



SENATE RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUPPORT FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

CONTENT

1. Preliminary comments	3
2. Doctorate	4
2.1 Starting situation.....	4
2.2 General objectives	5
2.3 Structured doctoral programmes.....	5
2.4 Individual doctoral programmes	6
2.5 Heidelberg Graduate Academy	7
2.6 Cooperation with non-university institutions	8
2.7 International visibility of research findings	8
3. Habilitation	9
3.1 Shortening the habilitation phase	9
3.1.1 Memorandum	10
3.1.2 Timing	10
3.1.3 Accompaniment.....	11
3.1.4 Evaluation	11
3.2 Improvement of preparation for the responsibilities of university teaching	11
3.2.1 Teaching Component in the Memorandum.....	12
3.2.2 Accompaniment and advice	12
3.2.3 Preliminary supervision of undergraduate and master's theses.....	12
3.3 Improvement of resources	12
3.4 Relieving the burden on habilitands	13
4. Junior professorship	13
4.1 Guaranteeing autonomy.....	14
4.2 Performance criteria and evaluation procedures.....	14

4.3 Long-term career prospects	15
4.4 Responsibilities in teaching and committee work.....	15
4.5 Financial, personnel and technical conditions	15
5. Junior Research Group Heads	16
6. Equal Opportunities for Women and Family Support	16
7. Final Comments	17

1. PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

The training of the next generations of academics is one of the core responsibilities of universities and is a crucial contribution to the sustainability of our society. The conditions under which these responsibilities have to be assumed have changed dramatically in the last few decades. The demand for highly qualified researchers is growing, the requirements they have to fulfil are changing and universities have to confront fiercer national and international competition. In order to be able to hold our own in this race for the “best brains” we need a thorough review and improvement of the institutional, material and social conditions for supporting young scholars.

After the judgement of the Federal Constitutional Court on 27 July 2004 on the 5th amendment of the university framework law, the federal legislator reversed the previous law limiting career pathways to the “junior professor” and abolishing the habilitation. The University of Heidelberg welcomes this amendment initiated by the Constitutional Court, seeing it as an opportunity for universities to raise their own profile in support for young scholars. It will avail itself of the different qualification pathways and take appropriate account of the differing cultures in the disciplines.

The quality of a university is, above all, to be read from the quality of its young researchers. Within Heidelberg University there is a growing awareness that young scholars should be supported and strengthened more effectively and visibly. This being so, and in view of the imminent changes in the law, the Senate Commission on “The situation of young researchers at Heidelberg University” closely examined the general conditions for supporting them and submitted proposals to the Senate for improving doctoral studies, modernising the habilitation, designing junior professorships and promoting the career pathway of young heads of research groups. The Senate deliberated on the proposals of the Commission at its meetings on 15 February 2005 and 19 July 2005, and adopted them in the present form.

Heidelberg University is committed to the principle of subsidiarity within the University. The support for young scholars will continue to be a primary responsibility of the faculties. The University will therefore not adopt any university-wide (framework) regulations for doctorates and habilitations, as provided by the law on institutions of higher education of the state of Baden-Württemberg (Landeshochschulgesetz). Instead, the Senate recommends that the Faculties give appropriate consideration to the following guidelines as they devise their regulations for obtaining doctorates and habilitations.

2. DOCTORATE

2.1 STARTING SITUATION

The doctorate forms the basis for almost any academic career. The training given to doctoral students is therefore of strategic significance to universities with regard to their support for young scholars and researchers and to raising their university profile. With approximately 1000 doctorates completed per year, Heidelberg University is one of the leading institutions for training doctoral students in Germany, and beyond. It is therefore particularly interested in safeguarding and improving the high quality of doctoral courses, and strengthening the competitiveness of its young scholars.

The importance of doctorates in the academic world and for society will continue to grow. Applicants for full professorships no longer exclusively need to show that they have earned their habilitation – junior professors or young heads of research groups can now also apply – and so the doctorate is gaining in significance. EU Research Framework Programmes are devoting an increasing amount of funding to individual and institutional doctoral programmes. In addition, there is increasing international competition for the best young scholars, which is heightened by the integration process in the European educational area.

