Regulations for Doctoral Degree Studies for the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Potsdam

November 10, 2021

The Faculty Council of the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Potsdam has promulgated the following regulations governing doctoral degree studies in accordance with the Brandenburg Higher Education Act (BbgHG) of 28 April 2014 (Law and Ordinance Gazette (GVBl.) I/14, [No. 18]), last modified by the Law of 23 September 2020 (GVBl.I/20, [No. 26]), in combination with the Basic Constitution of the University of Potsdam (GrundO) dated 17 December 2009 (Official Announcements UP No. 4/2010 p. 60) in the version of the Fifth Charter to Change the Basic Constitution of the University of Potsdam (GrundO) dated 21 February 2018 (Official Announcements UP No. 11/2018 p. 634)[1]:

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§ 1 Applicability

(1) These regulations apply to all doctoral procedures in the Faculty of Human Sciences.

(2) Doctoral studies serve to demonstrate the ability to conduct more profound scientific work. The doctoral degree is awarded on the basis of this doctoral work. The faculty confers the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

§ 2 Doctoral Committee

(1) The Doctoral Committee is responsible for examining the requirements for admission to doctoral studies and for conducting the doctoral process.

(2) The Doctoral Committee is elected by the Faculty Council and consists of five members of the Faculty of Human Sciences who must hold a doctorate. Four of the members must hold a professorship or hold a Habilitation. The fifth member shall be a member of the University within the meaning of Article 1, Paragraph 1, Nos. 4 to 6 of the Basic Regulations of the University. He or she must have a doctorate. An alternate shall be named for each member.

(3) The Doctoral Committee assigns the chair to one member. This member must hold a professorship or hold a Habilitation. The chairing member conducts the day-to-day business of the Doctoral Committee. The term of office of members of the Doctoral Committee shall be two years. Reelection is permitted.

(4) The Doctoral Committee meets regularly during the semester; video conferences or circulating documents are also permissible.

§ 3 Acceptance as a Doctoral Candidate, Admission to Doctoral Studies

(1) The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate is to be addressed in writing to the chairing member of the Doctoral Committee.

(2) Requirements for acceptance are:

1. a completed academic degree at a university or equivalent institution of higher education with a documented attainment of 300 credit points;
2. scholarly study of at least eight semesters with a final academic examination (Magister, Diplom);
3. scholarly study of at least eight semesters with a corresponding professional qualifi-

[1] Approved by the President of the University of Potsdam on 4 January 2022

cation (Staatsexamen, i.e., state examination);
4. a completed academic degree at a university or equivalent institution of higher education with a documented attainment of 300 credit points.

(3) In deviation from Section 3 Paragraph 2, persons may be accepted as doctoral candidates if they have completed a university or university of applied sciences degree with a minimum grade of "good" with a standard period of study of at least six semesters with a final academic examination (bachelor's degree, 180 credit points) in the intended subject area and they have completed supplementary coursework equivalent to 60 credit points of an accredited master's degree. The additional coursework may not include the attainment of a graduate degree or equivalent requirements.

(4) Foreign educational qualifications as a prerequisite for admission are to be considered equivalent, provided they are recognized in the Federal Republic of Germany.

(5) The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate must include:
1. documentation of the prerequisites according to paragraphs 2 or 3,
2. the names and written commitments of two persons qualified to supervise the candidate's work. At least one supervisor must be a member of the faculty and hold a professorship or Habilitation in the intended field. The second supervisor must hold a doctorate. The supervision of a dissertation by a professor from a university of applied sciences shall be governed on a case-by-case basis by the University of Potsdam and the university of applied sciences,
3. A supervision agreement between the doctoral candidate and the supervisors. This must at least include:
   a) The working title or subject of the dissertation;
   b) the intended field of study;
   c) the doctoral period, which may not exceed six years;
   d) a structured time and work schedule in terms of content;
   e) a schedule for regular reporting requirements and submission of substantive partial results;
   f) an agreement on the anticipated form of the written deliverable (publication-based dissertation or monograph).
4. The intended doctoral period can be deviated from if the doctoral candidate has compelling reasons for this.

(6) The Doctoral Committee shall provide an acceptance or rejection of the doctoral candidate in writing. A justification, including information on the right to appeal the decision, is to be included in case of rejection.

§ 4 Applying to Commence the Doctoral Examination Procedure

(1) The application for commencing the doctoral examination procedure is to be addressed in writing to the chairing member of the Doctoral Committee.

