



Online Session "Promotion im Dialog"

Meet the FU Doctoral Council

11.02.2026 | Anita & Stephi



What exactly is a Doctoral Council?

The Doctoral Council represents **all doctoral researchers at the university**. It was introduced in the State of Berlin with the new Berlin Higher Education Act (Hochschulgesetz). At Freie Universität Berlin, it consists of two elected members per department, i.e. a total of 22 members. The current council consists of **seven** people as some departments did not see any nominations.

*Representing all PhDs
Doctoral Council has 22 seats
Currently 7 active members*

What rights and influence does the Doctoral Council have?

Representatives of doctoral researchers can **speak and propose motions** in the Academic Senate and Department Councils. They can also take part in meetings and events organized within the entire academic environment of Berlin. They hold four voting seats on the DRS Permanent Commission. The Council **must be consulted on changes to doctoral regulations** and can issue recommendations to all university bodies.

*Voice & participation
Mandatory consultations
Right to issue recommendations*

What are the tasks of the doctoral representatives?

The Doctoral Council **represents the interests** of doctoral researchers towards the university leadership and other bodies. We focus on, among others, improving supervision standards, creating a better support system for international doctoral researchers, and building a stronger student community to advocate for our common needs.

*Better supervision
Support for International PhDs
Stronger community*



MEET THE COUNCIL

Spokesperson:
Anita Kowalczyk

Deputy:
Johanna Fritzi Momm

**Department of Education and
Psychology**

Sophie Christine Eicher
Susan Bochert (Dep.)

Department of Law

Frederik Jäger
Maren Lena Vogel

**Department of Biology, Chemistry,
Pharmacy**

Anita Kowalczyk
Stephanie Himpich
Sarah Lewandowski (Dep.)

**Department for the School of
Business and Economics**

Oscar Andres Arias Rojas

**Department of History and Cultural
Studies**

Johanna Fritzi Momm

Department of Earth Science

Department of Physics

School of Veterinary Medicine

**Department of Mathematics and
Computer Science**

**Department of Philosophy and
Humanities**

**Department of Political and Social
Sciences**



HOW ARE WE ELECTED & HOW YOU CAN JOIN

1. The election is a **majority vote** within the meaning of the Electoral Regulations of Freie Universität Berlin (FU-WahlO).
2. The doctoral candidates of each department elect **two members** and **two deputies** to the Doctoral Council.
3. Council members are appointed for **2 years**.
4. **All** doctoral candidates at FU are entitled to vote.
5. The nominations are submitted to the respective **departmental election board**.



WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO

Academic Senate

Development Planning Commission (EPK)

Executive Committee, Selection Committee
for the IBEF (Interpretative Edu. Research)

Department Board Meetings

Complaints Management Working Groups

DRS Supervisor Award Commission

On-demand meetings with the President &
Vice-Presidents

REPRESENTATION

FU Welcome Day

Berlin Doctoral Councils' Symposia

Doctoral Get-Togethers

Networking Meetings for new Doctoral
Candidates

BUA-based events

TBA Pulse Panel Discussions

COMMUNITY



WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO

Academic Senate and Department Councils

Direct voice and influence
on the new doctoral
regulations

Early insight

High-level networking

Advocacy

DRS meetings

Support for our day-to-day
work and initiatives

Reach-out

Complaints Management in Cases of Discrimination

Development of rules and
procedures

Development Planning Commision (EPK)

Right to speak and submit
motions with regard to the
current structural plan
adjustments

[illegible]

Building a Berlin-wide Doctoral
Student community
Organizational structure
between universities
Joint statements
Working group projects



GET INVOLVED

You can develop your skills and expertise in:

- **policy making**, by negotiating directly on doctoral regulations,
- **public advocacy**, by campaign on issues like budget cuts, research integrity, improving working conditions for doctoral researchers, but also anything else that you find important,
- **community building** and networking,
- **academic development**,
- **inter-university collaboration** by representing university's doctoral researchers in city-wide (or national?) symposia and councils,
- internal **council strategizing**, direction, communication, etc.



HOUSEHOLD BUDGET CUTS: WHAT WE KNOW

1. Budget cuts were imposed by the Berlin Senate and aimed at city's higher education and research sector, **affecting all major universities**.
2. The FU funding has been cut by approx. **37 million euros**. This is part of wider cuts of 250 million euros planned for Berlin's research and tertiary education sector.
3. Areas for reductions include **personnel/recruitment costs**, material and central management funds, and research (infrastructure, equipment).
4. Plans **2027 remain unclear**, and the use of reserves for 2025 and 2026 means many planned construction projects must be revised.
5. We want to make sure **Doctoral Students are informed** and that their concerns are heard.

Read more <https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/haushaltskuerzungen-berliner-senat/index.html>



HOUSEHOLD BUDGET CUTS SURVEY

You will find there questions like...

1. How aware are you about the potential impact of these cuts on your department?
2. How has information about the budget situation been communicated within your department/institute?
3. If you anticipate an impact, how do you expect it to demonstrate?

PhD student survey



How are PhD students in Berlin
affected by the budget cuts?





HOUSEHOLD BUDGET CUTS SURVEY

- The survey is open **until February 28th!**
- Results will be presented & discussed:
 - directly with the FU President and Vice President,
 - during the Academic Senate session in April,
 - via departmental channels.

PhD student survey



How are PhD students in Berlin
affected by the budget cuts?





COMING SOON....

- PhD **Get-Together** and networking events,
- Pulse **surveys**,
- **Panel discussion** organized together with DRS - discussion on separation of supervision and evaluation,
- **International PhDs'** Focus Group,
- Expanding our **reach** - LinkedIn & Newsletter.



HOW WE COMMUNICATE & HOW YOU CAN BE HEARD

Website and the contact form:

<https://www.fu-berlin.de/sites/promovierendenvertretung/index.html>

Doctoral representation of the Free University of Berlin



Seat of the doctoral representation at the DRS
Image source: David Ausserhofer (Editor: DRS)

The doctoral representation represents all doctoral students at the Free University of Berlin, regardless of individual or structured doctorate. [more...](#)

Kontaktformular

Wir freuen uns über Fragen, Anmerkungen und Anregungen. Wir sind zu erreichen durch dieses Kontaktformular oder unter:

promovierendenvertretung@fu-berlin.de

Die einzelnen Mitglieder der Promovierendenvertretung können auch persönlich kontaktiert werden. [mehr...](#)

Das Kontaktformular ist anonym. Falls Sie eine persönliche Kontaktaufnahme unsererseits wünschen, hinterlassen Sie bitte ihre E-Mailadresse im Formular.

Pflichtfelder sind mit einem Sternchen gekennzeichnet.

Ihre Nachricht *

Email:

promovierendenvertretung@fu-berlin.de



@DOCCOUNCIL_FU

PhD student survey



How are PhD students in Berlin affected by the budget cuts?

