

Call for Applications

Graduate School „Cultures of Knowledge” (CuKnow)

The Graduate School “Cultures of Knowledge” provides the opportunity for doctoral researchers to experience the study of knowledge in a multitude of scientific contexts, expanding their academic background with interdisciplinary perspectives. The program will enable doctoral researchers to determine the historical, institutional, social and global conditions for the production of knowledge and diffusion in matters relevant for the KIT Center Humans and Technology. The supervision concept is meant to be tailored to individual needs and participants of the Graduate School can profit from numerous proposed courses as well as from suggested classes or self-organized events.

Applying a broad knowledge concept allows to focus on specific practices in which knowledge is generated, stored, communicated, and applied. The concept “Cultures of Knowledge” thus allows to describe how people, groups of people (e.g. academics) or society as a whole deal with knowledge – and its absence.

As part of the KIT Center Humans and Technology, the Graduate School “Cultures of Knowledge” fosters close interaction between KIT departments in the humanities, social sciences, natural and engineering sciences as well as activities supporting the dialogue with public interest groups. The Graduate School gives doctoral researchers an opportunity to analyze seemingly abstract issues of “knowledge” in specific socio-technical constellations, places, innovation processes and organizations – from the perspective of a wide variety of scientific disciplines. In providing doctoral researchers with methodological tools that allow them to analyze and contribute to processes at the interface of science and society (e.g., innovation processes, policy advice or sustainability transitions), they will be well-prepared for future careers in this interface.

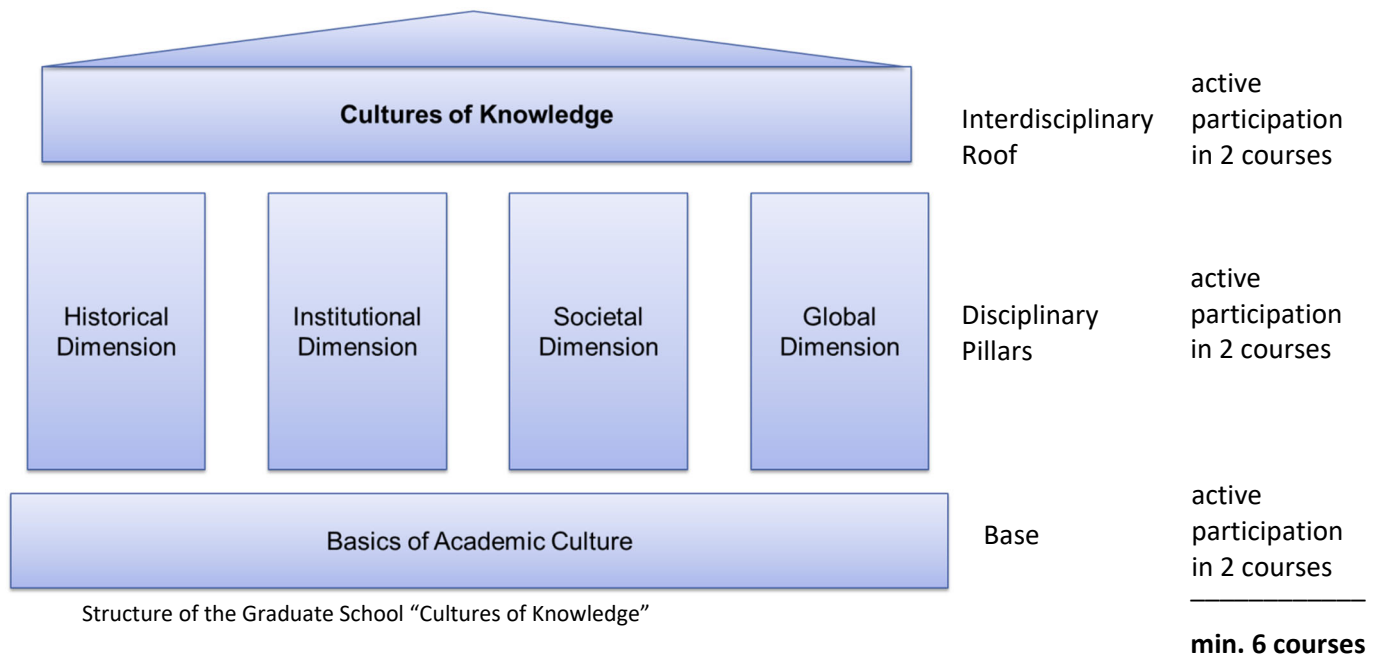
The Graduate School supports doctoral researchers with a threefold added value:

- they receive an interdisciplinary supervision that is tailored to their needs, where they choose a mentor from another scientific discipline;
- they learn self-reliance for their professional life, whether in science or in practice, administrating a budget, which they can use to cover the costs of events they plan to host, participating in the program committee of the Graduate School, and by bearing responsibility in the steering committee, which will be composed of elected doctoral researchers and the spokespersons of the graduate school;
- they learn disciplinary and methodological basics as well as transferrable skills, providing them with competencies to 1) situate their work in interdisciplinary contexts on a high methodological level, 2) strengthen their scientific mindset and their responsibilities as researchers, and 3) facilitate discussion with the general public on the role and function of research and technology in society.

