

# General Provisions of the Doctoral Regulations of the Digital Engineering Faculty at the University of Potsdam

Dated 27 November 2019

The Faculty Council of the Digital Engineering Faculty of the University of Potsdam on the basis of §§ 31, 72 para. 2 sent. 1 no. 2 of the Law Governing the Universities in Brandenburg (BbgHG) of 28 April 2014 (GVBl.I/14, [no. 18]), as last amended by article 2 of the Law from 5 June 2019 (GVBl.I/19, [no. 20], p. 3) in conjunction with article 21 para. (2) no. 1 of the General Rules and Regulations of the University of Potsdam (GrundO) of 17 December 2009 (AmBek. UP no. 4/2010 p. 60) in the version of the fifth statute amending the General Rules and Regulations of the University of Potsdam (GrundO) of 21 Februar 2018 (AmBek. UP no. 11/2018 p. 634) on 27 November 2019 the following have been enacted as statutes:<sup>1</sup>

Only the German version of this text (AmBek. UP no. 11/2020 p.508) is legally binding.

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## § 1 Doctoral Degree

(1) Based on fulfillment of the Doctoral examination procedure, the Digital Engineering Faculty of the University of Potsdam awards the academic degrees of

1. Doctor of Natural Sciences [doctor rerum naturalium (Dr. rer. nat.)],
2. Doctor of Engineering (Dr.-Ing.),
3. Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

(2) In addition, the faculty awards the following honorary doctoral degrees in recognition of exemplary achievement by distinguished scientists:

1. Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat. H.c.),
2. Doctor of Engineering honorary (Dr.-Ing. E.h.),
3. Doctor of Philosophy honoris causa (Ph.D. h.c.).

## § 2 Requirements for Obtaining the Doctoral Degree

(1) The doctorate is contingent upon completion of a written thesis (dissertation) and a subsequent oral examination (defense).

(2) The dissertation must

1. advance the scientific knowledge of the topic through independent research work,
2. describe the methods used to solve the task at hand in a comprehensible manner,
3. clearly present the results as well as interpret and discuss and
4. contain a complete documentation of the scientific literature and resources used in the work.

(3) The dissertation shall not exceed 150 pages and must be written in German or English.

(4) Should the candidate's objective be to attain the degree *Dr. rer. nat.*, the subject matter of the dissertation must belong to a scientific discipline. Should the candidate's objective be to attain the degree *Dr.-Ing.*, the subject matter of the dissertation must belong to an engineering discipline.

## § 3 Doctoral Committee

(1) The Faculty Council appoints the members of the Doctoral Committee and names a chairperson. Only professors of the faculty are eligible to serve as members of the Doctoral Committee. The term of office is two years and reelection is permissible.

(2) The Doctoral Committee makes the decision regarding the approval and opening of the doctoral examination procedure. The Doctoral Committee makes the recommendation to the dean on the completion of the doctoral examination procedure.

(3) The Doctoral Examination Committee meets at least four times during the semester. Urgent issues can be decided by means of written consent (via a circulated resolution).

<sup>1</sup> Approved by the president of the University of Potsdam on 20. Februar 2020.

#### **§ 4 Admission**

(1) The Doctoral Committee makes decisions regarding admissibility of the applicant to the doctoral degree program. Those applicants can be admitted to the doctoral program who

1. hold a university degree in the form of a Diplom or a master's degree earned in the Faculty of Digital Engineering degree program or a corresponding program of a German university and
2. present proof of a supervisory agreement between the applicant and the supervisor.

The Doctoral Committee recognizes equivalent foreign degrees. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating equivalence of the degree.

(2) The university degree must be presented in the form of the original or as a certified copy. The degree must have been completed with at least a satisfactory grade ("gut").

(3) If the applicant is unable to provide proof of the degree, as stated in Para. (1) no. 1, the Doctoral Committee is required to impose conditions for completion of modules in courses of the Digital Engineering program totaling 18 ECTS, in coordination with the supervisor, upon the opening of the procedure (§ 7).

(4) After admission, the doctoral candidate is required to enroll as a doctoral student for at least two semesters at the University of Potsdam. The candidate must take part in a doctoral seminar or the equivalent for at least one semester with verified proof of performance.

#### **§ 5 Supervisors**

(1) The Doctoral Committee appoints a primary supervisor and a secondary supervisor for each doctoral examination procedure. The supervisors must be professors or retired faculty professors.

