

Peer Programme “NaWi”



Programme Guide

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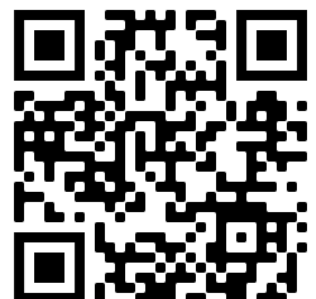


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1. Programme Objective

The German Rectors' Conference (cf. HRK 2014/2015) and the German University Association of Advanced Graduate Training (GUAT/UniWiND) classify **counselling as a central instrument in the supervision, support and qualification of young academics**. While the focus for Master's students is on a "comprehensive range of information and advice on doctoral candidates and the associated career development" including "qualification during the doctoral phase with regard to career objectives" (UniWiND 2014: 6-7), from the doctorate onwards, the focus is on **holistic career advice in the** sense of "exploring career options within and outside academia" and the "acquisition of key competencies" (UniWiND 2017: 24). Instead of relying on isolated formats in the areas of information, counselling and qualification, the necessity of **interlinking** these areas is emphasised (cf. UniWiND 2016: 8, 14, 18, 19, 27). Many graduate institutions already offer career counselling and/or coaching and/or **mentoring**. Some institutions offer coordinated counselling formats in which counselling, career phases, career planning and further qualification are coordinated. The support structures are supplemented in part by **peer networks, tandems**, formats based on the principle of 'help for self-help', regulars' tables, etc.

Study results from the German Centre for Higher Education and Science Studies (DZHW) on the **situation of early career researchers** indicate that, overall, the central support services offered by universities need improvement: only 45.6% of doctoral researchers are satisfied with the support structures (cf. DZHW 2018). In addition to the subject-specific support provided by the supervisors, an **interdisciplinary support structure** at the university also contributes to the successful completion of the doctorate. In view of the doctoral conditions at the University of Passau, where the majority of doctorates are currently independently organised individual doctorates, it therefore makes sense to **expand the central support infrastructure for early career researchers** through the "Peer-NaWi" programme at the start of the doctorate.

The **aim of the "Peer-NaWi" programme** is to support students interested in doing a doctorate in the final phase of their studies **in deciding on a doctorate** and, if applicable, an academic career.

2. "NaWi" Supports Early Career Researchers

Within the framework of the existing central mentoring **infrastructure** provided by the Graduate Centre as well as the mentUP+ women's mentoring programme and the mentUP* diversity mentoring programme, the "NaWi" peer programme is a **complementary instrument** for promoting young academics, as it differs in terms of programme goals, programme structure, programme focus and target group.

mentUP+



objective support and accompany young female scientists and female junior executives

focus career path after Master's degree, doctorate, habilitation

target group young female academics, young female executives with a Master's degree or higher

mentUP*



support members of previously underrepresented groups in universities and leadership positions

career path after Master's degree, doctorate, habilitation

young academics, young executives with a Master's degree or higher

Peer-NaWi



clarification of doctoral aspirations, assisted start into doctorate and support for successful doctoral process

academic career path after studies, transition to doctorate

students interested in a doctorate in the last semester before graduation

3. Target Group

Eligible to participate in the peer programme "NaWi" to start their doctorate are **as mentees**:

1. **students** with at least **good grades** in the **final phase of** a degree programme entitling them to a doctorate who are planning to do a doctorate at the University of Passau and who are likely to fulfil the requirements for acceptance as a doctoral candidate at the respective faculty. For students of the Faculty of Law, a first state examination with a grade of "vollbefriedigend" is generally required for a doctorate there.
2. **graduates** with at least **good grades who are** planning to do a doctorate at the University of Passau, whose **degree was** generally completed **no more than six months** ago at the time of application and who meet the requirements for acceptance as a doctoral candidate at the respective faculty.

Participation in the programme can **only effectively support** the entry into doctoral research if the participants

- regularly attend the meetings in the peer tandems,
- regularly participate in the group meetings of the peer consulting,
- participate in appropriate qualification workshops,
- participate in the network meetings (especially the programme's kick-off and closing events),
- make use of the information, counselling and coaching services offered by the Graduate Centre in an individually meaningful way.

Participation in the evaluation also helps the Graduate Centre to continuously improve the programme.

