Mentoring Guidelines

One of L3S’s strategic advantages is the possibility for PhD students to take over responsibility for cutting edge research topics already at an early stage. This provides valuable research expertise for each Ph.D. student as well as a good publication record for each L3S researcher. It is one of the major goals of L3S as a high quality research center that each researcher should co-author three quality papers per year on average (based upon DBLP and similar listings), and aim at one top conference in the respective area of research per year (see for example NTU Singapore’s list of top conferences for major research areas).

The high level of research is facilitated by a variety of interesting, innovative and international research projects at L3S as well as by L3S’s innovative mentoring program. Within our mentoring program, all PhD students have, in addition to their affiliation with a full-time faculty member as Ph.D. advisor, an experienced PostDoc researcher as personal mentor who supports their work and personal progress. Already by showcasing their current work, topics of interest and relevant background material in the central L3S Wiki and on the L3S web pages, PostDocs aim to give PhD students a first impression of interesting research topics. In personal discussions, the mentor will provide basic advice in the beginning: how to perform scientific research, how to cooperate with other researchers, where and how to find related information about a research area, what promising topics to explore in the PhD student’s and project’s area of interest. As the student’s knowledge progresses, advice includes how to write high quality scientific publications (including knowledge on a technical level), which venues to choose for specific publications, how to structure research work and present results in scientific talks or to a broader public, and how to write proposals for research grants. L3S has attracted a large number of researchers on PostDoc level who already have a good research record and can serve as points of contact for their research topics. They are managing research projects and research work, and interact both among themselves as well as with Ph.D. students. Beyond project work, they provide advice on Ph.D. student’s research throughout their Ph.D. program. This has advantages for both Ph.D. students and PostDocs:

- For the PhD student, continuous exploration of a research area leads to a consistent research record, together with his/her mentor. A weekly meeting (in smaller or larger reading and working groups) will (especially for new students) provide orientation, foster the student’s development and provide valuable advice and scientific input.

- For the PostDocs giving advice as mentors the possibility to propel his/her research topic in cooperation with motivated and distinguished PhD students is a valuable asset, especially when aiming at a later career as a university professor. The complete mentoring guidelines can be downloaded here.