

## Responses overall: 40+

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### General feedback

- very varied experiences overall
  - positive experiences mainly related to positive relations to and attitudes of supervisors/group leaders; included individual exceptions being made
  - negative experiences were related to a number of reasons, which are outlined below in more detail; one of the main concerns were the lack of clear information and guidelines, especially for international PhDs
- difference for stipend and Fördervertrag holders → trade-off between improved working rights on the Fördervertrag but low income/holidays
  - stipend: 400-500 Euro monthly support
  - Fördervertrag: no financial support, but the childcare programme (*Schnullerprogramm*) which is now going into its second phase, but:
    - no guarantee that it is granted
    - no support for children older than 3 years → yet a child needs looking after if they do not attend school yet)
    - subsidy only granted for a year → what happens after?
  - TVöD: not eligible for *Schnullerprogramm*
- some expressed a wish to change from contract to stipend
- many expressed a wish for additional financial support

### Detailed feedback

1. income and holidays on a 50% Fördervertrag are too low
  - inability to support partner when she is unwell or has appointments during pregnancy
  - increased difficulty of caring for a sick child as holidays need to be used
  - reliance on financial support and flexibility from a partner and/or other family members → more difficult when partner is non-German speaking and struggles to find work in Germany → in some cases, the PhD becomes the only breadwinner and may not be eligible for German state support and/or MPS support such as the *Schnullerprogramm*
2. understanding supervisors/directors/colleagues alleviate struggles
  - working hour flexibility/working from home (in scientific fields where this is possible)
  - choice to reduce working hours without financial loss
  - wish for training for supervisors/directors to handle issues around parenting appropriately
3. lack of administrative support and/or dedicated contact person for questions around parenthood (based on centralised information)

- lack of clear and uniform information about MPS guidelines around parenthood and PhD (incl. extensions, parental rights, possibilities of state support, contacting/finding childcare etc.)
  - lack of clear and uniform information about the rights stated in the contract and German labour law
  - lack of clear and uniform information about residence permits, visa types including support when needing to change a visa (e.g., in order to apply for financial state support)
  - lack of support with applying for financial state support such as *Eltern- and Kindergeld*
  - lack of support with applying for financial state support when a stipend/scholarship/contract ends and no (further) extension is provided
  - lack of support with finding a healthcare provider (midwife, gynaecologist, paediatrician) who can support parents who are not fluent in German
4. wish for better co-operations of individual MPIs with local Kindergartens and schools and/or institute Kindergartens
    - difficulty of getting a placement at short-notice
  5. wish for extensions /wrap-up Post-Doc positions at the end of the contract
    - if granted at the discretion of individual directors/supervisors, this can lead to unequal treatment within institutes and across the Society → need for clear guidelines (see above)
    - wish for extension for the *Mutterschutz*-period when working is prohibited yet payment (largely) comes from the employer
  6. wish for increased assistance (research assistant, making labs safe without the PhD losing valuable research time) for pregnant PhDs who are not allowed to work with chemicals or other hazardous substances
  7. wish for creation of a network/emailing-list/forum for MPS PhDs who are parents or are planning a family to exchange experiences and support each other
  8. academia as an insecure career path; feelings of having to choose work or family
    - financial support and/or follow-up positions could be given
  9. wish for a parent-child office in the institute
  10. wish for (financial) support with childcare also for retreats, conferences etc.