(2) The secondary supervisor must be independent of the primary supervisor. The Doctoral Committee can transfer the responsibilities of the primary supervisor to the secondary supervisor if the primary supervisor leaves the faculty or withdraws from supervision.

(3) Upon proposal by the Dean, the Faculty Board may authorize additional scientists to serve in a primary capacity for the supervision of dissertations on a case-by-case basis. This also applies to the implementation of § 31 para. (5) BbgHG [the Brandenburg Act of Higher Education]. Additional secondary supervisors need not belong to the faculty as long as one secondary supervisor is a faculty member.

#### **§ 6 Supervision**

(1) The supervisors commit themselves to providing specialist advice and support to the doctoral candidate throughout the preparation of the dissertation. They agree upon regular supervisory progress review meetings on an annual basis.

(2) Subject to the condition of admission (§ 4), supervisors conclude a supervisory agreement in written form. They agree on the intended doctoral project, which can be implemented within a working time of three years, and oblige themselves to complying with the DFG code "Guidelines for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice." Each party and the Doctoral Committee receive a copy of the agreement. Changes to the supervisory agreement must be made in written form.

(3) The agreement also includes:

- The first and last names of all parties involved,
- Working title of the dissertation,
- Scientific discipline,
- Proposal for the conditions in the case of § 4 para. (3),
- Signatures of the parties involved and
- Declaration by the parties involved to comply with the regulations for ensuring good scientific practices at the University of Potsdam.

(4) The doctoral candidate can withdraw from the doctoral procedure at any time, which thereby terminates the doctoral process.

#### **§ 7 Opening of the Doctoral Examination Procedure**

(1) The application to open the doctoral examination procedure is to be submitted to the chairperson of the Doctoral Committee. The following must be included with the application:

1. Five printed copies of the doctoral dissertation and one digital copy,
2. Seven copies of a scholarly abstract and one digital copy,
3. Seven copies of a tabular curriculum vitae, which provides information specifically about the candidate's scientific background,
4. A list of published or forthcoming manuscripts or other scholarly achievements, including any assessments, statements, and reviews,
5. A certified copy of the final grade certificate in accordance with § 4 para. (1),
6. A declaration that this dissertation has not been submitted to any other institution of higher education and that it was prepared independently and solely with the means specified,
7. Evidence of fulfillment of the conditions as stated in § 4 para. (3),

8. Evidence of enrollment and proof of performance in at least one one-semester doctoral seminar,
9. Evidence of enrollment as a doctoral candidate,
10. A police clearance certificate if the applicant was ex-matriculated for more than three months prior and was not engaged as a public servant,
11. A copy of a generally comprehensible summary of the dissertation in German.

One copy thereof will remain in the records of the Faculty.

(2) The Doctoral Committee shall make a decision about the opening of the doctoral procedure in their upcoming session if the complete application was submitted at least one week prior to this session.

(3) The chairperson of the Doctoral Committee shall notify the doctoral candidate in writing of their decision regarding the opening of the procedure. A rejection must be accompanied by an explanation. An application may be rejected if, in particular:

1. The evidence named in para. (1) is not provided,
2. The dissertation in this version, or in a version that is not significantly different, has already been submitted to another faculty for review and has not been accepted there,
3. An assessment by the Faculty of Digital Engineering cannot be guaranteed due to subject-specific reasons,
4. There are reasonable doubts as to the legitimacy of the declaration under para. (1) no. 6, or
5. There are compelling reasons that would lead to the withdrawal of the doctoral degree as outlined in § 14.

Faculty Council decides whether to object to the refusal to open the doctoral procedure.

(4) Upon the opening of the doctoral examination procedure, the Doctoral Committee appoints the Examination Committee based on the proposal of the primary supervisor. It consists of:

1. three reviewers and
2. three examiners, including the chairperson.

The members of the Examination Committee must be professors or retired faculty professors. The primary supervisor is also a reviewer; the other two reviewers must be independent of the supervisors; one reviewer may not be a member of the Faculty. The chairperson and the majority of the Examination Committee members may not be members of the Faculty. In justified, individual cases, evidence of a completed doctoral studies in a relevant subject area is sufficient for Examination Committee membership.