Doctoral training in Germany enjoys a good national and international reputation. In order to consolidate and expand this high reputation, however, the universities need to rethink and optimise their doctoral programmes, focusing on the needs and future chances of doctoral students. In modernising its doctoral training, Heidelberg University will give due regard to the differing cultures in the disciplines, and grant the faculties wide-ranging powers to set their own priorities.

In the last few years non-university research institutes have also endeavoured to promote young researchers, offering doctoral students the opportunity to do research at their facilities under mostly very good conditions. Heidelberg University welcomes this involvement, while being concerned to state that the doctoral procedure must remain in the hands of the universities. In order to offer all doctoral students the best possible conditions for their research projects, cooperation between the universities is to be intensified and expanded.

2.2 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Efforts to further improve doctoral training should pursue the following objectives:

- The time taken to complete the doctorate should be generally shortened. The average doctoral student in Germany graduates at the age of 33 (2003), which is older than in other comparable countries. Also the time taken, 4.5 years (2002/03), is relatively high. Although this problem was recognised in the mid-1990s, the age of graduates and the length of time taken to complete the doctorate have continued to rise. Our aim must therefore be to make it possible to obtain a doctorate within three years at most.
- Excellent general conditions and an efficient selection procedure must guarantee that the best young scholars can be recruited for doctoral studies. Another objective is to raise the share of qualified doctoral students from other countries.
- Supervision and advice for doctoral students shall be intensified.
- There must be a guarantee that qualification-related activities take absolute priority over other service duties, in order to enable candidates to concentrate on their own research projects.
- The doctoral programme shall involve more opportunity for interdisciplinary cooperation and acquiring specialist knowledge and key qualifications going beyond the field of research on the doctoral thesis.
- The international visibility of research findings of doctoral students shall be enhanced.

In order to achieve these objectives, Heidelberg University will

- offer structured doctoral programmes in as many academic fields as possible,
- create a Heidelberg Graduate Academy as the umbrella body for all doctoral programmes, in order to offer every doctoral student at the University the opportunity to acquire key qualifications (see section 2.5),
- create general conditions for funding those doctoral projects that do not fit into a structured doctoral programme (hereinafter called "individual doctoral programmes"),
- expand its cooperation with non-university institutions and well-known international partner universities,
- extend the possibilities for theses to be written in English, French and in justified exceptional cases in other languages, and promote the publication of outstanding research results by a publication phase immediately following the completion of the doctorate, lasting at most six months (see section 2.7).

2.3 STRUCTURED DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

In their statements, the Academic Council and the Conference of University Rectors have recommended the introduction of structured doctoral programmes everywhere. Heidelberg University is well on the way to achieving this and already has a number of structured programmes, including fifteen post-graduate research training groups (Graduiererkollegs), particularly in the natural and life sciences. Nevertheless, considerable efforts will be necessary in order to comply fully with this recommendation. In the humanities, cultural studies and social sciences a great deal still remains to be done.

Heidelberg University believes that individual doctoral programmes are still essential in many disciplines, alongside structured programmes. It is worrying that the support for doctoral programmes is concentrating increasingly on structured doctoral programmes. Heidelberg University is strongly in favour of keeping individual support as well. Nevertheless, all faculties will have to redouble their efforts to introduce structured doctoral programmes.

Heidelberg University documents the quality of its structured doctoral programmes through university-wide quality standards, while leaving the Graduate Schools and doctoral training groups (Promotionskollegs) a lot of freedom to plan their programmes to suit their subjects. The general principles for structured doctoral programmes at Heidelberg University are reflected in quality standards. They include the following:

- advertising of doctoral programmes internationally,
- selecting doctoral students on a competitive basis,
- organising a qualification phase as required (in the context of an integrated master's programme or through a special training module),
- concluding an agreement between the doctoral student and the advisor (group) stating the topic, duration, rights and duties of the student as well as a work plan extending generally over three years,
- supplementing the relations between the main supervisor and the doctoral student through elements of cooperative supervision and responsibility provided by a group of several professors,
- establishing a teaching programme of appropriate scope to accompany the doctoral course,
- fostering interdisciplinary exchange and the acquisition of additional qualifications in the context of the interdisciplinary doctoral centres (Doktorandenkollegs) of the Graduate Schools,
- assessing progress with the thesis at regular intervals,
- promoting the international dimension of the programme through guest lectures, visiting lecturers, attending conferences, periods at external partner institutions etc.