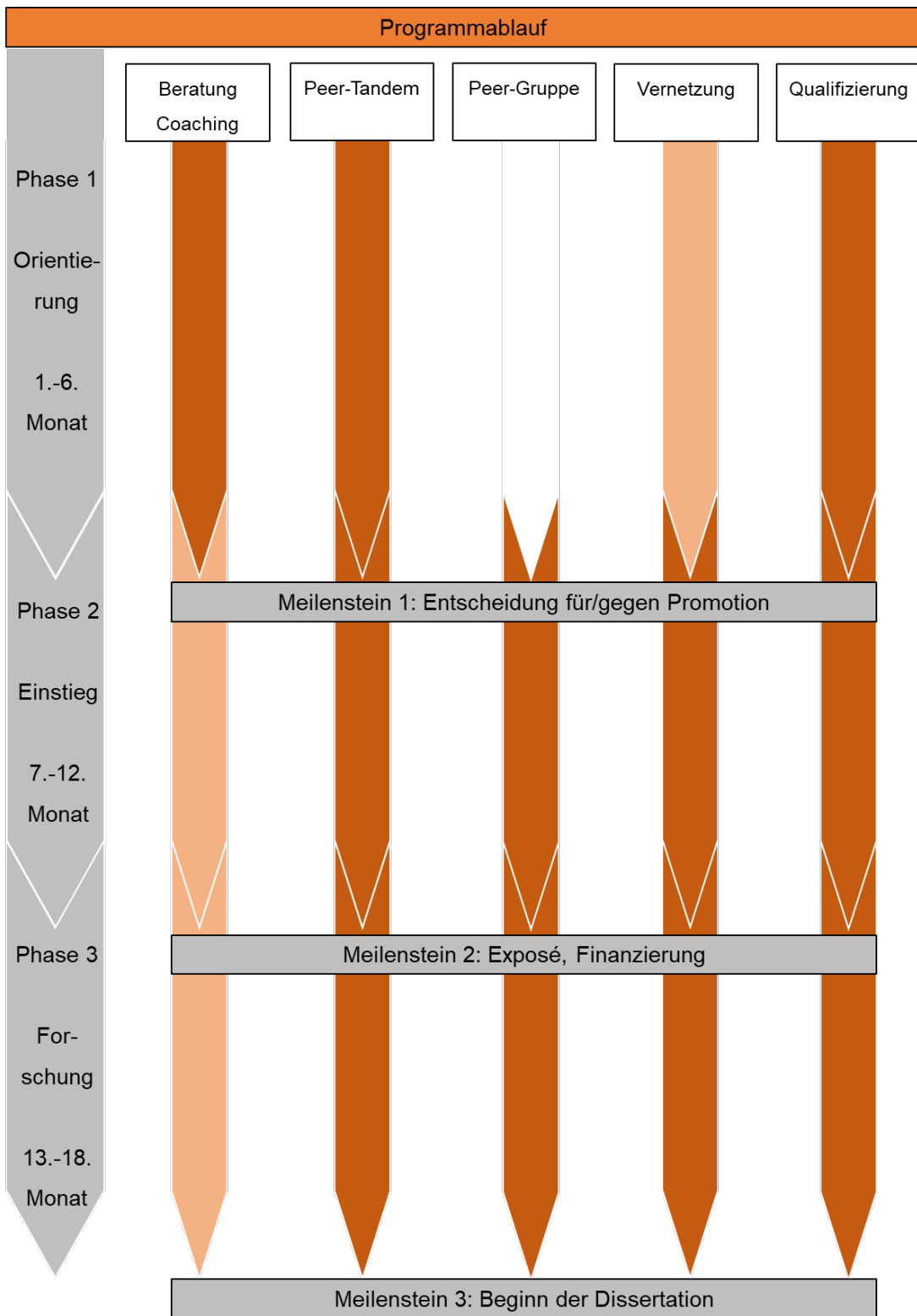
4. Programme Structure

The programme aims to meet the specific challenges that arise during the orientation and entry phase of the doctorate. It is divided into **three phases**, each of which makes **its own contribution to this goal** and whose completion is marked by '**milestones**'. The programme runs for **six to eighteen months, depending** on the decision for or against a doctorate. Participants who have decided against a doctorate after the first phase will, nevertheless, have worked on an individual competence profile for the next stage of their non-academic career.

