and Media Creation Walker Thompson	
10./11.11.2025 10 am–5 pm / 9:30 am–4.30 pm	Writing Scientific Papers in English Dr. Vera Leberecht	
12./13.11.2025 9 am–5 pm	Mastering the Unexpected Guido Molina	
19./20.11.2025, 9–17 Uhr	Master, Doktortitel, Chef – und „immer" reicht es nicht! Roman Jaburek	
25.11.2025 9–15 Uhr	Slidewriting & Storylining Dr. Markus Burger	
26.11.2025 2–6 pm	Research Data Management Nina Bisheh, Dr. Georg Schwesinger, Dr. Sebastian Zangerle	
27./28.11.2025 9:30 am–4.15 pm	Good Scientific Practice Dr. Julia Verse	
28.11., 05. & 12.12.2025 1–5 pm	Introduction to Programming with R Boyana Bonesa & Kevin Leiss	
02.12.2025 9 am–5 pm	How to Plan and Write a Competitive Research or Grant Proposal Dr. Thomas Koch	
03.12.2025 10–13 Uhr	Richtiges Zitieren und Vermeidung von Plagiaten Dr. Martin Nissen	

ANMELDUNG ZU DEN KURSEN
REGISTRATION FOR OUR COURSES

www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de

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Your next opportunity:

Intercultural Communication –

How to communicate successfully with German authorities (E & D)

- simulations of typical situations
- virtual coaching session

28.10.2025 10 am – 5 pm, in-person in Heidelberg

11.11.2025 10 am – 2 pm, online

Info & Registration

GRADUIERTEN AKADEMIE

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Free access to e-learning resources

- Digitale Resourcen (*constantly optimizing*)
- Epigeum (OUP/SAGE) „Research Integrity“ *(since 2018; renewal & migration to Moodle 2023)*
- Epigeum (OUP/SAGE) „Advancing your Research Career“ *(since June 2022)*
- Nature Master Classes *(since October 2022; now 21 stand-alone modules)*
- Epigeum (OUP/SAGE) Avoiding Plagiarism *(since October 2023)*
- Epigeum (OUP/SAGE) „Statistics“ *(since January 2025)*
- Epigeum (OUP/SAGE) „Masterin Mentoring“ *(coming soon)*
- *Scouting for: Basics in business & administration*

