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

of 15 May 2013

The Faculty Council of the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Potsdam has decreed the following Doctoral Degree Regulations in accordance with § 31 of the Brandenburg Higher Education Act (BbgHG) of 28 April 2014 (Law and Ordinance Gazette GVBl. I/14, no. 18) in conjunction with Article 21, para. 2, no. 1 Constitution of the University of Potsdam of 17 December 2009 (AmBek. UP No. 4/2010, p. 60) in the version of the First Ordinance amending the Constitution of the University of Potsdam of 27 February 2013 (AmBek. UP no. 4/2013, p. 116)¹:

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§ 1 Right to Confer a Doctorate

(1) The Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Potsdam awards the academic degree of *Doktor/Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)* or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the basis of a dissertation and an oral examination (disputation) or a comparable scholarly achievement as defined in § 7, para. 4.

¹ Approved by the President of the University of Potsdam on 30 April 2014

§ 2 Doctoral Committee

(1) The Doctoral Committee verifies the admission requirements for doctoral studies and conducts the doctoral examination procedure.

(2) The Doctoral Committee is appointed by the Faculty Council. It consists of five members of the Faculty of Human Sciences who must have a doctorate. Four members must be professors or faculty members who have completed their postdoctoral qualifications. The fifth member has to be a member of the University (...) and has to hold a doctoral degree. An alternate shall be appointed for every member.

(3) The Doctoral Committee appoints a chairperson from its members. He/she must hold a chair/professorship or have completed a postdoctoral qualification. The chairperson assumes the day-to-day management of the Doctoral Committee. The term of office of the committee members shall be two years. Re-election is permitted.

§ 3 Acceptance as Doctoral Candidate

(1) An application to be accepted as a doctoral candidature shall be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the Doctoral Committee.

(2) Requirements for acceptance are:

1. Successfully completed studies at a university or a comparable academic institution and evidence of 300 credit points,
2. University course of at least eight semesters including an final examination (Master, "Diplom"),
3. University course of at least eight semesters including a professional degree (state examination).

(3) By way of derogation from § 3, para 2, the Doctoral Committee may accept candidates if they have completed a degree program at a university or a college of higher education with at least a "good" rating within the standard period of study of a minimum of six semesters and a final academic examination (Bachelor, 180 credit points) in the academic field they want to pursue during their doctoral studies. In addition, they must have completed additional studies that correspond to 60 credit points of an accredited Master program. These additional academic performances must not include a university degree or comparable requirements.

(4) Foreign educational achievements shall be considered to be an equivalent provided they are recognized in the Federal Republic of Germany.

(5) The following documents need to be attached to the application:

1. Evidence of requirements pursuant to para 2 or 3 hereof;
2. Names and acceptance letters of two persons who are entitled to supervise a dissertation project. At least one supervisor must be a member of the Faculty who is either a professor or has completed a post-doctoral qualification in the relevant subject. The second person must have a doctorate. The supervision of a dissertation by a professor from a college of higher education or university of applied sciences shall be governed on a case-by-case basis by the University of Potsdam and the respective college;
3. Supervision agreement between candidate and supervisors; the document must contain at least the following information:
 - a) Working title or topic of the dissertation;
 - b) Period of candidature, which must not exceed six years;
 - c) Structured framework of time and working schedule as regards content;
 - d) Schedule of regular reporting obligations and submission of partial results;
 - e) Schedule of regular scientific consultations and support of early academic independence (in compliance with the rules of good scientific practice);

4. It is possible to deviate from provision 3b hereof if necessary due to compelling reasons related to the individual candidate.

(6) The Doctoral Committee shall inform about the acceptance or rejection as a candidate in writing that state the reasons and shall be accompanied by instructions on right to appeal.

§ 4 Application for Opening the Doctoral Examination Procedure

(1) Applications to open the doctoral examination procedure must be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the Doctoral Committee.

(2) The application must include:

1. Statement about the intended scientific discipline of the doctorate
2. CV in German or English that particularly refers to the course of studies
3. Evidence that the candidate meets the admission criteria under § 3, para. 2, or the admission criteria under § 3, para. 3 with regard to academic degree and achievements
4. Statement that the candidate has not opened a doctoral examination procedure at another university as well as a statement that the dissertation in its current version was not and is not being submitted at another university for appraisal
5. Four copies, bound or stapled, of the dissertation and a digital version
6. Abstract of the dissertation of up to ten pages including the dissertation's rationale and key results in German and English
7. Affirmation that the dissertation has been prepared independently and without unauthorized support, and complies with the rules of good scientific practice
8. Police Clearance Certificate not older than three months at the time of submission
9. List of the candidate's scientific publications

(3) A proposal regarding the Examining Committee's composition may be attached to the application to open the doctoral examination procedure subject to § 8, para. 2 and § 9, para. 1.