The **first phase** of the "Peer-NaWi" focuses on information and counselling. With the *information event on starting a doctorate* and the *advice offered* by the Graduate Centre, the mentees receive support in reflecting on their motivation and making a conscious decision for or against a doctorate. In order to get a feeling for what a (subjective) everyday doctoral life might look like, a *mentor* is already available to them in the first phase, who will accompany the mentees throughout the entire programme if they decide to do a doctorate. The mentees can also attend the events of the Graduate Centre in order to prepare themselves specifically for starting a doctorate. The first phase starts with a joint *kick-off event*, which also serves networking purposes. As part of the counselling, the mentees develop their individual *competence profile in the first phase*, which they can use for their further career management regardless of their decision.

The aim of the **second phase is to** set the course for a successful doctoral process. Clarifying the financing of the doctorate and preparing an exposé on the doctoral topic are therefore milestones of this phase. These topics can also be the content of the peer tandem meetings. The mentors can, for example, provide feedback on the application for a position or for a doctoral scholarship. The mentors can also use their experience to advise the mentees in their search for a suitable supervisor and in understanding the conditions of the supervisory relationship. When deciding on a doctorate at the University of Passau, the mentees support each other in the second phase in the format of *collegial counselling* (offered by LEHRE+). The aim of this is to work out individual solutions to challenges and thus also to expand one's own problem-solving strategies. The Graduate Centre's counselling services continue to be available on an as-needed basis, now with a focus on coaching. Depending on each discipline's culture and requirements, some mentees may need or want to prepare an exposé (e.g. to apply for a scholarship) during this phase. To support these processes, the Graduate Centre regularly offers *events* on exposé writing, work techniques, work organisation and self-management.

Phase three focuses on preparing the mentees for the research phase of their doctorate. The third phase supports them in expanding their *network* and gaining a foothold in the academic world at the University of Passau. The focus of this phase is the transition to the research phase of the doctorate. Successful research in the doctorate is promoted through individually selected *qualification events*. In these, the mentees also learn, for example, strategies for dealing with typical challenges during the doctorate. During the transition to the research phase, the mentees continue to be accompanied by their mentors, who support them, for example, in not letting themselves be discouraged by writer's block or setbacks. Likewise, the mentees can continue to make use of the collegial counselling format and, if necessary, individual coaching at the Graduate Centre.



5. Programme Components

The "Peer-NaWi" contains tried and tested programme components of mentoring programmes for early career researchers, and its programme structure is based on the quality standards of Forum Mentoring e.V. (cf. Forum Mentoring e.V. 2020). The "Peer-NaWi" includes the following **components**

1. Information, counselling, coaching,
2. Qualification,
3. Peer mentoring (in tandems and as a group format) and
4. Networking.

The programme components serve to provide interdisciplinary support for young researchers on their way to a doctorate by

- promoting the mentees' self and methodological competence,
- gaining an insight into the structures and rules of the scientific community,
- expanding their personal and professional network and
- receiving psychosocial support in the transition to a doctorate.

However, the "Peer-NaWi" is not a formal supervision for doctoral candidates! The subject-specific supervision of the doctoral thesis is reserved for the respective supervisors.

5.1 Information, Counselling, Coaching

The participants of the "Peer-NaWi" can use the information, counselling and coaching services of the Graduate Centre at any time. The following offers are integrated into the programme

- Information material (website)
- Information event (presently in German only)
- Kompetenzenbilanz Coaching (presently in German only)
- Career advice (partly available in English)
- Coaching.

As part of the programme, the mentees take part in individual counselling and coaching sessions. With the Kompetenzenbilanz Coaching, the mentees develop their individual competence profile.

5.2 Qualification

The Graduate Centre's programme of events is open to all young researchers. In the second and third programme phases in particular, the mentees are recommended to take advantage of the qualification programmes offered by the Graduate Centre, which are timed to coincide with the programme phases of the "Peer-NaWi".

Phase 2

- Working techniques (e.g. research)
- Scientific writing and/or writing workshop
- Exposé writing workshop
- Funding

Phase 3

- Project and time management
- Communication skills (e.g. giving presentations)
- Resilience and dealing with writer's block
- Funding: research project funding
- Seminars and workshops by LEHRE+

5.3 Peer Tandems

Within the framework of the "NaWi" programme, the mentees are accompanied in peer tandems by mentors who are at an advanced stage of their doctorate or have already completed their doctorate, whereby the completion of the doctorate usually does not go back more than five years.