(2) The application to commence the doctoral examination procedure must include:
1. a statement of the field and degree (Dr. phil. or Ph.D.) being sought for the doctoral degree;
2. a curriculum vitae written in German or English, outlining in particular the course of studies;
3. proof of the existence of the prerequisites required in Section 3 Paragraph 2 or proof of the existence of the prerequisites required in Section 3 Paragraph 3 with regard to the degree and the academic achievements to be attained;
4. a declaration that the doctoral candidate has not opened a doctoral procedure at any other university; as well as a declaration that the dissertation in its current version has not been submitted or is not available for review at any other university;
5. four bound or stapled copies of the dissertation, as well as a digitized version;
6. a summary of the dissertation comprising a maximum of 10 pages with its research question and main results in German or English;
7. a declaration that the thesis has been written independently and without the help of third parties and that all regulations of good scholarly standards have been observed in its writing;
8. a police clearance certificate, which is not older than 3 months at the time of submission;
9. a list of own scholarly writings published so far.

(3) The application for the commencement of the doctoral examination procedure may be accompanied by a proposal regarding the composition of the Examination Committee, taking into account Section 8, Paragraph 2 and Section 9, Paragraph 1.

§ 5 Commencement of the Doctoral Examination Procedure

(1) The Doctoral Committee makes its decision on

the commencement of the doctoral procedure with the majority of its members. For the purposes of these regulations, video conferences or document circulation procedures are also permissible. Attendance and the decision of the participants are documented. A decision on the commencement is to be made within 3 weeks of receiving the application.

(2) If the Doctoral Committee rejects the opening of the doctoral procedure, the chairing member must inform the doctoral candidate of this in writing, state the reasons and provide an appeal notice. The Doctoral Committee may reject the application only if

1. the documents named in Section 4 Paragraph 2 are not provided;
2. the submitted version of the dissertation, or a version that is not essentially different, has been submitted for evaluation to another faculty and has not been accepted there;
3. the Faculty of Human Sciences cannot guarantee an assessment due to discipline-specific reasons;
4. justified doubt as to the veracity of declarations under Section 4, Paragraph 2 Nos. 6 and 7;
5. compelling reasons that would lead to the withdrawal of the doctoral degree in accordance with Section 18.

(3) The Doctoral Committee makes decisions regarding objections to a rejection of commencing the doctoral examination procedure.

§ 6 Withdrawal of the Doctoral Application

As long as no expert opinion has been submitted to the examination board, the doctoral candidate has the right of withdrawal. Previous procedural steps are then considered not to have been taken.

§ 7 Dissertation

(1) The dissertation must have been prepared in a discipline represented on the faculty. It must represent an independently developed contribution to research.

(2) The dissertation must be written in German or English. Dissertations in other languages may be approved by the Doctoral Committee upon application if they are common in the international literature of the discipline and faculty review is assured.

(3) The dissertation can be published in parts before the review, in justified exceptional cases also as a whole.

(4) Instead of a dissertation thesis, writings published in a scientifically recognized manner or accepted for such publication or under revision may also be admitted as a written doctoral dissertation if they represent in their entirety achievements equivalent to a dissertation (publication-based dissertation). A publication-based dissertation must

1. include a review paper that presents a coherent research program of its own based on the publications submitted,
2. include a statement of what contributions the doctoral candidate has made to submitted joint publications. This statement must be confirmed by the other co-authors.

(5) The dissertation must state on the title page the topic, the name of the author, the indication "submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences of the University of Potsdam," and the year of submission.

§ 8 Examination Committee

(1) The Doctoral Committee appoints an Examination Committee for each doctoral procedure and assigns one member of the committee as chair. This member must be on the Faculty of Human Sciences and hold a professorship or a Habilitation. Supervisors are not allowed to serve as chair.

(2) The examination committee consists of at least five members related to the field. The Doctoral Committee may allow a lower number in justified exceptional cases. One member must belong to the group of academic employees and hold a doctorate. Four of the members must hold a professorship or a Habilitation, or belong to the group of university teachers. The doctoral candidate may submit proposals for the committee's composition. The Doctoral Committee is not bound to accept such proposals.

(3) The Doctoral Committee may appoint members of other faculties of the University of Potsdam as well as of other universities or universities of applied sciences as members of the Examination Committee.

(4) The examination committee has the following tasks in particular:

a. the determination of the persons who will prepare expert opinions for the evaluation of the dissertation (see Section 9, Paragraph 1);
b. the decision on whether to accept the dissertation on the basis of the expert opinions;
c. the assessment of the dissertation on the basis of the expert opinions and the oral examination, and the determination of the overall verdict.