2.4 INDIVIDUAL DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

Individual doctoral programmes offer a high degree of flexibility, personal responsibility and freedom, so that this form of doctoral course must be regarded as still appropriate for certain research projects. Heidelberg University is strongly in favour of maintaining individual doctoral programmes, but it is not blind to the problems connected to this doctoral model.

In the interest of the doctoral students, some elements of the structured doctoral programmes should be adopted and conditions thereby created to enable a university-wide quality standard for individual doctorates as well. Besides a clear improvement in supervision they would be able to acquire additional skills. Binding standards shall include:

- concluding an agreement between the doctoral student and the supervisor stating the research topic, duration, and a normally three-year work plan,

- regularly discussing progress with the thesis project,
- involving the doctoral student in the interdisciplinary doctoral centres of the Graduate Schools to foster interdisciplinary exchange and the acquisition of additional qualifications.

Further, the University recommends that all concerned introduce the following elements for individual doctoral programmes:

- supplementing the relationship between the main supervisor and the doctoral student in the form of cooperative supervision and responsibility shown by other representatives of the discipline,
- Conducting workshops for the doctoral students of a subject / a subject group with the presentation of research projects,
- Involving doctoral students in current research projects,
- Improving the financial conditions through attracting scholarships and externally funded projects.

2.5 HEIDELBERG GRADUATE ACADEMY

In order to further raise the profile of its doctoral training, Heidelberg University is founding a "Heidelberg Graduate Academy". It will link up all doctoral programmes which will, as far as possible, be grouped together in Graduate Schools.

The Graduate Schools will form the framework for cooperation, exchange and common activities of differing graduate programmes, offer training and qualification opportunities of cross-disciplinary relevance, and shape the substantive and structural aspects of doctoral programmes in keeping with university-wide quality standards for structured programmes. In cooperation with the Graduate Schools, the Graduate Academy will set up an interdisciplinary doctoral centre, responsible for an interdisciplinary programme of educational events, skills training, and advice services.

With the founding of the Heidelberg Graduate Academy, the University will also demonstrate the breadth and quality of its post-graduate training to the outside world. The Academy will ensure the uniform, professional appearance of all doctoral programmes at the University, set the university-wide standards for structured and traditional programmes, promote exchange between the different areas of scholarship and coordinate the range of non-subject-specific training in appropriate skills. The management of the Graduate Schools and research schools will, as far as possible, receive administrative support from the Graduate Academy.

The interdisciplinary skills-training programmes of the Graduate Academy, including courses in university teaching, will be available to doctoral students and also to habilitation candidates, post-doctoral students and young heads of research group.

2.6 COOPERATION WITH NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS

One of the major strengths of Heidelberg University is its connections with the numerous non-university research centres in the Heidelberg area. Cooperation with these institutions is intense and successful. However; in the field of support for young scholars, available potential for institutional cooperation must be better used. The doctoral programmes set up jointly with non-university research institutes and renowned international partner universities will be integrated into the structure of the Heidelberg Graduate Academy. In all cooperation with non-university research institutes, care must be taken to ensure that the doctoral procedure remains the exclusive responsibility of the faculties of Heidelberg University and that the awarding of the right to supervise doctorates to young heads of research groups is linked to the criteria named below (see section 5).

Since 2002, the Faculty of Life Sciences and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) have successfully run a joint PhD Programme, which will be extended to the Medical Faculties from 2005. As of 2005, the Research School (Promotionskolleg) for Astronomy will be established in cooperation with the Heidelberg Max Planck Institutes for Nuclear Physics and for Astronomy. The University seeks to establish further cooperation with Max Planck Institutes and with the DKFZ (German Cancer Research Centre) and GSI (society for heavy ion research), which are both members of the Helmholtz Association. The next step will be to establish a research school for the life sciences, law, economics and sociology in conjunction with the Max Planck Institutes, and another research school in cooperation with the DKFZ (Helmholtz training group). In all the doctoral programmes set up jointly with non-university partner institutions, the connection with Heidelberg University must be clearly evident, both in the long and the short version of the name.

2.7 INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

International attention to research results achieved in Heidelberg is in the interest of the university, the institute, the supervisors and the young scholars. Heidelberg University will therefore create the legal preconditions for the submission of theses in English, French and, in justified exceptional cases, in other languages, as long as that is in keeping with the topic. However, an acceptable level of language must be maintained, to be certified, if necessary, by a native speaker of that language.