plus quick self-test for easy orientation

Digital resources

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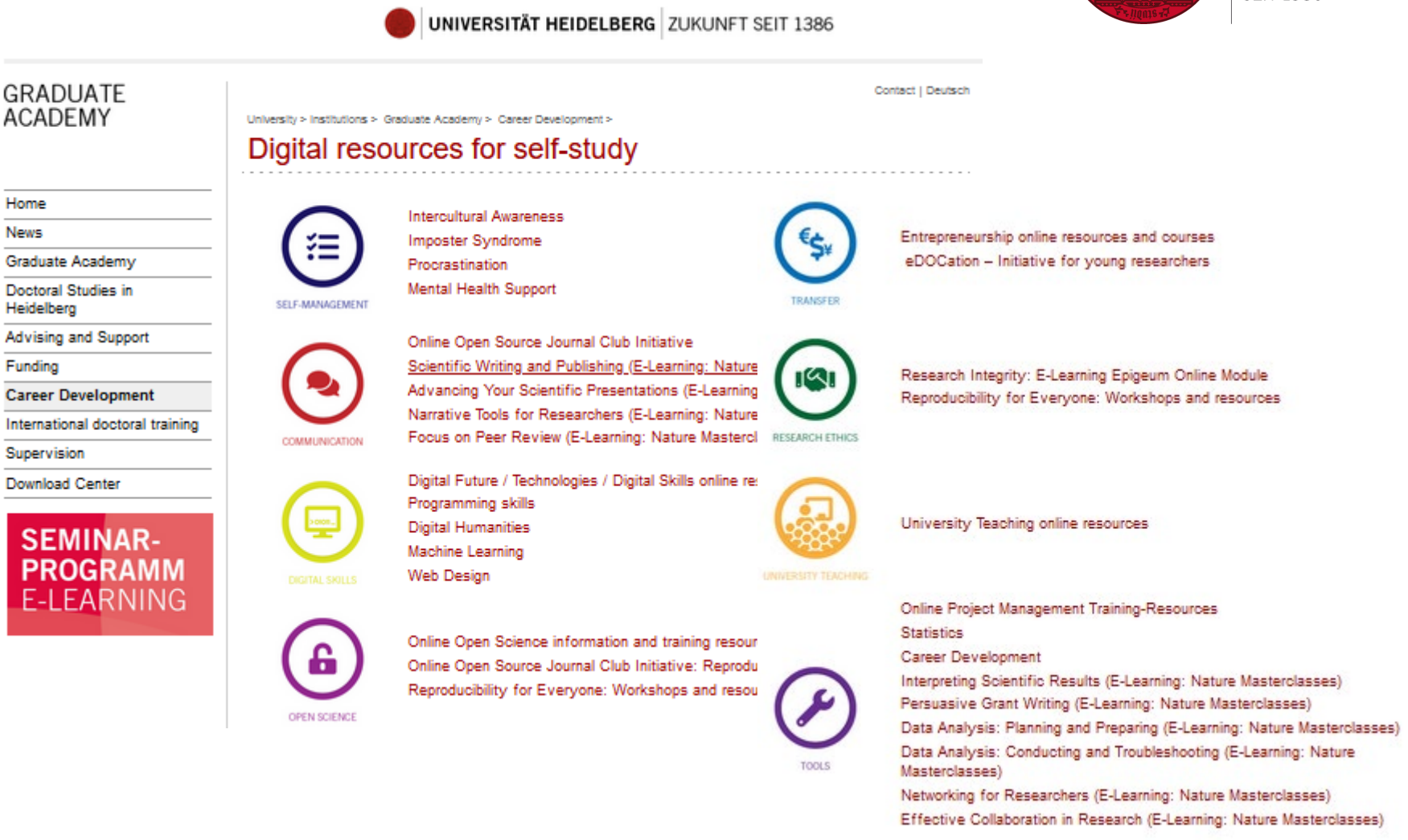

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/karriere/digitale_weiterbildung/digitale_ressourcen_selbststudium_en.html

Nature Master Classes on-line (NMO)

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Full catalogue of courses covering the whole research pipeline

Design research	Secure funding	Experiment and analyse	Write and publish	Share and disseminate	Develop your career	Work with others
Experiments: From idea to design	Persuasive grant writing	Managing research data to unlock its full potential	Writing a Research Paper*	Narrative tools for researchers	Getting an academic research position	Networking for researchers
	Finding funding opportunities	Data analysis: Planning and preparing	Publishing a Research Paper*	Advancing your scientific presentations		Introduction to collaboration
		Data analysis: Conducting and troubleshooting	Writing and Publishing a Review Paper*	Effective science communication		Participating in a collaboration
		Interpreting scientific results	Focus on peer review	Creating successful research posters		Leading a collaboration
			Research Integrity: Publication Ethics			

See quick selftest for easy orientation

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/karriere/digitale_weiterbildung/e-learning_en.html

Text production…

… is an essential part of the doctoral journey!

