Universität Zürich[UZH]

Graduate Campus

University of Zurich
Graduate Campus
Rämistrasse 59
8001 Zürich
contact@grc.uzh.ch
www.grc.uzh.ch

Data protection concept for the processing of data in the context of the survey on quality assurance of doctoral supervision at UZH

This document is provided for transparency towards survey participants and internal stakeholders and describes the processing of data in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations of the Canton of Zurich and UZH.

The promotion of early career researchers is one of the strategic principles of UZH. According to § 4 of the University Act («UniG» – currently only available in German), UZH is required to ensure quality in research and teaching. As part of this commitment, the Graduate Campus, on behalf of the Executive Board of the University, is conducting the pilot project "Monitoring Supervision Quality and Conditions of Doctoral Studies" in order to create a data basis for a comprehensive quality management cycle in doctoral supervision. To this end, the Graduate Campus is authorized to collect, analyze, and provide study-related data on various doctoral programs for internal use at UZH.

This document describes which data the Graduate Campus collects, processes, and discloses for monitoring the quality of supervision and the conditions of doctoral studies in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations, as well as the measures taken to ensure the security and protection of these data.

1. Subject and purpose of the data collection for the monitoring of the quality of supervision and the general conditions of doctoral studies

The Graduate Campus collects general and personal data in order to ensure and continuously improve the quality of research and teaching at the doctoral level. This includes survey data from doctoral candidates who provide feedback on the quality of supervision and on the conditions of their doctoral studies at UZH. More details about the survey are given in section 2.

Participation in the survey is optional. Respondents are not required to answer all questions and may withdraw from the survey at any time.

The data collected will only be used for internal quality processes within the faculties or the university. The primary users of the data are the deans. In addition, associate deans and directors of graduate schools may be informed of the results as appropriate.

2. Data collection

The following general and personal survey data will be collected in order to monitor the quality of supervision and the general conditions of the doctoral studies at UZH.

The *personal survey data* include:

- Data on the doctoral candidates participating in the survey (faculty, graduate school, doctoral program, year of doctoral studies, employment at UZH, place of last academic degree, gender)
- Data on the supervisors (name and institute affiliation) of the doctoral candidates participating in the survey
- Data on supervision and general conditions of doctoral studies (satisfaction with supervision, doctoral agreement and expectation management, exchange and feedback, free research time and social climate).

The non-personal survey data relate to the social environment at UZH in general and include the following topics

- Diversity and equal opportunities, discrimination, sexual harassment, academic integrity and Open Science.

The data is collected using the survey tool LimeSurvey, which is operated within the UZH infrastructure. For the purpose of sending invitations and targeted reminder messages, the LimeSurvey tool uses a technical access token. This token is used exclusively to manage participation and reminder status and is not linked to the survey responses. All responses are stored anonymously.

The personal data of the supervisors is processed in encrypted form after collection, meaning that personal identifiers are replaced by technical codes that cannot be directly linked to an identifiable individual.

Access to encrypted data at the level of individual supervisors is only made possible once the criteria defined in Section 3 are met.

The responses of doctoral candidates remain anonymous at all times, ensuring that no conclusions can be drawn about individual persons.

3. Data Analysis

As part of the monitoring process, the encrypted data mentioned in section 2 will be analyzed by the Graduate Campus. The analysis takes place at different levels of aggregation (faculties, graduate schools, doctoral programs and supervisors) and supports internal quality processes within the faculties and the university.

Data aggregation at the individual level is only performed when the following criteria are met

- A minimum threshold of 10 responses per supervisor is reached, or
- A time moratorium of 5 years has elapsed.

Aggregated results are provided to the user group in the form of reports.

Deans will receive aggregated data at multiple levels (faculty, graduate school, doctoral program and supervisor). If the criteria in section 2 are met, personal data may be discussed in leadership meetings with the respective supervisors.

Vice deans and heads of graduate schools will only be provided with aggregated results at faculty and graduate school levels. The deans may also inform them of personal content in individual cases if necessary.

4. Data storage

The data collected and analyzed in the context of monitoring the quality of supervision and the conditions of doctoral studies are stored in encrypted form on an UZH server. Access is restricted to persons who need it for their tasks and responsibilities. Access rights are documented in a separate authorization concept and are regularly reviewed and updated. Authorized persons are bound to secrecy in accordance with the applicable professional secrecy laws.

5. Disclosure of data within the UZH and to third parties

The data collected and analyzed in the context of monitoring the quality of supervision and the conditions of doctoral studies are disclosed only on a need-to-know basis.

The intended user groups, i.e. deans, vice-deans and heads of graduate schools, do not have direct access to the collected data. They will receive results in aggregate form as described in Section 3.

No transfer of personal data to other UZH departments or external third parties is intended. Any transfer of analyzed non-personal data to third parties within or outside the UZH will only take place in aggregated and fully anonymized form, ensuring that no individuals can be identified.

If external service providers are involved in data processing, they are obliged to comply with data protection regulations by means of legal, technical and organizational measures.

6. Technical and organizational measures

The Graduate Campus uses technical and organizational security measures to ensure that data collected and analyzed in the context of monitoring the quality of supervision and the conditions of doctoral studies remain confidential and are protected against accidental or unlawful access, modification, disclosure, loss, or destruction.

7. Data Retention

All data and information collected and analyzed in the context of monitoring the quality of supervision and the conditions of doctoral studies are stored on internal, protected UZH servers. The data will be kept for a maximum of 10 years after the intended use has been completed.

8. Validity

The Graduate Campus reserves the right to amend this data protection concept with future effect if the implementation of new quality instruments, technologies or changes in legal requirements make such adjustments necessary.

The threshold criteria for data aggregation at the individual level, as specified in section 2, cannot be lowered.

9. Right of access

Further information on the monitoring of the quality of supervision and the conditions of doctoral studies, as well as on data protection, can be obtained from the Graduate Campus.

Doctoral candidates participating in the surveys have the right to request access to their personal data relating to the invitation and participation status, and to request its correction, deletion or restriction where applicable.

Survey responses themselves are stored anonymously and cannot be linked back to individuals. For this reason, individual survey responses cannot be modified or deleted after submission.

Please contact the Graduate Campus at the following address:

University of Zurich
Graduate Campus
Rämistrasse 59
CH-8001 Zürich
contact@grc.uzh.ch

Version 2.0 / 13.10.2025