(5) The opening of the procedure shall be conveyed to the faculty. Simultaneously, professors of the

faculty and university lecturers will have access to the digital version of the dissertation and the abstract for a period of two weeks. The right to submit comments to the Doctoral Committee regarding the work is granted for up to one week after expiration of the display period.

## **§ 8 Review of the Dissertation**

(1) The reviewers each receive one printed copy of the dissertation and the abstract. Within eight weeks after receiving the dissertation, the reviewers shall report independently of each other, in writing whether the dissertation requirements stated in §2 para. (2) have been met.

(2) Separately, the reviewers will give the dissertation one of the following grades:

- summa cum laude,
- magna cum laude,
- cum laude,
- rite or
- insufficienter.

(3) If a review is not submitted within the deadline, the Doctoral Committee decides whether to grant an extension deadline or if it is necessary to appoint another reviewer.

(4) If two reviewers award the dissertation the grade “summa cum laude” and the third awards “magna cum laude,” the Doctoral Committee will obtain a further review at the request of the primary supervisor.

(5) If the primary supervisor or at least two reviewers award the dissertation the grade “insufficienter,” the doctoral examination procedure concludes without success. If one reviewer recommends the grade “insufficienter,” the Doctoral Committee appoints another reviewer in accordance with § 7 para. (4); sentence 1 applies accordingly.

## **§ 9 Defense**

(1) The Examination Committee determines the time and place of the defense, which is open to the university community, and appoints a minute taker. The chairperson invites the doctoral candidate to the defense with a two week notice and announces to the candidate the members of the Examination Committee. Along with the invitation, the doctoral candidate receives the result of the dissertation assessment without the recommended grade, in accordance with § 8 para. (1), as well as the comments, in accordance with § 7 para. (5).

(2) The examiners receive a copy of the dissertation abstract as well as the dissertation review with grades in accordance with § 8 para. (1) and (2). The

Examination Committee receives the comments in accordance with § 7 para. (5).

(3) The quorum for the defense must consist of at least four members of the Examination Committee in accordance with § 7 para. (4). At the request of the chairperson, the Doctoral Committee may permit a video conference for a maximum of one member of the Examination Committee; this member is considered to be personally present.

(4) If three reviewers award the grade “summa cum laude,” the proceedings of the Examination Committee are only valid if five members of the Examination Board are personally present, pursuant to § 7 para. (4), among them must be at least two reviewers and one member from another faculty. The members who are present must be able to assess the breadth of the scientific discipline.

(5) If one or more members are hindered from participating at short-notice, or if the minimum requirements for the composition of membership cannot be met in accordance with para. (3) or (4), the chairperson of the Doctoral Committee is authorized to add additional members to the Examination Committee.

(6) The defense is open to the university community. It is composed of a 30-minute presentation and a question period of the candidate, which should not exceed 60 minutes. The presentation should explain the scientific problem explored in the dissertation, the methodological approach used to find a solution, the most important result of the research work and its classification in the current body of knowledge. The subsequent question period addressing the dissertation and its scholarly context must reflect that the doctoral candidate has developed his or her topic on the basis of in-depth knowledge of the particular subject area, the relevant literature, and methodology.

(7) The chairperson opens the defense by introducing the Examination Committee and the scientific background of the doctoral candidate. The question phase is initially carried out by the members of the Examination Committee and proceeds according to the requirements of the presentation, as described in para. (6). The chairperson may then subsequently admit questions from other participants.

## § 10 Evaluation

(1) At the end of the question period, the candidate and the audience are excused while the Examination Committee deliberates on the defense. The following point are given particular weight:

- the quality of the presentation,
- the ability to engage with questions and criticism, and

- the level of knowledge demonstrated.  
§ 8 para. (2) applies with respect to grading. If at least two members of the Examination Committee give the defense the grade of “insufficenter,” the defense is deemed to have been unsuccessful.

(2) The Committee determines the grade of the doctoral achievement by a simple majority vote. When determining the grade of the doctoral examination performance, the Examination Committee may deviate at most one grade from the reviewer vote. The grade “summa cum laude” may only be given if:

1. three reviewers have awarded the dissertation “summa cum laude” and
2. the Examination Committee in a closed session has agreed to this assessment by vote (with a maximum of one opposing vote).

(3) At the conclusion of the closed-door session, the chairperson announces the result of the examination to the doctoral candidate. A record is kept of the proceedings and the result of the defense.