In order to enable the publication of research findings in reputable publishing houses and international journals, outstanding doctors are to be granted a publication phase of

at most six months, immediately after they have obtained their doctorate. A grant application for the necessary funds must be made to the University or the Medical Faculties.

3. HABILITATION

Heidelberg University welcomes the fact that the habilitation is, in principle, to be retained in Baden-Württemberg. Nevertheless, the newly created qualification pathway of junior professor is proving very competitive. The habilitation must be generally expanded in such a way as to retain its own profile over against the junior professorship and heading a research group, and so that it can be regarded as an equivalent qualification pathway.

The expansion of the habilitation should chiefly pursue the following goals:

- shortening the habilitation phase, and
- improving preparation for the responsibilities of university teaching.

It is also important to

- safeguard and improve the resources of habilitation candidates, and
- spare them extraneous burdens.

3.1 SHORTENING THE HABILITATION PHASE

One of the main points of criticism regarding the habilitation is the high average age (40.3 in 2003) at which successful candidates are granted the permission to teach (*venia legendi*) a particular subject. That is why both the doctoral and the habilitation phase must be considerably shortened (cf. section 2). In the latter case it is also necessary to guarantee its competitiveness compared to other qualification pathways. The habilitation phase should generally not take longer than four years (compared to the junior professorship, which is planned to last six years). An exception would be if the candidate opted for a specific route that could be responsibly accepted, and this would have to be explained to the Rector in a personal talk. In order to manage within the four-year period, a Memorandum should be drafted on the habilitation project and the habilitation phase should be more tightly structured. At the same time, the candidates should be given better support and evaluation, and relieved of responsibilities extraneous to their course.

3.1.1 MEMORANDUM

The general conditions of the habilitation project shall be outlined in a Memorandum between the habilitand, mentor group or mentor (see 3.1.3) and the faculty. The Memorandum shall contain, in particular,

- the (working) topic of the habilitation paper or the area of a cumulative habilitation,
- the envisaged *venia legendi*,
- the foreign language selected for the habilitation paper, as appropriate,
- the composition of the mentor group,
- the planned timeframe,
- the probable culminating phase,
- the predicted point in time for the interim evaluation,
- the number of individual classes, the expected participation in undergraduate examinations and other service duties, and
- the resources needed for the habilitation project and the qualification, including the basic equipment needed to attract external funding (possibly also funds for programmes to acquire university teaching skills).

The responsibilities and activities of the habilitand must serve the purpose of acquiring the qualifications needed for a university professor. That does not just mean research findings, but also includes experience in teaching and committee work ("academic self-government") along with education and training programmes (see section 3.2). Academic achievement from elsewhere (e.g. postdoc periods abroad) may be considered in the Memorandum and lead to a shortening of the habilitation phase.

The mentor or mentor group are responsible for the adherence to the Memorandum, along with the dean. The Rector must be informed of the state of the evaluations at two-yearly intervals. Habilitationsschriften may be written in English, French and, in justified exceptional cases, in other languages, if this is appropriate to the topic. However, an acceptable level of language must be guaranteed, to be certified, if necessary, by a native speaker of that language.

3.1.2 TIMING

The habilitation phase begins with the presenting of the Memorandum to the Faculty. The candidate is thereby formally accepted. After about two years the Faculty shall conduct an interim evaluation. The whole habilitation procedure should be completed at the latest four years after the submission of the Memorandum, with no more than six months elapsing between the opening of the assessment procedure and the granting of the *venia legendi*. Breaking this deadline must be justified in individual cases before the responsible bodies in the Faculty and reported to the Rector at the same time.

3.1.3 ACCOMPANIMENT

In order to allow candidates to focus on acquiring the qualification, better accompanying measures are to be put in place. The purpose of the accompaniment is to help them to be able to plan their project accurately and foster their academic self-reliance and freedom.

Habilitation candidates should be able to choose whether the Faculty transfers the responsible accompaniment to an individual professor (mentor) or to a mentor group with a chairperson. When the candidature has been accepted, their mentor or mentor-group shall be formally installed by the Faculty. The mentor group may include members from other universities.

