Information for potential doctoral candidates

A doctoral thesis is a fantastic intellectual adventure. I am happy to serve as advisor ("Doktorelter") for select doctoral candidates.

At the same time, a doctoral thesis is a massive investment of time—primarily for the doctoral candidate, but also, to a much more limited degree, for the academic advisor. This is why we need to make sure first that a potential candidate and a potential advisor are a good fit. Here is some information that helps both sides—me and you—to see if we could be a good fit. I share information on what I am looking for and what I can offer.

What I am looking for

You need a master-level education (*Staatsexamen*, etc. will also work) with good grades overall and excellent grades in the courses directly related to the work you want to do/the subject you have chosen. Having experience in the field you want to study is an advantage.

You need a good, timely, relevant research idea. "I would like to do something on digital media" is not enough. On the other hand, especially during the first steps, a fully-fledged research proposal is not necessary, either. This preliminary research idea should already be based on your reading of the relevant scholarly literature. You do not need to be an expert in that field yet. You do need to demonstrate awareness of existing research, though.

The first step

In the first step, you need to draw my interest with your preliminary research idea. Write a short email and attach a PDF in which you sketch your research idea (1-2 pages, including references). You can include a CV and a scan of relevant academic degrees.

How you can improve your chances:

- Write an email that does not sound like you copied and pasted a template
- Do not attach a research idea obviously created using generative AI
- Demonstrate that you actually know something about my work, beyond the "research interest" keywords on my website
    - Were you a student in one of my classes? Did we meet at a conference or a teacher education event? Did somebody who knows my work well tell you specifically to talk to me? Mention this in your email!
    - Do you want to extend, critique, or develop further any of the work I have done in the past? Did you notice gaps in my work that you would like to fill? Do you think there is a theory that could be used to tackle topics I am

interested in from a new, fresh perspective? Are there methods that I have used in the past that you are interested in using yourself? Or methods that could have been applied to topics I am interested in, but that weren't so far? Tell me!

- Demonstrate that you have awareness of the literature in the field you want to tackle. You can do this by referencing relevant work in a first research sketch. Make sure that you have actually read any work that you are referencing. In Germany, any university library near your hometown will gladly offer you a guest library card, usually free of charge. ResearchGate can also be an option to get relevant literature.

The second step

If your research sketch caught my interest, I may ask you to send me a more extensive exposé. You can take as much time as you need to write that exposé. You are not expected to have something at the ready within a week's time.

The third step

If I think your exposé shows potential, I will invite you to an office hour, in person if feasible, or via Zoom if not feasible. We will discuss your research idea, what you would need from an academic advisor, and what I and the BUW can offer you. We will also talk about your motivations for doctorate-level work.

The fourth step

If we both feel that we'd be a good fit for the doctorate process, we will now start with the required paperwork. That includes a supervisory agreeement (*Betreuungsvereinbarung*) and, if applicable, support applying for scholarships or grants.

At this point, you would formally be accepted as a doctoral candidate. I am happy to provide structured support after that point, including regular meetings, access to a research colloquium hosted by the TEFL department, access to my networks, and general mentoring. I will gladly support you in applying for grants and scholarships if applicable, support you when selecting and applying for conferences to attend, help you with your first publications, etc.

The alternative route

All this above is relevant if you are looking for an academic advisor only (*externe Doktorarbeit*). Are you looking for a paid position (*Wissenschaftliche*r Mitarbeiter*in*)

instead? Then look directly into the job listings (https://stellenausschreibungen.uni-wuppertal.de) and, if there is an opening that would be a good fit, apply through this platform. You can disregard anything written here—if you are accepted to a pre-doc position in my work group, I am also willing to serve as your academic advisor.