Curriculum

The curriculum is divided into three areas: 1) a base area for general knowledge, 2) a pillar area, in which the doctoral researchers are assigned to a discipline or a methodological approach typically in just one of the four pillars and 3) the roof, an interdisciplinary area in which the actual cooperation between the disciplines takes place. This should ensure that doctoral researchers first of all acquire general skills for writing a dissertation and establish connections to the professional world (science and practice; base). Secondly, the doctoral researchers have a ‘disciplinary home’ in one of the four pillars and can obtain a ‘second home’ if they choose a mentor from another pillar. Thirdly, the roof

provides them with a forum for the interdisciplinary approach. This is where the above-mentioned work on the identification of knowledge cultures, the navigation between them and their formation finds its proper place. Successful candidates will acquire an official certificate which states the membership within the graduate school (details can be found below). Prerequisite for receiving the certificate is the active participation in two courses respectively in the base, in one pillar (or more) and in the roof.



In general, the wide range of courses (which can be held in a presentable and digital form) includes proposed courses organized by the PIs. In addition, doctoral researchers are required to show initiative by preparing the annual program and, in close consultation with the board of directors and the KHYS (for the base area), generating events tailored to their needs. Finally, also achievements rendered externally, like active participation in conferences or organized meetings with EUCOR partners (a trinational alliance of five universities in the Upper Rhine region), can be credited. The same is envisioned for the involvement of doctoral researchers in research and teaching.

The courses and events offered by the graduate school will be open to everyone, while doctoral researchers, who follow the curriculum, will earn a **certificate** verified by the supervisor/mentor. Doctoral researchers can choose a **mentor** from another field or even another pillar, with whom they meet regularly. The mentor reviews their progress in the graduate school's curriculum based on a kind of 'diary' and advises the doctoral researcher on his or her active and passive involvement in the program.

Interdisciplinary roof:

A Retreat will be organized annually as a mandatory course (participation min. twice during the PhD phase is obligatory): ideally, the Retreat is attended by all members of the graduate school. At this event, the doctoral researchers present themselves, their projects and the progress of their work (posters, short papers) and collect ideas for the disciplinary and interdisciplinary events. This mutual exchange is the condition for interdisciplinary work in general and for planning the annual program in particular. In addition, a series of lectures will be held once a year, also an obligatory event, which will deal with the particular annual theme and will be taught by the PIs as well as by internal and external colleagues.

In close consultation with the board of directors and the steering committee, doctoral researchers are free to organize interdisciplinary conferences, study days (journées d'études) and workshops, invited lectures plus discussion and method-oriented reading groups within the roof. Events of this kind are open to other young researchers, e.g., from the EUCOR or EPICUR (European Partnership for Innovative Campus Unifying Regions) framework, and established experts from Germany and abroad. In pillar four, researchers from outside Europe will be integrated as lecturers in (virtual) lectures.

Disciplinary pillars:

In addition to the mandatory courses already included in master programs of the faculties (e.g., master classes and advanced seminars, there will also be obligatory courses offered specifically for doctoral researchers, such as doctoral colloquia of the respective institutes or departments. Also, doctoral researchers are free to plan reading groups on methodological issues, invited lectures plus discussion and study days in close consultation with the board of directors and the steering committee. Within the global dimension, doctoral researchers will be closely linked to the research cooperation IECO – Institute of Eco-Industrial Development, that focusses on industrial sustainability, organized jointly by KIT and Partners in Latin America, mainly in Chile.

Base:

The base provides for interdisciplinary basics for preparing and implementing a dissertation and the connection to professional life. This can be achieved through already existing internal KIT events, above all those of the KHYS, which offers numerous educational courses for doctoral researchers and also refers to those of other corporate partners. Workshops on digital humanities are also to be held. Digital courses will be used all throughout in our graduate school. In particular, courses of the newly founded KIT Academy for Responsible Research, Teaching, and Innovation (ARRTI) are to be integrated into this level of the doctoral program, for example, one-day workshops on Scientific Integrity, courses in epistemic aspects of particular relevance for interdisciplinary cooperation and such that foster the reflection of responsibilities of scientists and engineers towards society. In cooperation with doctoral researchers, events with a focus on transfer to professional life (for example, workshops with directors of publishing houses and museums) will be developed.

Application

Current doctoral researchers of KIT Departments that are part of KIT Center “Humans and Technology” are invited to apply, either in German or English. Applications will be reviewed by the School’s board of directors in March 2021. The complete application must be submitted through our application platform (<https://indico.scc.kit.edu/e/CuKnow>).

The complete application (German or English) includes in one single Pdf-document:

1. **Paper describing the doctoral project and the connection to the subject of the graduate school** (max. 2 pages)
2. **Curriculum Vitae** (max. 2 pages)
3. **Copy of the confirmation of registration at KHYS or letter of acceptance as doctoral researcher to the KIT Department**
4. **Short letter of recommendation from the supervisor (if not part of the graduate school)**

Further information and questions

For further information on the Graduate School “Cultures of Knowledge” see the website: www.mensch-und-technik.kit.edu/cuknow.php

For general questions on the Graduate School, please contact Silke Zimmer-Merkle (silke.zimmer-merkle@kit.edu).

For questions particularly concerning the online application process, please contact Tina Sommavilla (tina.sommavilla@kit.edu).