The Faculty is generally responsible for handling the procedural side of the habilitation (interim evaluation, initiation of assessment procedure, obtaining opinions from referees), and the mentor or mentor group is responsible for providing specialist advice and methodological support, and for assessing the candidate. The granting of the *venia legendi* will still be the decision of the responsible habilitation conference.

3.1.4 EVALUATION

Both the interim evaluation and the final reference procedure will reflect the culture of the individual subjects and faculties. That is why the procedural details should be left to the faculties. However, the respective habilitation regulations must contain a binding procedure. In their habilitation regulations the faculties shall set out the way in which the interim evaluation is to be conducted (e.g. on the basis of a presentation before the habilitation conference or a written report to the mentor or mentor group).

The results of the evaluation must be communicated to the candidate with explanatory comments. External referees are to be involved at least at the second evaluation of a junior professor, and so this is also advisable for the final evaluation of a habilitation. The faculties are therefore recommended to include obligatory external referees in their habilitation regulations.

3.2 IMPROVEMENT OF PREPARATION FOR THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING

The way in which candidates have hitherto given evidence of teaching and methodological aptitude is clearly in need of improvement. In appointment procedures for a chair this may prove to put habilitands at a significant disadvantage, as compared to the situation of junior professors, who will have had six years of teaching experience. On the other hand, there is also a danger of excess in using habilitands for teaching

duties and other services, which may mean that the time available for research is limited and that the habilitation phase is consequently prolonged.

3.2.1 TEACHING COMPONENT IN THE MEMORANDUM

In order to guarantee continual training in university teaching, the Memorandum shall contain a section on the teaching load to be covered. It shall only set out the general type (lecture, seminar, practical etc.) and scope of the classes. The teaching mentioned in the Memorandum must allow candidates to conduct demanding coursework on their own responsibility and contain the usual form of teaching (including lectures). At the same time, however, limits should be set on the amount of teaching expected, and the times without teaching obligations should be established (section 3.4). These arrangements shall apply in principle to external habilitands as well. Habilitands shall be encouraged to acquire university teaching skills, e.g. through the Heidelberg Graduate Academy (section 2.5).

3.2.2 ACCOMPANIMENT AND ADVICE

The classes of the habilitand shall be attended by the mentor or mentor group, and at intervals by an advisor external to the Faculty. In addition, selected classes are to be evaluated by the students present. The external advisors shall be selected in consultation between the habilitand and the mentor group. The University shall draw up a list of suitable persons for the external accompaniment.

3.2.3 PRELIMINARY SUPERVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE AND MASTER'S THESES

The competent supervision of theses is an important part of teaching and should thus be practised in the habilitation phase. Since it is not legally possible for habilitands to bear ultimate responsibility for (co)supervising theses they should at least be involved in the early stages of advice (in bachelor's and master's degrees, Diplom, Magister and teacher training courses). They should also be able to advise on doctoral theses including on working groups set up at their own proposal. On the other hand, broadly relieving habilitands from supervisory duties puts them a great advantage as compared to the junior professorships. The effort needed to provide preliminary supervision of theses must not slow down the habilitation.

3.3 IMPROVEMENT OF RESOURCES

Habilitands must be equipped with the resources required for their academic projects and training programme (e.g. rooms, technical equipment, costs for teaching method courses, basic equipment for attracting external funding, staff assistance et al). The allocation of funds must be organised by the mentor or mentor group and must be included in the Memorandum. In order to strengthen the personal responsibility of the

habilitands, they should be allocated the necessary finance directly by their department. The funds required are to be raised by the department concerned. Travel costs of habilitands should also be paid from the departmental budget, as far as possible.

The faculties and departments will have to raise even more resources to finance young scholars in future. So that habilitations do not become a burden on the departments, they should be increasingly included in budget negotiations in future to the detriment of externally funded projects without support for young academics. In efforts to raise external funds, habilitands should be taken into account and encouraged to take independent initiatives.

3.4 RELIEVING THE BURDEN ON HABILITANDS

The high average age of granting the *venia legendi* is not least due to the over-burdening of candidates with different teaching duties along with committee work and other duties. The prospect of being able to conclude the habilitation procedure after four years will only be realistic if the faculties are really determined to take practical steps to lighten the load on candidates.