(4) A failed defense may be repeated once. A period of six months from the date of the first defense should not be exceeded. If the repeated test is also not passed, the doctoral procedure has ended unsuccessfully.

## § 11 Publication of the Dissertation

(1) Upon passing the defense, the doctoral candidate is obliged to publish the dissertation and an abstract in German and English in a digital version on the Potsdam University publication server, according to the requirements of the university library.

(2) The reviewers can impose conditions for the publication of the dissertation in respect to factual corrections. The Examination Committee adjudicates any differences should they arise. Reviewers who have rated a dissertation “insufficenter” can elect not to be named in the publication. Publication can only then take place after the primary supervisor has approved the final version of the dissertation (Imprimatur)

(3) The doctoral candidate is obliged to ensure the university library that the digital version corresponds to the final version of the dissertation, in accordance with para. (2). The submission of files that do not meet the requirements of the file format or for which the required user rights for the electronic publication are not granted is not considered published.

(4) Publication must take place within one year after the defense. The Doctoral Committee can extend the deadline appropriately where good cause

exists. If the doctoral candidate misses the deadline, he or she loses all rights acquired in the doctoral procedure. In this case, the procedure ends and the dissertation is rejected. Restoration to the previous status is granted according to § 32 VwVfG.

#### **§ 12 Completion of the Dissertation Procedure**

(1) If the doctoral candidate has fulfilled all obligations, then the doctoral procedure is successfully completed upon the handing over of the doctoral certificate.

(2) The academic title may only be used after the doctoral certificate has been handed over.

#### **§ 13 Doctoral Certificate**

(1) The doctoral certificate states in the German the following information:

- Name of the university and faculty,
- Last name, first name, date and place of birth of doctoral candidate,
- Doctoral degree awarded,
- Scientific discipline,
- Dissertation title,
- Grade,
- Place of issue, date of defense as date on which doctoral studies completed,
- Signature of the dean and president of the University of Potsdam.

(2) The faculty can add an English translation to the certificate. In the case of § 1 para (1) nos. 1 and 2, this may contain the following text: "The degree 'Dr. rer. nat.' / 'Dr.-Ing.' is equivalent to the degree 'Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)' in the Anglo-American educational system."

#### **§ 14 Invalidity and Revocation**

(1) If, before the issuance of the doctoral certificate, it emerges that the applicant has engaged in deception in demonstrating their doctoral achievement or in regard to the requirements for admission to the doctoral procedure then the academic degree will be refused.

(2) The faculty can revoke the academic degree if any of the reasons named in para. (1) are retrospectively established or if the rules of good scientific practice have not been observed.

(3) Applications for the withdrawal of the doctoral degree must be directed to the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee conducts an assessment and then makes a recommendation to the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council can only decide for

revocation and annulment with a two-thirds majority.

#### **§ 15 Honorary Doctoral Degree**

(1) Based on the recommendation to award an honorary doctoral degree by a full-time faculty professor, according to § 1 para. (2), the Faculty Council appoints a commission to examine the scientific merits of the potential honoree. The commission consists of the dean, five other professors or retired faculty professors, an academic staff member and a student.

(2) The commission proposes an honorary doctorate to the Faculty Council with a two-thirds majority vote. The decision to award an honorary doctoral degree requires a two-thirds majority of the members present at the Faculty Council session, with two thirds of university instructors present.

(3) The honorary doctoral degree is completed with the handing over of a certificate in which the achievements of the honoree are highlighted. The certificate bears the seal of the university and the signature of the dean and the president of the University of Potsdam.

#### **§ 16 Entry into Effect and Transitional Regulations**

(1) The General Provision of the Doctoral Regulations shall take effect on the day after their announcement in the Official Public Notices of the University of Potsdam. At the same time will cease to be effective: § 3 of the "Statutes for the Further Application of the Regulations of the Mathematics and Natural Science Faculty of the University of Potsdam and the Hasso Plattner Institute" of April 24, 2017 (AmBek. UP no. 9/2017 p. 311).

(2) Paragraph 1 does not apply to doctoral procedures whose opening was requested before these regulations came into force.

(3) The enrollment obligation stated in § 4 para. (4) does not apply to doctoral candidates who were admitted to the doctoral program before these regulations became effective until March 31, 2023.

(4) The faculty shall publish an English translation of these regulations in the Official Public Notices of the University of Potsdam.