

Position paper by the Assistants' Association at the University of Basel (avuba), opposing a potential increase in tuition fees for doctoral students

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avuba opposes an increase in tuition fees for doctoral students

As part of the university cost-saving measures, scenarios are being explored in which tuition fees could be increased for doctoral students. avuba opposes a potential increase in tuition fees for doctoral students for the following reasons:

- Tuition fees for doctoral students were already raised by CHF 200 to CHF 350 from fall semester 2014.
- Due to inflation, i.e. since the last fee increase for doctoral students in 2014 (99.1 points, September 2014), tuition fees would have to be reduced by 1% (98.1 points, December 2017).
- An increase in fees would make the university less attractive to international researchers, and internationality is key to cutting-edge research and university rankings. For this reason, avuba also recommends that fees remain the same for domestic and foreign doctoral students.
- It is counterintuitive to charge tuition fees for doctoral students who are also university employees. Companies pay for their employees' continuing education and do not require any "kick-backs" from their employees for the training.
- Doctoral students rarely attend lectures. As services for doctoral students are not to be increased, there is no justification for raising fees.
- Increasing tuition fees is pure tokenism that will harm or hinder individuals while making no structural changes.
- Research and technological development benefit the whole of society, not just individual researchers. It is therefore not appropriate for costs to be borne by the individual. avuba believes that a knowledge-based society should not skimp on education, teaching, or research.
- ETH Zurich charges a flat rate of CHF 1,200 for doctoral students (one-off fee for the entire doctorate, regardless of duration), which must be paid once a student has registered for their doctoral assessment. avuba proposes that consideration be given to introducing a similar rule for a similar amount.

avuba is monitoring the cantonal cost-saving measures with great unease and is concerned about the University of Basel's ability to compete on the domestic and international stage. It therefore appeals to the relevant cantons, the University Council, the President's Office at the University of Basel, and to all Faculties to expand and continuously improve – rather than restrict – the quantity and quality of services for doctoral students and postdocs.

avuba therefore asks that no fee increase be implemented and recommends that the number of people engaged in teaching and research – particularly doctoral students and postdocs – and the university bodies that support teaching and research should not be restricted.