(5) The examination committee has a quorum if at least three members participate. It does not meet in

public. For the purposes of these regulations, video conferences or document circulation procedures are also permissible. Attendance and the decision of the participants are documented.

§ 9 Evaluating the Dissertation

(1) At least two reviews of the submitted dissertation are prepared by persons who hold a professorship or a Habilitation. One of the reviews may be provided by one or more of the supervisors. For the second expert review, the examination committee appoints a person from the subject area of the submitted dissertation who holds a professorship or a Habilitation and be impartial in the sense of the general rules of good scientific practice.

(2) The expert reviews must be prepared independently and include a declaration of impartiality. They shall be submitted in writing to the examination committee within three months of appointment. The expert reviews are to be treated confidentially. The reviews must recommend, with explanation, the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation. If acceptance of the dissertation is proposed, an evaluation must be submitted at the same time and reasons given. The rating designations are:

*summa cum laud*e =	a particularly outstanding dissertation. This proposal must be justified explicitly;
magna cum laude =	a very good dissertation;
cum laude =	a good dissertation;
rite =	an appropriate, dissertation-worthy achievement;
non sufficit =	an insufficient performance for a dissertation.

(3) If the deadline for submitting an expert review is exceeded by more than one month, the examination committee may assign another person to prepare an expert review in accordance with Paragraph 1. If this concerns the expert review of the person who supervised the doctorate, the right of nomination according to Paragraph 1 shall come into force again.

(4) If the reviews differ with regard to the recommendation for acceptance or rejection, if the grades differ by more than one grade value, or if there is an objection by a committee member to the evaluation in the reports, the examination committee must obtain another report, which should be available within six weeks if possible. In this additional expert review, the reasons stated in the other expert review are to be noted and weighted. At the same time, the Doctoral Committee must be informed.

(5) The dissertation and the reviews will be made available for inspection in the Dean's Office for two weeks after all reviews have been received. The members of the examination committee receive the documents in digital form. All members of the faculty who are authorized to supervise dissertations are entitled to inspect them. The provisioning of the reviews shall be indicated on the homepage. Comments on the dissertation must be announced during the display period and addressed to the chairing member of the examination committee within two weeks after the end of the display period. They must make reasoned recommendations regarding the acceptance, rejection, or evaluation of the dissertation. They are to be included with the doctoral studies documents.

§ 10 Decision Regarding the Dissertation

(1) A decision regarding the dissertation should be made no later than four weeks after the provision deadline.

(2) The examination committee decides on the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation on the basis of the expert reviews and submitted statements with the majority of the committee members in an open vote. Abstentions are not permitted.

(3) The dissertation is evaluated by the examination committee by open vote on the basis of the expert reviews and after thorough discussion. Abstentions are not permitted. The rating designations are:

For exceptional and outstanding performance, the rating *summa cum laude* = a particularly outstanding dissertation may be given. This is only possible if all expert opinions are in favor of such an evaluation and the decision is made unanimously by the examination committee.

magna cum laude =	a very good dissertation;
cum laude =	a good dissertation;
rite =	an appropriate, dissertation-worthy achievement;
non sufficit =	an insufficient performance for a dissertation.

(4) The acceptance and evaluation of the dissertation shall be communicated in writing to the person seeking the doctorate by the chairperson of the examination committee, along with the date set for the oral examination. The expert reviews and comments on the dissertation must be attached with a note of confidentiality. At the same time, the Doctoral Committee must be notified.

(5) A rejection of the dissertation and justification thereof shall be communicated in writing by the chairperson of the examination committee to the person seeking the doctorate; this document shall state the reasons for the rejection and be accompanied by a notice regarding appeal procedures. At the

same time, the Doctoral Committee must be notified. The Doctoral Committee decides on an appeal against the rejection of a dissertation with the involvement of the person who supervised the work. If the dissertation is rejected, the initiated doctoral examination procedure cannot be continued. The rejected dissertation remains in the examination files.

§ 11 Oral Examination (Disputation)

(1) In the oral defense, the dissertation is defended before the examination committee. The doctoral candidate submits his or her theses in writing to the chairperson of the Examination Committee at least 10 days before the dissertation defense. These are sent to the members of the Examination Committee and the Doctoral Committee. The dissertation defense also covers selected problems and the corresponding state of research in the subject area as well as related areas of other subjects. The examination committee sets a time and place for the oral examination and provides public, university-wide notice for at least 14 days, including the announcement of the topic (announcement via notice board or posting on the homepage). In justified exceptional cases, the Doctoral Committee can allow deviation from this regulation.