§ 5 Opening of the Doctoral Examination Procedure

(1) The Doctoral Committee shall decide about the opening of the doctoral examination procedures with a majority of its members within three weeks after submission of the application.

(2) If the Doctoral Committee rejects the opening of the doctoral examination procedures, the chairperson shall inform the candidate in writing, give reasons for the decision and instructions on right to appeal. The Doctoral Committee may only reject the application if

1. evidence/comments required under § 4, para. 2 has not been provided.
2. the submitted version of the dissertation, or a version that is not essentially different, has been submitted for evaluation to another faculty, or has not been accepted.
3. the Faculty of Human Sciences cannot guarantee an evaluation due to subject-specific reasons.
4. there are justified doubts as to the veracity of the statements to be made pursuant to § 4, para. 2, no. 6-7.
5. there are reasons that would lead to a withdrawal of the doctoral degree in accordance with § 18.

(3) The Doctoral Committee shall decide about appeals against the rejection of opening the doctoral examination procedures.

§ 6 Withdrawal of Application for a Doctorate

As long as no expert review has been submitted, the candidate shall have the right to withdraw from the application. Any procedural steps up to that point shall not be deemed a doctoral examination procedure.

§ 7 Dissertation (Thesis)

(1) The dissertation must be prepared in a scientific area or academic field represented at the Faculty. It has to be an independently prepared contribution to research.

(2) The dissertation must be written in German or in English. Submission of dissertations in another language may be approved by the Doctoral Committee upon application if this language is typical in international publications of the respective discipline, and if the Faculty can ensure its evaluation.

(3) The dissertation may be published in parts prior to evaluation; publication as a whole shall be permitted in exceptional cases.

(4) Instead of a monograph, a set of papers may be accepted that have already been published in an academic journal, submitted for such publication or are being under revision provided that they represent an achievement equivalent to a dissertation (publication-based dissertation). A publication-based dissertation must include:

1. an overview paper that presents a coherent and independent research program based on the submitted publications
2. a statement about the candidate's contribution to joint publications; this statement has to be confirmed by the co-authors.

(5) The title page of the dissertation must state the topic, the author's name, the statement "Submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences of the University of Potsdam", and the year of submission.

§ 8 Examination Board

(1) The Doctoral Committee appoints an Examining Board for each doctoral examination procedure and a chairperson from the members of the Examining Board. The chairperson must be a professor of the Faculty of Human Sciences or a faculty member who has completed post-doctoral qualifications.

(2) The Examining Board consists of at least five members who are related to the relevant academic field. The Doctoral Committee may approve fewer members in exceptional cases. One board member must belong to the academic staff and hold a doctorate. The other members must be professors, have completed their postdoctoral qualification or university lecturers. One member of the Examining Board may be appointed upon the proposal of the person who is applying for the doctoral examination procedure.

(3) The Doctoral Committee may appoint members of other faculties of the University of Potsdam as well as of other universities or colleges of higher education to become members of the Examination Board.

(4) The Examining Board shall be responsible for:

1. selecting the persons who will review and evaluate the dissertation (see § 9, para. 1).
2. deciding about the acceptance of the dissertation on the basis of the evaluation reports (reviews).
3. evaluating the dissertation on the basis of the evaluation reports and the oral examination as well as the overall rating.

(5) The Examining Board shall have a quorum if at least three members are present and a member represents the

academic field of the doctoral studies.

(6) Meetings of the Examining Board shall not be public.

§ 9 Evaluation of the Dissertation

(1) At least two written evaluation reports must be prepared for the submitted dissertation. One evaluation may be prepared by a supervisor. If there has not been any supervision, the candidate shall have the right to propose a person who shall prepare an evaluation. The person proposed must be a professor or have completed a postdoctoral qualification in the respective academic field. The Examination Board appoints a second reviewer from the academic field of the submitted dissertation who must be a professor or have completed a postdoctoral qualification. Conflicts of interests shall be excluded in line with the rules of good scientific practice.

(2) The evaluation reports must be prepared independently. They must be forwarded to the Examination Board within three months after they were commissioned in writing. The evaluation reports must be kept confidential. They must recommend the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation and substantiate the recommendation. If they recommend its acceptance, they have to propose a grade for the dissertation. The following grades can be given:

<i>magna cum laude</i> =	very good
<i>cum laude</i> =	good
<i>rite</i> =	sufficient
<i>non sufficit</i> =	insufficient

Outstanding achievements can be evaluated with the grade *summa cum laude* = with distinction, which has to be justified separately.

