To be or not to be a doctoral candidate
Self-assessment

1. Why do I want to do a doctorate?
   - I am fascinated by science.
   - I want to learn more about my field of research.
   - I find it interesting to delve deeper into scientific research.
   - Scientific research is fun.
   - I intend to pursue a career in academia or research.
   - A doctorate is common in my discipline (e.g. chemistry, biology).
   - I hope to find a better job with a higher income.
   - My family expects me to do a doctorate.
   - I would like to enjoy university life a bit longer.
   - I have no other choice or way of making a living.

⇒⇒⇒⇒ You should seriously reconsider your choice to pursue a doctorate if you can confirm most of the questions in the second half positively.

2. Requirements for a doctorate

   Formal
   - I have the grades and language skills as required by the respective FU faculty's doctoral regulations.
   - I already have been offered a doctorate position.
   - I have obtained financial support for my doctoral studies.

   Personal
   - I pursue my work with perseverance and tenacity.
   - I handle setbacks well and take criticism while still being able to motivate myself.
   - I can set my own time schedule and stick to it with intrinsic self-discipline.
   - I have strong writing skills.
   - I am ready to spend 3 or more years doing research on one topic.

   Private
   - I have a stable personal life and my partner or my family support my wish to do a doctorate.
   - I am aware of the fact that doing a doctorate will have constraints on my leisure-time and activities with my family.
   - I can take stress mentally and physically.

⇒⇒⇒⇒ For a doctorate, you should agree with most of these statements.
### What is my path to a doctoral degree? Doctorate types in comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctorate in a Doctoral Program</th>
<th>Individual Doctorate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application to a doctoral degree program</td>
<td>Search for an appropriate supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation project within the thematic spectrum of the doctoral program</td>
<td>Greater freedom as far as the choice of dissertation topic is concerned</td>
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<td>Course program designed in accordance with the research objectives of the program to strengthen and deepen disciplinary knowledge as well as professional and transferable skills</td>
<td>Participation on an individual basis in courses and colloquia organized by department/research group</td>
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<td>Dissertation supervision by supervisory team</td>
<td>Supervision by a university professor (Doktorvater/Doktormutter); team supervision is still an exception</td>
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<td>Generally an interdisciplinary working environment</td>
<td>Generally a discipline-based working environment</td>
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<td>Formalized supervisory agreement that lays down the rights and duties of doctoral candidates and members of the supervisory team</td>
<td>Generally a letter of acceptance from the supervising professor (Betreuungszusage) for the application for the admission to do a doctorate at the respective department</td>
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<td>Duration of the doctorate corresponds to the program membership and generally amounts to three years (+ one year in case of family responsibilities).</td>
<td>Duration of the doctorate is laid down in the doctorate regulations of the department (standard processing time [Regelbearbeitungszeit]; four years until the conclusion of the dissertation process). It can be prolonged (also repeatedly) with the consent of the supervisor and the doctoral committee.</td>
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<td>Systematic preparation for the conference participation and generally obligatory lectures and poster presentations during the doctorate in the program</td>
<td>Lectures/presentations at international and national conferences can be freely chosen and agreed on between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor</td>
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<td>Doctoral program organizes scientific exchange among doctoral candidates as well as with external partners by inviting guests, through research stays abroad and by providing extensive meeting and workshop program.</td>
<td>Integration into the scientific community and relevant networks mainly by the supervising professor; exchange with other doctoral candidates generally on one’s own initiative</td>
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