The goal of mentoring programmes is the **share experience and knowledge between mentors and mentees** with the purpose of career-related and psychosocial **support**, and the stimulation of **self-reflection** on the part of the mentees (cf. Lödermann 2013: 51f.). The classic mentoring relationship is one-to-one mentoring, which takes place as a personal counselling relationship between two people who usually have different statuses. The mentors advise their mentees against the backdrop of personal experience and thereby share informal experience-based and operational knowledge (cf. Fleck/Brüschke/Brocke 2017: 79).

Peer mentoring differs from this classic mentoring format in the **equality of status of the peers**, who are (usually and approximately) at the same qualification level. In addition to practical scientific and personal competence development, peer mentoring formats foster **socialisation**, promote networking within the university and offer support (cf. Brocke et al. 2017: 92f., 96f.).

The **goals and formal organisation of the tandem meetings** are determined in advance by a peer mentoring agreement between the mentors and the mentees, which is available on the Graduate Centre's website. The tandem meetings should take place as - if possible - physical meetings at regular intervals and should be of a suitable duration (e.g. 60 minutes). The content of the meetings is determined independently by the tandem team.

On the one hand, the **matching** of the tandems is prepared by the programme coordination by taking into account the respective disciplines, motivation, expectations and other wishes regarding participation in the programme on the part of the mentors and mentees. However, since chemistry is also crucial for constructive cooperation within the peer tandems, the final composition of the tandems takes place in a speed-dating format.

5.4 Peer Consulting

All mentees are accompanied by a collegial counselling format from the second phase of the programme onwards. In the **group meetings**, the mentees are guided to independently work out ways of solving problems by applying the **method of collegial counselling**. The cases to be discussed are brought in by the mentees themselves. The peer group meetings are scheduled on a regular basis.

5.5 Networking

Topic-specific network meetings (e.g. on financing the doctorate and the research project) should enable all participants to exchange experiences.

The programme begins with a **kick-off event** where all mentors and mentees get to know each other. Participation in the kick-off event is mandatory.

In addition to informal **get-togethers** of the programme participants, it is planned to offer further networking events adapted to the respective goals of the individual programme phases. For example, the organisation of a science slam is being considered, where participants can learn about the research projects of other early career researchers and also strengthen their communication skills.

The programme ends regularly after 18 months with a **closing event**. Events at the phase transitions are planned.

6. Recommendations for the Organisation of the Peer Tandems

Peer mentoring within the tandems is **organised independently** by the mentors and mentees. The programme coordination does not make any specifications regarding the content and procedure of the tandem meetings. The peer tandem meetings are **not intended as supervision of the individual doctoral theses**. The designated supervisors are still responsible for the subject-specific supervision of the doctorate. The mentors provide **complementary support** to the supervisors. They advise the mentees primarily on interdisciplinary topics and challenges of starting a doctorate. Accordingly, the mentees should communicate the topics for which they would like support from their mentors and clarify whether these are rather part of the formal doctoral supervision. Under certain circumstances, it may make sense to involve the designated supervisor in the mentoring process.

Important conditions for a successful exchange in the peer tandems are **respectful interaction** and **constructive communication**. Therefore, we recommend discussing the **general conditions of the tandem relationship** and clarifying respective **wishes** and **expectations**.

6.1 Establishing and Shaping the Mentoring Relationship

At the first meeting, the following points should be clarified:

Contents of the tandem sessions

- What expectations do you have of each other?
- What do you each hope to gain from the peer mentoring relationship?
- Which topics should be discussed?

Organisation and procedure

- How often do you want to meet?
- How will you keep in touch?
- Are face-to-face meetings possible? Where will you meet?
- How many meetings do you want to hold at least?
- How short a notice may an appointment be rescheduled?

Trust

- Explicitly agree on discretion and confidentiality: To which group of people does this apply? What may be told to whom and under what circumstances, and what may not be told?
- How should feedback be given? How and in what form can you make it clear that you are not satisfied with something?
- How can it be addressed if the impression arises that the agreement is no longer being respected?

Conclusion (of the mentoring relationship)

- How will you review your work and wrap up at the end of the programme?