(3) If the deadline for the submission of an evaluation report has been exceeded by more than one month, the Examination Board may assign another reviewer pursuant to para. 1 hereof. If this concerns the evaluation report of the person supervising the doctoral procedure, the right of proposal pursuant to para. 1 shall become effective again.

(4) After all evaluation reports have been submitted, the dissertation and the evaluation reports shall be made available for inspection at the Dean's Office for two weeks. The members of the Examination Board may ask for a digital version of the documents. All Faculty members who are authorized to supervise a dissertation shall have the right to inspect the dissertation. Comments on the dissertation have to be announced during the display period and submitted not later than two weeks after the end of the display period to the chairperson of the Examination Board. They must give substantiated recommendations with regard to the dissertation's acceptance, rejection or evaluation and must be attached to the documents of the doctoral procedure.

(5) In case the recommendations in the evaluation reports differ with regard to acceptance or rejection, the grade differs by more than one assessment level, or a commission member has objected to a reviewer's evaluation, the Examination Board must request an additional evaluation report. Such report shall be available within 6 weeks, if possible. The additional evaluation report shall consider and weigh the reasons stated in the other reports. The Doctoral Committee must be informed at the same time.

§ 10 Decision about the Dissertation

(1) A decision about the dissertation shall be taken not later than four weeks after the end of the display period.

(2) The Examination Board decides about the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation on the basis of the evaluation reports and submitted comments with the majority of the commission members by open ballot. Abstention from voting shall not be permitted.

(3) The Examination Board evaluates the dissertation on the basis of the evaluation reports and a thorough debate by open ballot. Abstentions shall not be permitted. The grades are:

magna cum laude = very good
cum laude = good
rite = sufficient
non sufficit = insufficient

Outstanding achievements can be awarded with *summa cum laude* = with distinction. The rating *summa cum laude* can only be awarded when all reviewers recommend this grade and the Examination Board takes a unanimous decision.

(4) The chairperson of the Examination Board shall inform the doctoral candidate in writing about the date of the oral examination defense. He/she attaches the evaluation reports and comments regarding the dissertation and notifies the candidate about their confidential nature. The Doctoral Committee must be informed at the same time.

(5) If the dissertation is rejected, the chairperson of the Examination Board shall inform the candidate in writing, has to state the reasons and attach the instructions on right to appeal. The Doctoral Committee must be informed at the same time. The Doctoral Committee, in consultation with the supervisor of the doctoral project, decides about an appeal against the rejection. The commenced doctoral examination procedure must be discontinued if the dissertation was rejected. The rejected dissertation remains with the examination files.

§ 11 Oral Examination (Defense)

(1) The Examination Board attends the candidate's defense of the dissertation. He/ she must submit his/ her theses in writing to the chairperson of the Examination Board not later than 10 days prior to the disputation. The theses shall then be sent to both the members of the Examination Board and Doctoral Committee. The defense shall additionally cover selected topics of the candidate's academic field and related disciplines. The Examination Board sets the time and place for the defense and provides university-wide notice including the dissertation topic for at least 14 days. Upon application and in exceptional and duly justified cases, the Doctoral Committee may approve other regulations.

(2) The defense shall take place within four weeks after the dissertation was accepted. It is open to the university public except for the Examination Board's counsel on the assessment of the examination results. The members of the Examination Board conduct the disputation. They also invite, in writing, the persons who have prepared the evaluation reports provided they are not members of the Examination Board, and the members of the Doctoral Committee. The chairperson of the Examination Board leads the defense and appoints a member of the Examination Board to keep minutes about the defense and its results.

(3) The defense shall take between 60 and 90 minutes. It is conducted in German or English. The Doctoral Committee may approve exceptions upon application. At the beginning the candidate shall give a 20-minute presentation explaining the theses he/ she submitted in writing. The members of the Examination Board, the reviewers and the members of the Doctoral Committee shall initially have the right to speak in the subsequent debate. Afterwards the chairperson of the Examination Board may grant the right to speak to members of the Faculty.

(4) After the defense the Examination Board shall deliberate about the defense in a non-public meeting and decide on the examination result by simple majority. Abstention from voting shall not be permitted. The following grading is possible:

summa cum laude = with distinction
magna cum laude = very good
cum laude = good
rite = sufficient
non sufficit = insufficient

(5) If a candidate fails the defense (*non sufficit*), he/ she shall be informed about such a decision and its reasons. This shall be accompanied by instructions on right to appeal. The defense can only be repeated once, at the earliest after three months and latest after one year.

§ 12 Doctoral Achievement and Notification of Examination Results

(1) If the candidate passes the defense, the Examination Board shall decide about the overall grading of the doctoral achievement with the majority of its members in a non-public meeting. For the overall grade, the dissertation is double-weighted and the defense single-weighted. Abstention from voting shall not be permitted. The overall grade shall be justified in writing in the examination report. The following grades can be given for the overall doctoral achievement:

magna cum laude = very good
cum laude = good
rite = sufficient

The rating of *summa cum laude* can only be awarded when the Examination Board unanimously recommends this grade, the dissertation shows this grade and the oral examination was graded at least *magna cum laude*.