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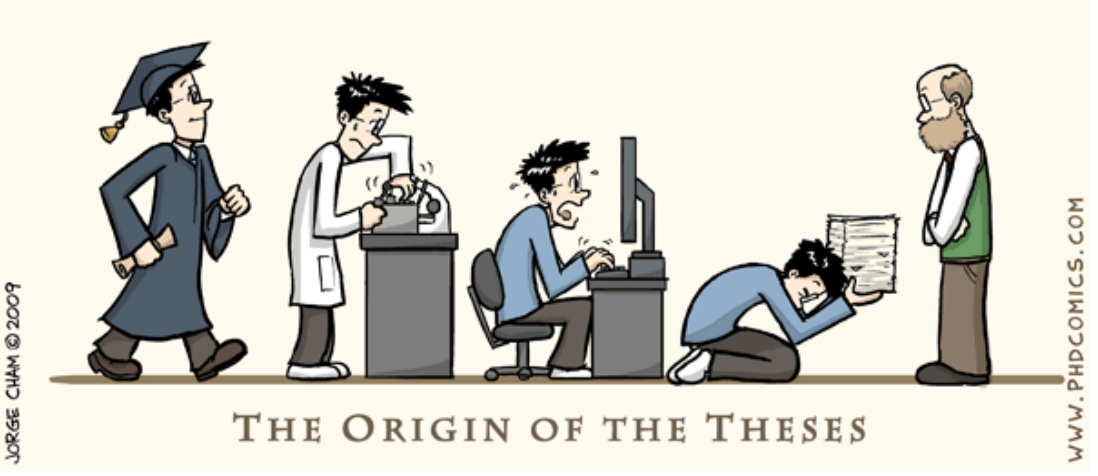
- Exposé writing
- Scientific writing
- Science writing
- Thesis writing
- Else …

Using large language models -
Embracing Innovation with Integrity!

- ✓ Transparency and Disclosure
- ✓ Academic Autonomy and Integrity
- ✓ Correct Referencing and Source Validation
- ✓ Compliance with Dissertation Regulations
- ✓ Authorial Responsibility



0 months → **36 - 42 - 52 months max!**

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/promovieren/index_en.html

GRADUIERTEN AKADEMIE

Media Room INF 370

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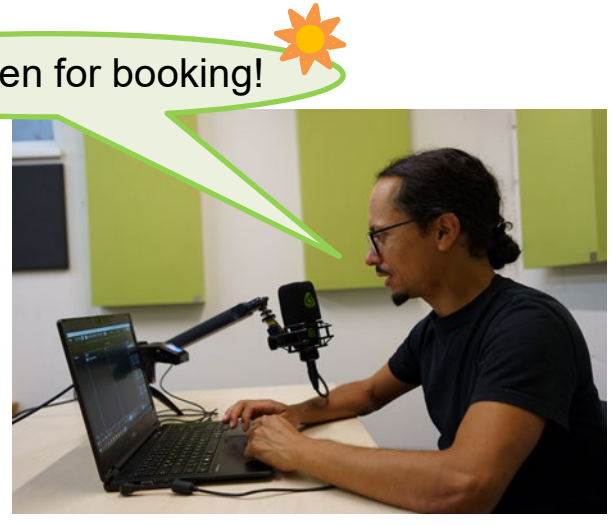
- Equipped for the production of high-quality **audio** and **video** for working on topics related to academic life, scholarship, and research, e.g.
  - ✓ creating a **podcast**
  - ✓ recording a **voice-over** for a ***ppt*-presentation** to be made available online
  - ✓ Conducting / documenting **interviews** with colleagues or visiting scholars
  - ✓ Producing **videos** to share scientific knowledge with a wider public
- Booking is **free of charge** for Heidelberg University doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, faculty and staff; go to the online booking system
- For first time users:
  please, take an appointment with GA-staff to receive instructions on the use of the space and its equipment

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/karriere/medienraum_en.html



Book your space in the Käthe Leichter Forum (KLF)

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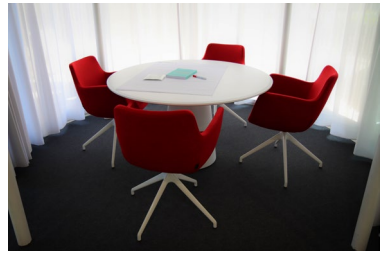
- Co-working and event spaces in the Käthe Leichter Forum
- Available to doctoral candidates and employees of Heidelberg University for reservation via on-line booking tool at https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/akademie/arbeitsplaetze_en.html

