

## avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey 2018

### Survey

At the end of September 2018, everyone registered as an avuba member as of the end of April 2018 by Student Services (matriculated doctoral students) or Human Resources (employed postdocs) received an individual, one-time link to the survey. This ensured that each avuba member would only be able to complete the survey once.

The avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey 2018 closed on November 10, 2018. A total of 690 assistants fully completed the survey, 550 of whom were employees of the University of Basel.

#### Proportion of avuba members who completed the survey

	Number of avuba members (by 30.4.2018)	Number of surveys completed (by 10.11.2018)	Participation rate for avuba members
Theology	36	15	42%
Law	164	20	12%
Medicine	812	80	10%
Humanities	541	126	23%
Science	1169	357	31%
Economics	96	33	34%
Psychology	139	44	32%
Other	46	15	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3003</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>23%</b>

#### Proportion of assistants employed at the University of Basel who completed the survey

	Number of assistants employed*	Number of surveys completed	Participation rate for employed assistants
Doctoral students	826	395	48%
Postdocs	521	155	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>41%</b>

\* HR analysis "Personnel list (active employees); assistants; University of Basel", dated 30 April 2018

## Analysis

avuba has analyzed and compared the responses from the individual faculties and from all male and female assistants. Differences have been identified in just a few areas. Noticeable differences are shown in square parentheses in the “Key Findings” section.

The feedback on first supervisors (professors) was very positive: The vast majority of assistants feel that their work is valued, that they have sufficient freedom to conduct their research and/or design their work as they wish, and that meetings with their supervisors are valuable in their content and/or methodology.

### Key Findings

- Around 40% of all assistants [42% of female assistants and 33% of male assistants] stated that the workload for which they are paid is not sufficient to complete their assigned work as well as their own research.
  - On average, respondents spend an additional 7.6 hours per week working for their employer (mean = 7.6, median = 5).
  - On average, they spend an additional 13 hours per week on their own research (mean = 13.2, median = 10).
  - At least 40% of assistants who stated that they do not have enough time for their own research gave the following reasons:
    - Supervising students
    - Other administrative work
    - Teaching and assessments
    - Collaboration on other projects
- Around 80% of assistants whose contract is extended receive an extension of one year or less. A total of 40% of all assistants would like their contract to last longer.
- Around 40% of all respondents [46% of female assistants and 31% of male assistants] stated that their main supervisor does not have enough time to supervise them on a day-to-day basis. According to this 40%, the main reasons for this are:
  - The main supervisor spends too much time on administration.
  - The main supervisor has too many other people to supervise (students, employees, researchers).
  - The main supervisor is rarely present.
  - The main supervisor spends his or her time on his or her own research.
- Almost 30% of all assistants [34% of female assistants and 22% of male assistants] stated that they have not been told what they are expected to achieve to reach the next qualification stage, or that this has not been communicated with sufficient clarity.
- Around 30% of assistants [34% of female assistants and 20% of male assistants] stated that their professors do not speak openly about their assessment of their assistant’s academic career or do not communicate this satisfactory enough.
- In addition, a little over 30% of assistants [38% of female assistants and 25% of male assistants] do not feel sufficiently supported by their supervisor when it comes to career planning and advice and building a network.
- In terms of infrastructure, it is particularly striking that 30% of assistants are disturbed by the noise levels and room temperature in their workplace.

- Around 45% of assistants [60% of assistants in the Faculty of Humanities and 35% of assistants in the Faculty of Science] require assistance to proofread high-impact publications/presentations in English. In 50% of cases, this proofreading is currently performed by someone from their working environment [20% of assistants in the Faculty of Humanities and 75% of assistants in the Faculty of Science].
- At least one third of all assistants believe that their research and/or working conditions would generally improve if the following changes were made:
  - Longer contract terms
  - More time to write during the week
  - More time for their own research

avuba has already discussed these findings with the President's Office. Together with avuba, the university management will now seek solutions to rectify the problems addressed in the survey as quickly as possible.

## Publication

The following reports on questions 1–21 of the survey are published in [German](#) and [English](#) with graphics:

- EN 20190402 avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey 2018 – answers given by all assistants of the University of Basel who took part in the survey (N=690).
- EN 20190402 avuba PhD & Postdoc Survey 2018 – answers given by assistants employed at the University of Basel who took part in the survey (N=550).

321 respondents provided (sometimes very detailed) answers to open question 22: “What measure(s) would you like the university to implement to improve working situations, research conditions, and career opportunities?” These feedbacks are summarized and will be discussed bilaterally with the President's Office.

## Questions and Feedback

If you have any questions or feedback on the survey, please contact Patricia Eiche, avuba administrator, or the Group III Senate representatives of the relevant faculty.

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