We recommend that you make these points binding in a **peer mentoring agreement**. You can access this on the Graduate Centre's website.

Avoiding dependency and competition

Within the framework of mentoring cooperation, there **should be no relationship of dependency** between mentee and mentor. Mentoring within the "Peer-NaWi" also should be rather **non-hierarchical peer support**, so that there is usually equality of status between mentee and mentor. Therefore, make sure that the mentor is not involved in the formal academic supervision of the planned doctorate. Due to the equality of status, another scenario can arise: a **competitive relationship** between mentor and mentee, especially if they are doing a (post-) doctorate or are working at the same chair. Potentially conflictual situations can include applying for projects, participating in conferences, publishing together, or even appointments with the joint supervisor. If you fear a possible **conflict of interest** due to such a constellation, we strongly recommend that you inform the programme coordination and seek a suitable solution together.

Dealing with diversity

Demographic and personal characteristics - such as gender, sexual orientation, cultural and socio-economic background or physical and mental limitations or disabilities - can also have an indirect influence on the peer mentoring relationship due to the associated social discrimination experience, socialisation or role attribution. If you as a mentor or mentee are part of a cross-gender or cross-culture tandem, for example, we recommend that you openly communicate and reflect for yourself as well as together in the tandem about how these social markers might affect the tandem relationship.

6.2 The Role of the Mentees

It is the mentees' responsibility to actively shape the peer mentoring relationship and to specify in which way they want the mentor to support them. **Unless otherwise agreed, the mentees initiate the tandem meetings and take care of organising the dates and maintaining contact.**

In order to make the best possible use of the mentors' experience and informal knowledge, it is recommended that the tandem meetings be prepared beforehand and, if necessary, also reflected afterwards. In preparation for the tandem meetings, the mentees can, for example, reflect on which topics they want to talk about with the mentor in the meeting. In preparation for the tandem meetings, it is advisable to reflect on the following points:

- Are there issues that were not fully clarified at the last meeting? What remained open at the last meeting?
- What is the main topic to be discussed in the next tandem meeting?
- Have you informed your mentor about the topic?
- What exactly interests you as a mentee about the topic?
- In which way do you hope to receive input from your mentor on this topic?
- Has your mentor had a similar experience? If so, what interests you in particular? How are your situations comparable?

After the tandem meeting, it may also be useful to keep **short records** with the topic of your conversation: What did you take away from the meeting and how can you implement it in your everyday work? This also serves as a reflection on whether all topics were clarified in the tandem meeting. In addition, jointly defined tasks until the next meeting can be tracked.

6.3 The Role of the Mentors

The mentors **support** the personal and academic development of their mentees. In order for the mentees to benefit from the experiences and informal knowledge of the mentors, an **open exchange** about their own successes, (subjectively) difficult situations, and **strategies** for dealing with the challenges of starting a doctorate is important. The focus here is on the **needs of the mentees**. Within the peer tandems, mentors provide **'help for self-help'**. They are benevolent **sparring partners** for the mentees who give constructive feedback and support the mentees in their self-reflection. In addition to the doctoral supervisors, the mentors can support their mentees in their socialisation with the academic world and in their integration into the research environment of the University of Passau. In the tandem relationship, the **initiative should come from your mentees**, although you can also actively shape the mentoring yourself! For the organisation of the regular tandem meetings, it can therefore be useful to consider the following points:

- Are there issues that were not fully clarified at the last meeting? What remained open at the last meeting?
- Have you been informed what topic your mentee wants to discuss in the next meeting?
- Do you have experience with this topic? Are you prepared for the topic?
- What issues or challenges would you like to work on with your mentee?
- What would you like to do to support your mentee?
- Would you like to give your mentee tasks for the next meeting?

Mentoring can take various forms. In addition to the **personal conversation**, you can also support your mentees through **'shadowing'**. If agreed, mentees can **accompany** their mentors **to appointments and events** and then discuss what they have observed together. In another variant of shadowing, you take part in one of your mentee's events (**observation**). You can also use role-playing as a method within the tandem meetings, e.g. to **practise** job interviews or unpleasant **situations**. In addition to the content of the mentoring and the methods, you can also **vary the locations of the tandem meetings**.

As mentors, the programme coordination is always available to you as a contact person and offers you **training in mentoring** prospective early career researchers prior to the start of the programme.

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