- Open event space

- Seminar room

- Co-working desks

- Rotunda



Sponsorship for doctoral candidates heiDOCS 2.0 & LGF

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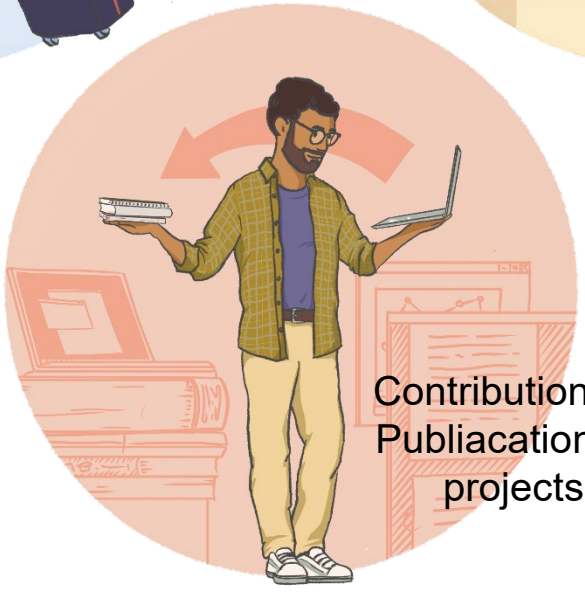

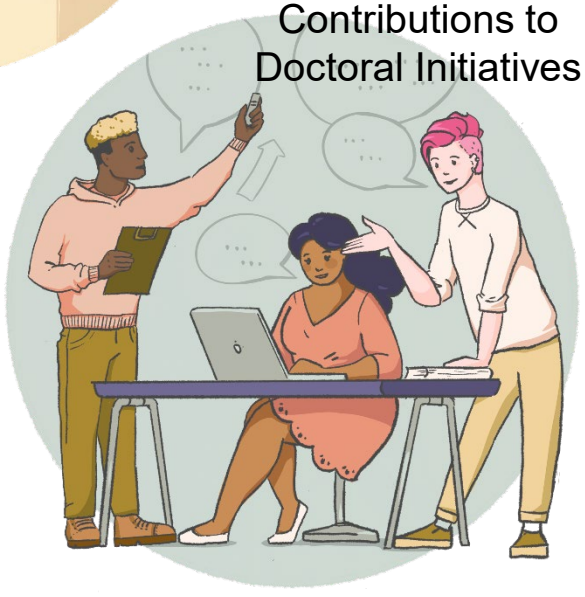

March 15
June 15
Sept. 15
Dec. 15

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/foerderung/heidocs_main_en.html#mobilitaetsbeihilfen

Graduate Academy offerings (II)

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- Cotutelles: Negotiating contracts for dual affiliations incl. supervision with international partners
- Brochure Kiosk – see http://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/downloads/ (Graduate Academy downloads)
- Newsletter (please subscribe on our homepage)
- Instagramm www.instagram.com/ga_uniheidelberg
- Bulletin board (seeking partners for research, scientific or language co-operations; https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/aktuelles/index_en.html#board)
- Jour fixe Doktorandenkonvent
- Coordinating the Ombudsprogram for doctoral candidates

NEW!

Please, do follow us!

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Stay up-to-date and receive regular updates about fellowships, doctoral programs etc.

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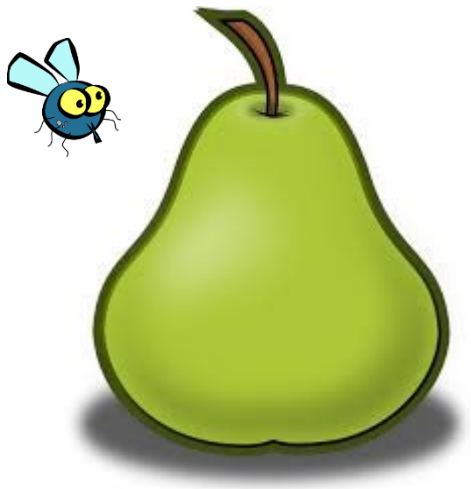
www.instagram.com/gradakad_uniheidelberg

Whom to contact
if anything goes pear-shaped?



