Doing Research and Completing a Doctoral Program at Germany's most Traditional Business School

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Marcus Saber is a cosmopolitan: in his personal and professional life, he travels across Europe; for his studies, he comes to Leipzig. How does that work? Marcus Saber is a part-time doctoral candidate at the House of Talents, the Doctoral Program of HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management . In 2014, he successfully completed his Master's degree at HHL. He could have easily moved away from science and dived back into working life on full-time basis. Marcus Saber has worked at Schwarz Group since 2008 and is currently serving as Head of the Digital Department at Lidl E-Commerce International. "I am a networker though,?• says the 26-year-old today, who works on his dissertation mainly in the evening and on the weekends. "I am interested in new concepts and developments and, first and foremost, I love comparing notes with other students.?•

The right mix of theory and practice

The House of Talents of HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management offers him the perfect environment to do so. Marcus Saber is currently in Leipzig, completing HHL's Summer School. Although he can generally organize his time freely, this week of lectures is compulsory for the doctoral candidates.

Together with the other students from the Doctoral Program, Saber is listening to lectures on the topic of leadership this year. High-caliber representatives from the economy are talking about how to lead a company. This is good input for the 26-year-old, who comments, "The Summer School classes provide just the right mix of theoretical models and practical application.?• When he returns to his desk in a few days, he will be able to apply the new knowledge straight away.

For Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Althammer, this is the pivotal point. He considers obtaining a doctoral degree from HHL to be a bridge for transfer. The Chairman of the Doctoral Committee explains, "We examine questions which are of interest to science and businesses.?• These include ethical issues in risk management, communication and leadership responsibility, employee involvement in open innovation, service productivity and sustainability. The doctoral candidates do not just deal with topics from the economy and management. Scientific work by itself is a good school for future executives: developing theoretical models, analyzing data, investigating problems and, eventually, finding strategies and solutions.

Obtaining a doctoral degree from HHL is by no means unworldly, according to Wilhelm Althammer. The economic expert has been asked more than once if the degree was necessary at all for a career in business or even represented over-qualification. Exactly the opposite: out of approximately 200 graduates from HHL's Doctoral Program from the last 20 years, 30 went on to pursue a career in science as post-doctoral candidates, academic lecturers and university professors; the remaining 170 launched a career in the free economy, with some of them even starting their own businesses. "We deliberately address students who are not sufficiently challenged with regard to their scientific interests,?• says Althammer. Marcus Saber is not too concerned about the higher qualification either. "I do not need a title to reach the next level of management,?• he says. "Completing the Doctoral Program is another step in my personal development and proves my keen interest in the things I do on a daily basis.?•

Research scholarships to support junior scientists

Those applying to HHL should come with a high degree of inquisitiveness as well as a topic with which they can and want to deal with for the next three years. Each year, approximately 25 new doctoral candidates can start their research projects at HHL. Those applying with a well-phrased dissertation project description and a suitable qualification will be accepted into the program. While many applicants have a Master's degree in economics, the program is also open to people from other fields.

When Stefan Anderer's doctoral supervisor came to HHL, he applied for one of the coveted Friede Springer Scholarships. Stefan Anderer is a Research Associate at the Center for Advanced Studies in Management (CASiM) and Research Fellow at the Dr. Arendt Oetker Chair of Business Psychology and Leadership. For scholarship holders, HHL waives the tuition fees of EUR 15,000. The scholarship covers the cost of living as well as participation in scientific conferences. Stefan Anderer particularly appreciates the space and responsibility which he has as an HHL scholarship holder. "The program allows me to remain closely connected to the university while still maintaining my personal life in another city,?• says the 32-year-old who lives in Berlin. Despite the distance, Anderer feels that he is well looked after. "Thanks to intense communication and the broad offer of doctoral courses, which mainly take place on the weekends, the logistics are manageable,?• he comments.

Connecting research and instruction

A third path to obtaining a doctoral degree is a Research Associate position. "I found the option of starting the Doctoral Program at HHL immediately after the Master's degree very attractive as it allowed me to continue to work on the topic and content of my field of research,?• says Fabienne Orban. She is a Research Associate at the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Junior Professorship in International Management. As part of her dissertation, the 28-year-old examines the impact of CEOs and top-level managers on the success of a company. Additionally, she also supports the research and instruction of the junior professorship by overseeing field projects with companies, attending international conferences and therefore representing HHL across borders. Outstanding doctoral candidates will be given the opportunity to obtain a post-doctoral degree from HHL after completing the program. The path to a junior professorship at other universities is also open to them.

Rewarding the good ones

Practitioners, scholars or research associates - in the end, it is the outcome that counts. The research results produced by HHL's doctoral candidates from the last couple of years have received a great response, also on an international stage. Stefan Anderer, who is currently developing a research projects on styles of thinking in management together with his doctoral supervisor Timo Meynhardt and a colleague from the University of St. Gallen, has already been invited to attend the highly-respected conference of the Academy of Management in California. But it is not just about good feedback. Many candidates also see great benefit in the fact that they do not necessarily have to prepare one major dissertation but can also write and publish various scientific articles, often in collaboration with co-authors. "This makes working easier,?• says part-time doctoral candidate Marcus Saber. "As a team, we do not have to fend for ourselves.?• And that pays off. Three years ago, Nagwan Abu El-Ella and her academic tutor Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart received the ISPIM Award for "Best Paper on practical implications for technology?•. In 2015, HHL doctoral candidate Christian Comberg and his co-authors were presented the ISPIM "That's Interesting!?• Research Award. HHL itself honors the best research performances with the HHL Research Award. But even without prizes; a doctoral degree from HHL paves the way for a career in research without closing the door to the economy.

http://www.hhl.de/hot

HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management

HHL is a university-level institution and ranks amongst the leading international business schools. The goal of the oldest business school in German-speaking Europe is to educate effective, responsible and entrepreneurially-minded leaders. HHL stands out for its excellent teaching, its clear research focus, its effective knowledge transfer into practice as well as its outstanding student services. The courses of study include full and part-time Master in Management as well as MBA programs, a Doctoral program and Executive Education. HHL is accredited by AACSB International. http://www.hhl.de

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HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management
Die HHL ist eine universitäre Einrichtung und zählt zu den führenden internationalen Business Schools. Ziel der ältesten betriebswirtschaftlichen Hochschule im deutschsprachigen Raum ist die Ausbildung leistungsfähiger, verantwortungsbewusster und unternehmerisch denkender Führungspersönlichkeiten. Neben der internationalen Ausrichtung spielt die Verknüpfung von Theorie und Praxis eine herausragende Rolle. Die HHL zeichnet sich aus durch exzellente Lehre, klare Forschungsorientierung und praxisnahen Transfer sowie hervorragenden Service für ihre Studierenden. www.hhl.de

Anlage: Bild