Hence teaching obligations should be limited to the amount required for teacher training (see section 3.2.1, and section 3.2.3). In addition, habilitands should be granted a fixed quota of at least ten months after the interim evaluation in which they can concentrate on their Habilitationsschrift. This culminating phase should, if possible, only include one lecturing semester and otherwise be taken in the lecture-free period. During this period the habilitands should be freed of all teaching obligations and committee work. The departments must arrange for appropriate substitute teachers. The necessary funding must come from the departmental budget, but on the argument in financial negotiations that it is an investment in young academics.

4. JUNIOR PROFESSORSHIP

The newly created career pathway of junior professor offers young academics the opportunity to acquire the qualifications for a full professorial appointment through autonomous work on their own responsibility. Heidelberg University would like to make use of the freedom in devising the junior professorship that the legislator has allowed the universities, so that this pathway will also prove itself in international competitive.

In order to guarantee the competitiveness of the junior professorship it is necessary to

- guarantee the institutional autonomy of junior professors,
- make the evaluation procedure and performance criteria transparent,
- open up long-term career prospects for junior professors,

- limit teaching duties and committee work, and to
- allocate the necessary financial and staff resources.

The details of the junior professorship shall be laid down in a qualification plan. This is an agreement between the junior professor, the faculty (in agreement with the unit that provides the funding) and the University. The qualification plan sets out what is expected of the parties concerned and the necessary general conditions.

4.1 GUARANTEEING AUTONOMY

The high degree of autonomy is a key quality feature of junior professorships. The job profile should therefore correspond to that of a normal professorship and not that of the previous assistant professor positions. Junior professorships should not be designed as part of existing hierarchical structures. In order to be able to establish their own research profile, junior professorships should also be used in fields lending themselves to independent research and teaching. The qualification plan must contain an appropriate job description guaranteeing the competitiveness of the junior professor. Junior professorships must not be tied into an existing professorship. If they are integrated into a research project they must have a recognisable role as a partner with equal rights.

The career pathway of a junior professorship and an accompanied habilitation are mutually exclusive.

4.2 PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

In order to be able to work in a focused and efficient way, junior professors must be aware, from the start, of the procedure and criteria by which they are to be evaluated. The evaluation procedure shall be established in a statute applicable to the whole university. In the interest of junior professors, external opinions should be obtained in every case of evaluation. The criteria for the interim and final evaluation (generally after three or six years) shall be laid down in the qualification plan. This will include, on the one hand, what is expected of the junior professor in research, teaching, committee work and in-service training. On the other hand, the qualification plan shall contain the general conditions necessary to fulfil these expectations, which the faculties (including the unit providing the budgetary funds) and the university are obliged to provide.

4.3 LONG-TERM CAREER PROSPECTS

The University must hold out long-term career prospects to excellent young academics in order to be able to attract them to take up a junior professorship. Therefore the qualification plan should also stipulate the circumstances under which the assumption of a tenure-track professorship is possible. The granting of a tenure-track option shall be stipulated in the qualification plan. If his/her interim evaluation shows a junior professor to be particularly good, a tenure-track option can also be subsequently included in the qualification plan. Heidelberg University wishes to equip some of the junior professorships with a tenure-track option. To that end, at least five percent of new professorships are in future to be advertised as junior professorships with a tenure-track option. In addition, the Heisenberg Programme of the German Research Foundation (DFG) is to be used for fast-track appointments to full professorships.

4.4 RESPONSIBILITIES IN TEACHING AND COMMITTEE WORK

Junior professors must have enough time to develop their own research profile and to advance their scholarly and professional qualifications. That is why their responsibilities in teaching and committee work (“academic self-government”) need to be limited. Junior professors at Heidelberg University will be allowed to take off a semester for research purposes as do full professors - however, at the earliest one year after the interim evaluation. The teaching commitments of junior professors shall, on average, constitute four contact hours per week during the semester, in addition to an appropriate participation in examinations. They shall not be more involved in committee work than the other professors at their department. Other services may only be required of them to the extent usual for the other professors at the department. The qualification plan must contain detailed information in this regard.