How to manage a PhD?

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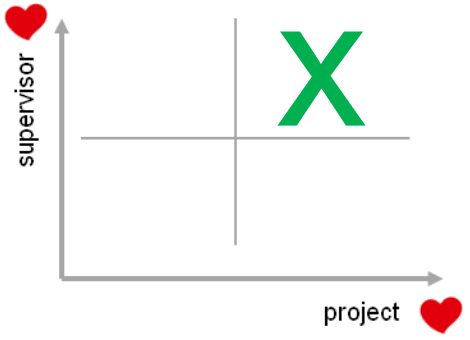
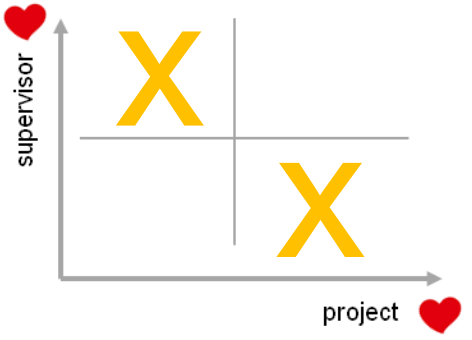
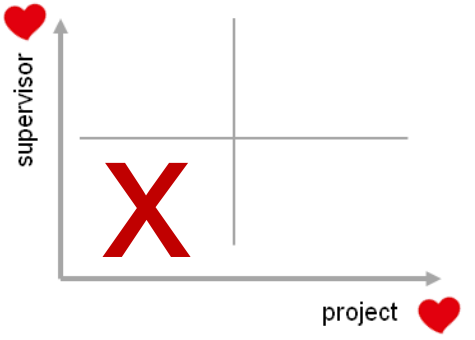
Happiness, satisfaction, resilience, work-life integration



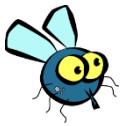
Great –
- keep going,
- nurture
- and enjoy!



Fix it –
- talk to people
- identify sinks
- keep observing!



Drastic change is much needed –
- talk to people
- think about plan B!

Avoid the fly  turning into a big white elefant…

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Talk (*selectively!*) to

- your supervisor
- your 2nd supervisor/mentor/TAC members
- your peers or the postdoc you work with
- the student representative(s)
- the PhD program coordinator
- **us – contact the Graduate Academy**
- the department head / Dean of Graduate Studies
- the equal opportunity office (Gleichstellungsbüro)
- the doctoral ombudsperson

… and start talking early on; communication is key!

Ombudspeople & Ombudsprogram

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Prof. Dr. C. v. Stutterheim
(Institut für Deutsch als Fremdsprachenphilologie; IDF)

Prof. em. Dr. M. Wink
(Seniorprofessor, Pharmazeutische Biologie; IPMB)

About to be re-launched!