(2) The examination is open to the public, with the exception of the examination committee's deliberations on the assessment of the examination results. The dissertation defense is conducted by the members of the examination committee. The persons who have prepared expert reviews in the doctoral procedure may also be invited in writing to the dissertation defense, provided they are not already members of the Examination Committee, as well as the members of the Doctoral Committee. The chairperson of the examination committee shall chair the scholarly debate and assign another member of the examination committee to prepare the minutes of the dissertation defense, as well as its result.

(3) The dissertation defense should last at least 60, at most 90 minutes. It takes place in German or English; exceptions can be permitted by the Doctoral Committee upon request. As an introduction to the scholarly debate, the doctoral candidate explains the theses he or she has submitted in writing for the dissertation defense in a presentation of about 20 minutes. In the subsequent debate, the members of the Examination Committee, the persons who prepared the expert reviews, and the members of the Doctoral Committee shall first be given the right to speak. Subsequent further speaking rights may be granted to faculty members by the chair of the examination committee.

(4) Following the dissertation defense, the examination committee discusses the oral defense in closed session and decides on the examination result by simple majority. Abstentions are not permitted. The possible ratings are:

*summa cum laud*e =	a particularly outstanding dissertation defense;
magna cum laude =	a very good dissertation defense;
cum laude =	a good dissertation defense;
rite =	an appropriate performance worthy of a dissertation defense;
non sufficit =	an insufficient performance for a dissertation defense.

(5) A failed oral examination (non sufficit) shall be communicated to the candidate, stating the reason and accompanied by a notice of appeal procedures. The test can be repeated only once, at the earliest after three months and at the latest after one year.

§ 12 Evaluation of the Doctoral Candidate's Performance and Announcement of the Examination Result

(1) If the dissertation defense has been passed, the examination committee shall determine the overall grade of the doctorate in a closed session by a majority of its members. In the evaluation, the dissertation performance is to be weighted twice, the oral examination performance is to be weighted once. Abstentions are not permitted. The assessment of the overall rating is justified in writing in the protocol. Ratings for overall doctoral performance may be:

magna cum laude =	a very good doctoral performance;
cum laude =	a good doctoral performance;
rite =	a reasonable doctoral performance.

(2) The predicate *summa cum laude* can only be awarded if the dissertation has this predicate and the oral examination performance has been assessed with at least *magna cum laude*, whereby unanimity of the committee is required.

(3) Immediately after the determination of the overall result of the doctorate, the chairperson of the Examination Committee shall inform the doctoral candidate of the result. The confidentiality of the consultation must be maintained.

(4) The final protocol of the examination is forwarded to the Doctoral Committee.

(5) The Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences issues a provisional certificate containing the evaluation of the dissertation and the overall result. This certificate does not entitle the holder to use the title Dr. phil. or

Ph.D..

§ 13 Publication of the Dissertation

(1) The dissertation must be published within two years of the oral examination (unless it has already been published in its entirety in accordance with Section 7, Paragraph 3) and the number of copies specified in Sections 14, 14 no. 4 and 15 must be submitted to the university library free of charge.

(2) If it is proven that publication by a commercial publisher is secured (Section 15 Paragraph 1), the obligation to deliver may be extended by one year. In justified exceptional cases, further extensions are possible.

(3) If the deadlines according to Paragraphs 1 and 2 are not met, the previously rendered rights from the examination performances expire.

(4) The copies to be published shall comply with the formal requirements according to Section 7 Paragraph 5 and shall contain the names of the reviewers and the date of the oral examination on the back of the title page. Dissertations to be published by a commercial publisher must be marked as a dissertation of the University of Potsdam.

§ 14 Forms of Publication

The following forms of publication are permitted:

1. Publication as a monograph by a publisher;
2. Publication in a journal;
3. Publication in electronic form on the publication server of the university library;
4. Publication by the doctoral candidate in durable bound form. The number of copies to be delivered is ten.

§ 15 Submission Obligation

(1) If a dissertation is or has been published by a publisher as a monograph (Section 14 No. 1) or in a journal (Section 14 No. 2), six copies must be delivered to the University Library.

(2) If the publication is made in accordance with Section 14 No. 3, bound copies are no longer to be delivered. The file format and data storage of the electronic version must be coordinated with the university library. The doctoral candidate must transfer the rights for the electronic publication of the dissertation to the University of Potsdam, the German Library in Frankfurt am Main/Leipzig (DDB), and if necessary the Special Collections Library of the German Research Society (DFG); the doctoral candidate must also ensure that the electronic version corresponds to the accepted dissertation. The submission of files that do not comply with the specifications regarding the file format and data carriers is not considered as publication. The same applies if the rights of use required for the publication of the electronic version of the accepted dissertation in data networks are not granted by the doctoral candidate.

