



Friedrich Schiller University of Jena

Ph.D. Program in Developmental Psychology



Applying as a Doctoral Student

Excellent students who have obtained a Diploma/M.Sc. degree or equivalent are invited to conduct their doctoral studies at the Department of Developmental Psychology (DDP)/Center for Applied Developmental Science (CADS). Applications are always welcome.

Promoting Competencies

We aim to promote expert as well as general competencies in our doctoral students. This includes skills that are relevant for excellent research, such as expert knowledge in the field, an understanding of the international and interdisciplinary research context, ethical responsibility, and also personal skills. These include self-regulation and flexibility, communication skills and social competencies as well as career-related competencies. We lay particular emphasis on encouraging independence and responsibility in our doctoral students. At the beginning, doctoral students take part in a structured study program in advanced developmental science, both basic and applied. This includes – in addition to all activities described in more detail below – a scientific writing course, at least one method workshop, two lectures in developmental psychology, and one seminar co-taught with CADS faculty. Doctoral students further strengthen their competencies through project management and advising research assistants, tutors, and sometimes Diploma/M.Sc. theses.

The Dissertation Proposal

Dissertation theses conducted at the DDP/CADS aim to make a significant contribution to our understanding of human development across the life span. Doctoral students work on a dissertation topic related to a particular research project, or they develop their own dissertation project. As a first step in the process, doctoral students work on a dissertation proposal, which undergoes several revisions based on feedback from the advisors.

Financial Support

Students who write their dissertation proposal may be financially supported by the DDP/CADS for about three months. The dissertation itself can be financed through either a scholarship or through research assistant positions. We encourage doctoral students to apply for their own funding but support them regarding material expenses and participation in advanced training seminars and conferences.

Advice and Support

Doctoral students are advised by experienced senior scientists (most probably head of the department and principal investigator of the research project) who work closely together with the doctoral student and provide feedback, support, and advice during the whole dissertation process. Furthermore, doctoral students receive advice by experts in methods and statistics. Our doctoral students present regularly, typically once a semester, on the progress of their dissertation at our weekly research colloquium. All doctoral students have a fully equipped work space, can use literature and data on file at the DDP/CADS, and receive technical assistance.

International and Interdisciplinary Exchange

We encourage and support interdisciplinary and international cooperation of our doctoral students. We make this possible through stays of visiting scholars in Jena or through exchange stays of Jena doctoral students abroad. Many of our doctoral students work in projects that are part of large interdisciplinary and international research consortia. Moreover, doctoral students take part in at least one interdisciplinary workshop offered by the CADS or the Jena Graduate School "Human Behaviour in Social and Economic Change" (GSBC). Moreover, they join the Annual Forum of the GSBC.

Presentations and Publications

Doctoral students present their work to scientific audiences at large international congresses and smaller international conferences hosted by the DDP/CADS in Jena. Furthermore, as part of the study program, they take part in one summer school or relevant pre-conference. Our doctoral students work on first-author publications during their studies, closely supported by their advisors.

Graduation and Career Prospects

Before graduation, doctoral students receive particularly dense support from their advisors. This includes planning the dissertation committee and exam topics as well as support with exam preparations. After graduation they can count on continued support and counseling regarding their future career course, which includes recommendations to future employers, or (if appropriate) offering of a postdoctoral position.

CADS and the Jena Graduate School "Human Behaviour in Social and Economic Change" (GSBC)

Ph.D. students at the CADS are part of the Jena Graduate School "Human Behaviour in Social and Economic Change" (GSBC). The doctoral study program at the CADS is equivalent to 51 ECTS. Doctoral students are welcome to participate in other courses and events offered by the GSBC. Each year in September, students provide a report on their activities during the last academic year.

Our Current Ph.D. Students



Nicolas A. Arnaud. Succession in family businesses. Funded by Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology.



Anja Blumenthal. Facilitating the School-to-Work Transition: Design and evaluation of a skills promoting intervention program. Funded by DFG.



Anett Brambosch. Implementation and evaluation of the Life Skills Program IPSY and the community-based project Netecom- New Learning Cultures in Thuringian Communities. Funded by the ministry of culture of the Federal State of Thuringia.



Astrid Körner. The role of resource losses and gains in times of social change: Associations between intraindividual changes in personal and social resources, potential precursors, and psychosocial functioning. Funded by the Jena Graduate School "Human Behavior in Social and Economic Change".



Andrea Michel. Psychological adaptation of adolescent immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Germany and Israel. Funded by the Jena Graduate School "Human Behavior in Social and Economic Change".



Martin Obschonka. Success and flop of innovative entrepreneurs, career pathways and personality characteristics of innovative entrepreneurs in Thuringia. Funded by Thuringian Ministry of Education.



Michael Spaeth. Childhood risk factors and alcohol use trajectories during adolescence, re-analysis of IPSY. Funded by DFG.



Victoria Wenzel. Mediation processes in the life skills program IPSY for the prevention of substance misuse. Funded by research group on promotion of positive development and prevention of problem behaviors.