https://www.graduateacademy.uni-heidelberg.de/beratung/ombudsperson_en.html

Extracurricular activities…

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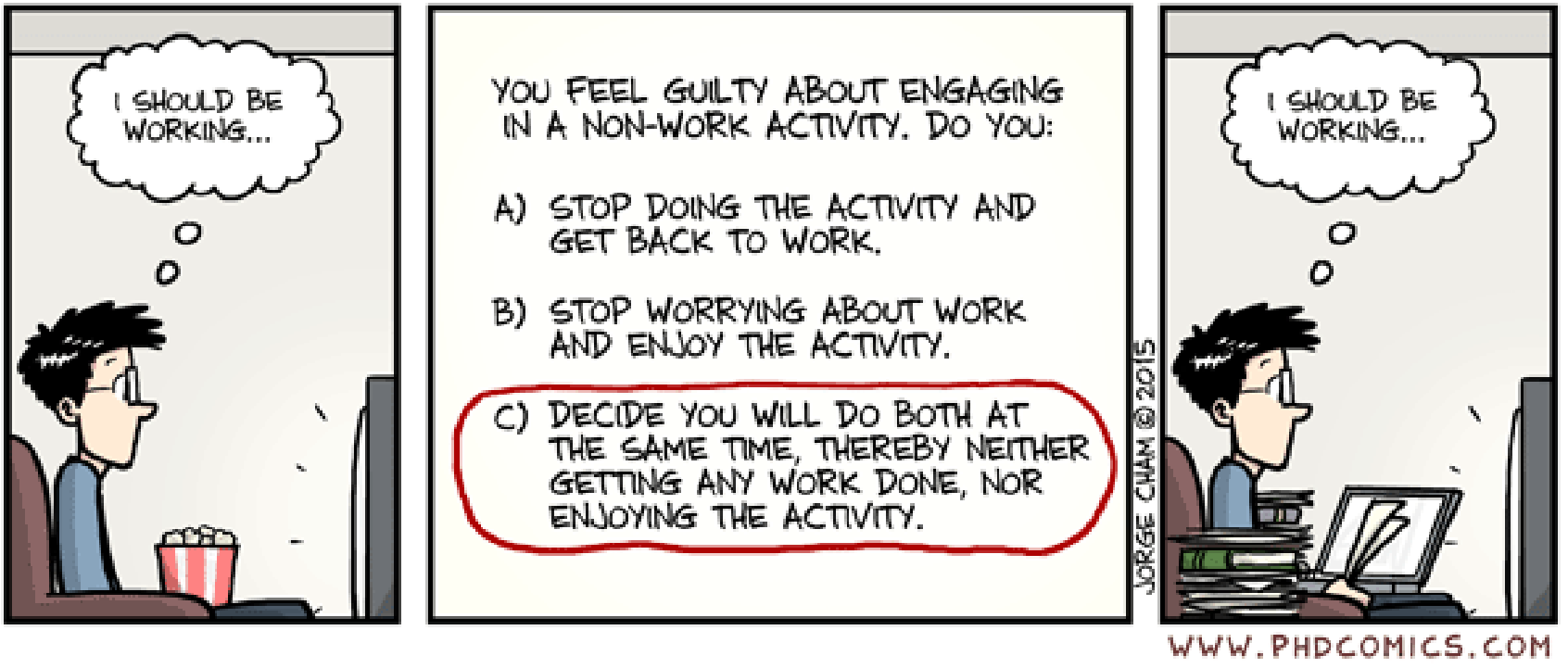

…are encouraged!!!

…must no prolong the thesis project!!!