§ 16 Execution of the Doctorate

(1) After fulfillment of the duty of delivery according to Sections 14 and 15, the graduation is completed by handing over the doctoral certificate.

(2) The degree (Dr. phil.) is awarded with a German language certificate, the degree (Ph.D.) is awarded with an English language certificate. In the English-language certificate, the designation of the predicate is omitted and a Diploma Supplement with the designation of the predicate is added.

(3) The doctoral degree certificate must include:

1. the name of the university and faculty,
2. the doctoral degree awarded,
3. the field of study,
4. the title of the dissertation,
5. the overall grade according to Section 12,
6. the name and place of origin of the doctoral candidate,
7. the name of the rector or the president and the dean.

The doctoral certificate shall bear the seal of the University and be signed by the Dean of the Faculty and a representative of the University administration. The date of the oral examination is called the date of graduation.

(4) With the award of the doctoral certificate, the University confers the doctoral candidate the right to use the title of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

(5) In the case of publication in a journal or as a monograph by a commercial publisher, a provisional and temporary certificate of successful completion of the doctoral process may be issued upon request, entitling the holder to use the doctoral title if a certificate from the journal confirming acceptance of the work for printing or a publishing contract with a commercial publisher can be presented.

§ 17 Plagiarism Review

The faculty checks submitted dissertations for pla-

giarism. The dean is responsible for the further design of the procedure.

§ 18 Invalidity of Doctoral Studies

If it becomes apparent before the doctoral certificate is issued that the doctoral candidate has been deceptive about the prerequisites for the doctorate when providing evidence of the doctoral achievements, or that essential prerequisites (Section 3) were erroneously assumed to have been met, the Faculty Council may declare the doctoral achievements invalid by a two-thirds majority after hearing the Doctoral Committee.

§ 19 Withdrawal of the Doctoral Degree

(1) The doctoral degree may be withdrawn if it is subsequently found that it was obtained by deception, or if essential requirements for the award were erroneously assumed to have been met.

(2) Proposals for the annulment or withdrawal of a doctoral degree must be directed to the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee conducts an assessment and then submits its recommendation to the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council can only decide for the withdrawal or annulment with a two-thirds majority. The person affected must be given an opportunity to state their position before the decision is made.

§ 20 Honorary Doctorate

(1) The faculty may confer the degree of honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil. h.c.) on the basis of outstanding and independent scientific or intellectually creative achievements in the disciplines or in recognition of special services to the disciplines for which the faculty is responsible. Merit based solely on extracurricular promotion of the sciences cannot be recognized by an honorary doctorate.

(2) An honorary doctoral degree (Dr. phil. h.c.) must be requested by at least three members of the faculty who hold a professorship or a Habilitation. The proposal shall be received by the Doctoral Committee and examined by a commission appointed by it in accordance with Section 8, Paragraph 2. The commission prepares a written statement which is submitted to the members of the faculty who hold a professorship or a Habilitation for decision-making. The resolution requires a majority vote of the faculty members who hold a professorship or a Habilitation, with written votes acceptable.

§ 21 Opening Clause

The Faculty of Human Sciences can join international cooperation agreements of the University of Potsdam for the joint execution of doctoral procedures by resolution. If individual regulations of cooperation agreements contradict these doctoral regulations, doctoral procedures can be carried out by resolution of the Faculty Council on the basis of the deviating rules. The resolution must individually designate the regulations repealed for the joint doctoral procedures.

§ 22 Junior Professorships and Junior Research Groups

(1) Those who hold a junior professorship at the University of Potsdam are equal to professors in the rights derived from these doctoral regulations.

(2) Anyone who heads a junior research group at the University of Potsdam that is funded by scientific organizations is equal to professors in terms of the rights derived from these doctoral regulations.

§ 23 Entry into Force / Exit from Force

(1) These regulations take effect on the day after their publication in the Official Announcements of the University of Potsdam. The doctoral regulations of 15 May 2013 (Official Announcements No. 9/2014 pp. 441-447) are repealed with this publication.

(2) The doctoral regulations of 15 May 2013 (Official Announcements No. 9/2014 pp. 441-447) continue to apply to procedures for which the application for the opening of the doctoral project was submitted during the period of validity of the old doctoral regulations.