4.5 FINANCIAL, PERSONNEL AND TECHNICAL CONDITIONS

Junior professors must be adequately equipped to be able to perform their tasks effectively. The financial and staffing conditions shall therefore be established in the qualification plan and regarded as a binding promise. Providing junior professorships with assistants and student staff shall be settled in the negotiations on the qualification plan. Junior professors shall be able to use laboratories and secretarial assistance to an appropriate degree, and also to be personally responsible for a share in the budgetary funds of the department.

5. JUNIOR RESEARCH GROUP HEADS

In the natural sciences, the leadership of a junior research group has developed into a largely independent career pathway, particularly in connection with the support programmes of non-university institution (DFG, MPG, Helmholtz Association, Volkswagen Foundation et al.). This is intended to allow outstanding young scientists the opportunity to develop self-reliance and personal responsibility at an early age. The non-university institutions offer young scientists outstanding conditions for defining their own research profile.

One problem regarding this career pathway has been that it was not legally possible to provide independent supervision of diplom or doctoral theses. One solution here is, first of all, to establish a junior professorship established in cooperation between the non-university institution and the University, and to make the appointment jointly.

Apart from a junior professorship, the right to supervise and examine doctoral students can only be given to young scientists once the responsible faculty authorities have established that the position concerned is very like the profile of a junior professorship. Here the following criteria are regarded as indispensable:

1. The position of the junior research group head must be advertised and filled by analogy with the legal regulations for junior professorships.
2. The University or the cooperating faculty must be appropriately represented in the selection commission, on a parity basis in terms of numbers and rights.
3. Junior research group heads must share in the teaching at the cooperating faculty as befits a junior professorship. Here participation in a Research Training Group may be counted as part of a teaching load. They shall also participate appropriately in examinations and administrative duties.

These criteria shall primarily serve the interests of graduates and doctoral students. They shall receive broad-based training from an advisor representing their subject in research, teaching and academic self-government.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Equality of opportunity has still not been achieved for women at the university and in research. This is in clear contrast to the constitutional requirement that women and men be treated equally. Heidelberg University is strongly committed to the active promotion of women and has documented this, in particular, in its Plan for the Promotion of Women. The objectives and interventions it contains also cover a wide range of activities in the field of young researchers, and are beginning to bear fruit.

Hitherto Heidelberg University has not made full use of the creative potential of women in the field of young scholars. True, the share of women among graduates has risen to 52 percent, and among doctoral students to 45 percent, thereby clearly exceeding the figures at the state and federal level. However, women are still sorely under-represented among habilitations and professorships. The share of woman professors at Heidelberg University is over the state average but under the federal average. Regarding the share of women completing their habilitation the University is below both the state and the federal average.

The most important causes of the under-representation of women at the university and in research are the many problems involved in trying to combine a family and an academic career. Heidelberg University will therefore make it a higher priority to improve the supply of childcare offerings suited to university members and to establish a programme to further dual-career couples. To improve the provision of childcare at the university, it intends to establish a centre for childcare with an appropriate number of crèches, day-care centres and after-school child-minding facilities. The first step, the establishing of a crèche in the Neuenheimer Feld campus, is quite advanced and about to be realised.

With the programme "Partners of Excellence" that is to be established in the context of the "Top Universities" contest, Heidelberg University would like to set up a service, hitherto unique in Germany, to look for positions for the spouses or companions of scholars who have received academic appointments. This scheme is intended to cope with the increasing problem of calls being declined due to a lack of suitable employment for the scholar's partner. The programme seeks to offer a job, financed from a central pool for a maximum of three years, to spouses or partners who themselves have an excellent academic profile. This will enable them to apply for a position themselves and set up their own research group.

7. FINAL COMMENTS

The continuing improvement of the general conditions for young researchers is one of the prime objectives of Heidelberg University. The Senate Commission on "The situation of young researchers at Heidelberg University" would like to continue its work and, in particular, work on ways of improving the long-term career prospects of young academics, e.g. through expanding the positions below the W3 professorship and making them more flexible.

In the context of the Annual Report of the Rectorate, the Rector will report regularly on the implementation of these guidelines, on the basis of data from the Graduate Academy. The Senate Commission on "The situation of young researchers at Heidelberg University" will evaluate the effects of the recommendations in due course

(approximately five years after their adoption) and submit proposals for further elaboration to the Senate.

Adopted by the Senate of Heidelberg University on 19 July 2005

Heidelberg, 20 September 2005

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Peter Hommelhoff
Rector