Extracurricular activities - examples

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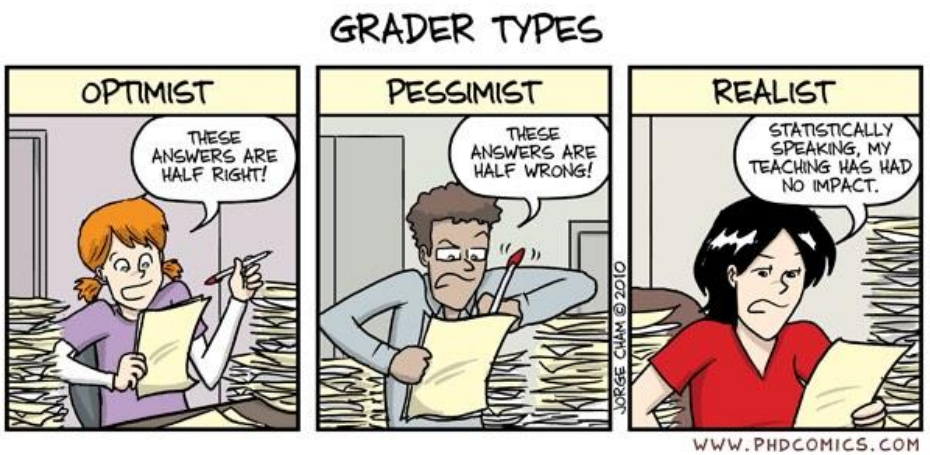
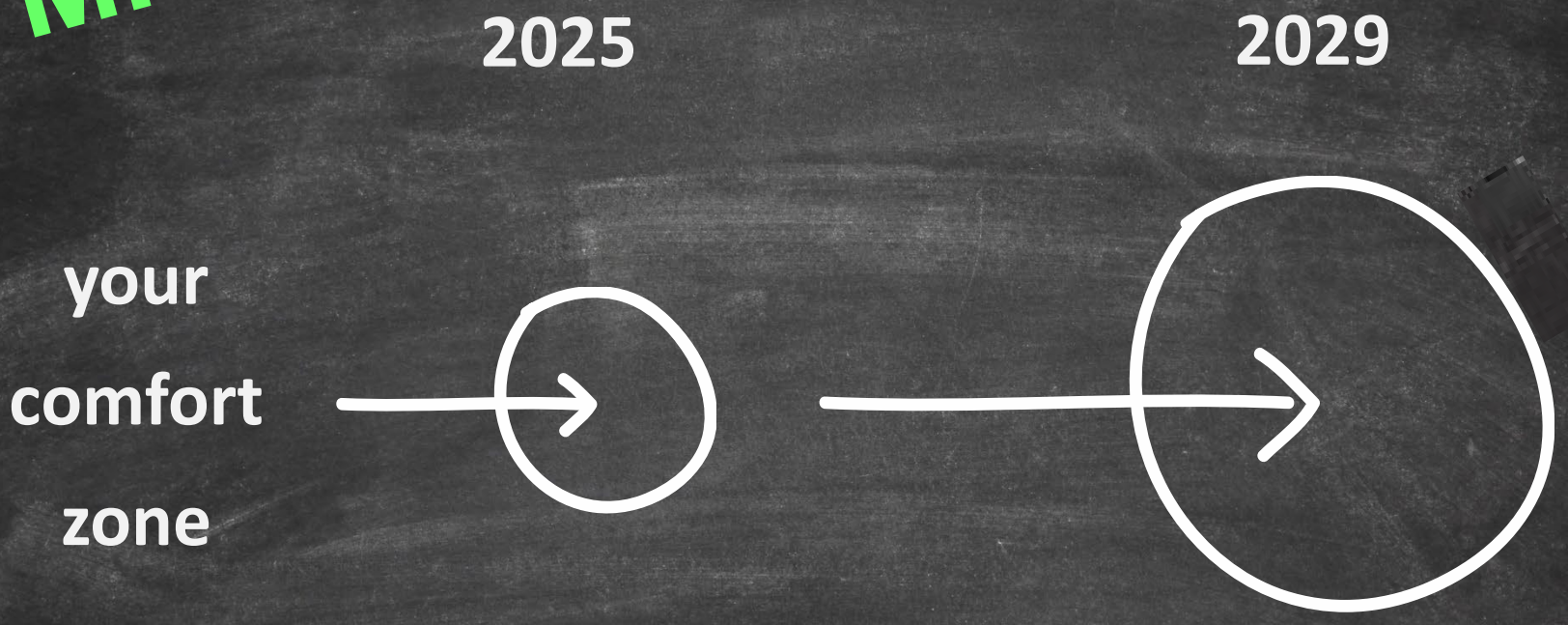
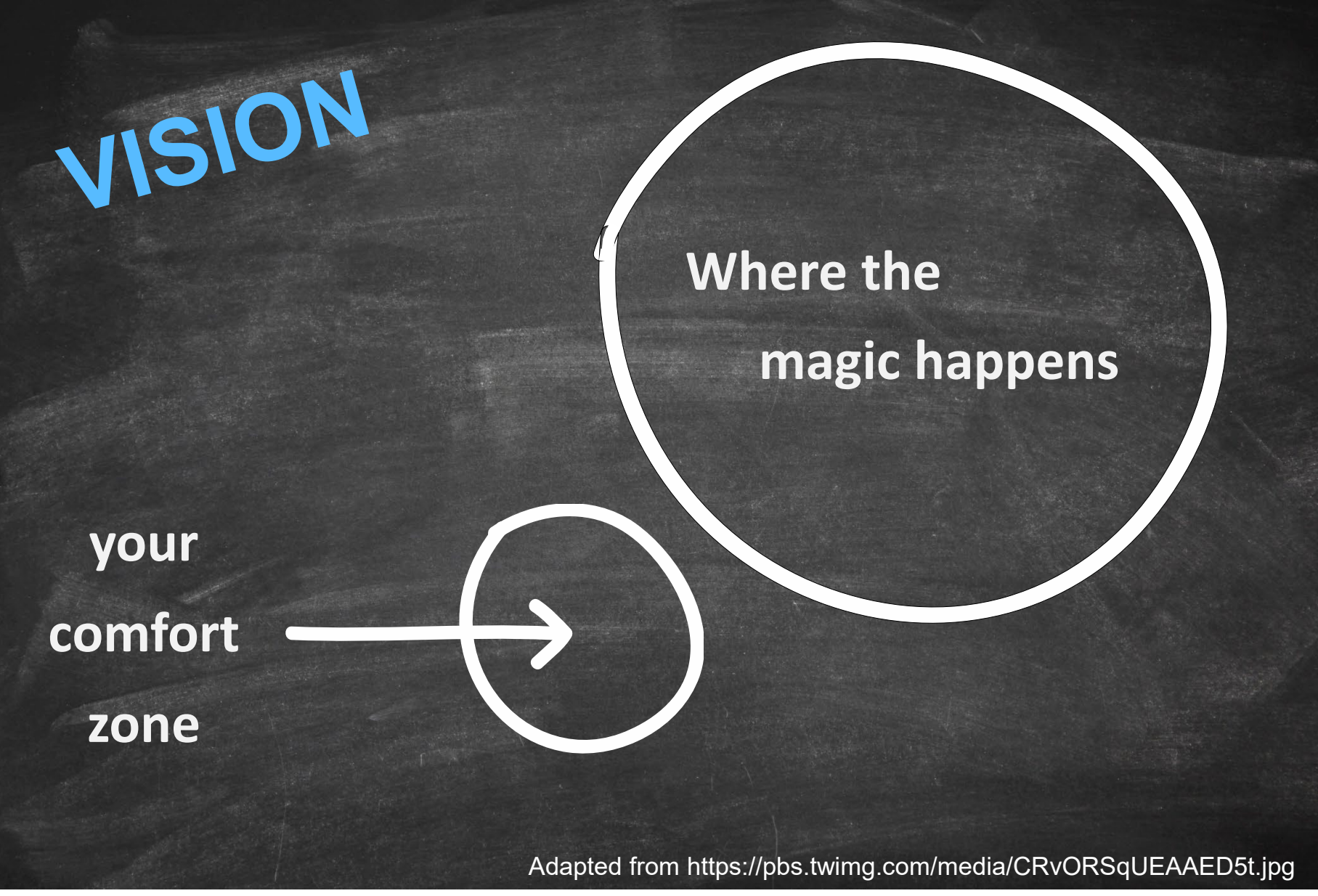
- Doctoral fellow representation
- Contributions to conference/workshop/meeting organization
- Teaching!
  - Is preparation for and part of a university career
  - Is appreciated and in principle combinable with a DAAD fellowship (contact the DAAD in case you are not sure about this)
- Complementary skills training & career orientation/coaching



MISSION



Adapted from https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CRvORSqUEAAED5t.jpg



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THANK YOU!