(2) The chairperson shall inform the candidate about the overall grade of the doctoral achievement immediately after the decision was made by the Examination Board. The confidentiality of the deliberations has to be preserved.

(3) The final examination report is sent to the Doctoral Committee.

(4) The Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences issues a provisional certification that includes the grade of the dissertation and its overall grade. Such certification does not entitle the holder to use the title Dr. phil. (Ph.D.)

§ 13 Publication of Dissertation

(1) The dissertation shall be published within two years after the date of the defense (unless already completely published in accordance with § 7, para. 3); the number of copies specified under § 15 shall be delivered.

(2) Submission requirements shall be extended by one year if evidence has been submitted that a commercial publisher guarantees publication (§ 15, para. 1). Further extensions of the deadline shall be possible in exceptional and duly substantiated cases.

(3) Any rights resulting from previous examination results shall expire if the deadlines pursuant to para. 1 and 2 hereof have not been observed.

(4) The copies to be published shall meet the formal requirement in accordance with § 7, para. 5 and name the reviewers as well as the date of the oral examination on the reverse side of the title page. Dissertations published by a commercial publisher must be marked as a dissertation of the *Universität Potsdam*.

§ 14 Types of Publication

Approved types of publication are:

1. Publication as monograph by a commercial publisher,
2. Publication in a journal,
3. Publication in electronic format on the publication server of the University library,
4. Publication in permanently bound format by doctoral candidate; the number of copies to be delivered is 20.

§ 15 Submission Requirement

(1) If the dissertation is or will be published as a monograph by a commercial publisher (§ 14, no. 1) or in a journal (§ 14, no. 2), six (6) copies have to be submitted to the University library.

(2) If the dissertation is published in accordance with § 14, no. 3, it is required to submit five (5) bound copies and an electronic version. File format and medium of the electronic version shall be agreed with the University library. The candidate must grant the right to publish the electronic version to the *Universität Potsdam*, the *Die Deutschen Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main/Leipzig* and, if necessary, the Special Collections Library of the German Research Association (DFG). The candidate must also affirm that the electronic version corresponds to the accepted dissertation. Data files that do not meet the requirements of file format and media do not qualify as publication. The same shall apply if the candidate does not grant the right to publish the accepted dissertation in an electronic format.

§ 16 Doctoral Certificate

(1) When the submission requirements have been fulfilled in accordance with § 15, the doctorate will be awarded by delivering the doctoral certificate.

(2) The doctoral certificate must contain:

1. Name of the university and faculty,
2. Awarded doctoral degree and
3. Academic field
4. Title of the dissertation,
5. Overall grade pursuant to § 12,
6. Name and place of birth of the doctoral candidate,
7. Names and signatures of the President of the University and the Dean of the Faculty.

The doctoral certificate will be evidenced by the seal of the University and the signature of the Dean of the Faculty and a representative of the university management. The effective date of the doctorate shall be the date of the defense. A certificate in English can be issued upon request.

(3) Upon the delivery of the doctoral certificate the candidate is entitled to use the title of a *Doktor/Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)* or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

(4) If the dissertation is accepted for publication by a journal or as a monograph by a commercial publisher, a provisional certificate may be issued about the successful completion of the doctoral examination procedure which entitles the candidate to use the title of a doctor. The request for such provisional certificate must be supported by a confirmation of acceptance for publication by the journal or the publishing contract with a commercial publisher.

§ 17 Plagiarism Assessment

Submitted dissertations will be assessed for plagiarism. The Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for further procedural rules.

§ 18 Invalidity of Doctoral Degree

If it becomes apparent before the delivery of the doctoral certificate that the candidate has engaged in deception regarding the prerequisites for admission to the doctoral examination procedure or if essential prerequisites (§ 3) have untruly be assumed to exist, the Faculty Council, after consultation with the Doctoral Committee, may declare the candidate's performance as invalid by a two-thirds majority.

§ 19 Withdrawal of Doctoral Degree

(1) The doctoral degree may be withdrawn if it is subsequently established that the candidate has engaged in deception or essential prerequisites for awarding the doctorate were untruly assumed to exist.

(2) Every faculty member can submit an application to the Doctoral Committee regarding the rejection or withdrawal of a doctorate. The Doctoral Committee conducts an assessment and then submits a recommendation to the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council can only decide for a withdrawal or rejection with a two-third majority. The respective candidate shall have the opportunity to be heard.

§ 20 Honorary Doctorate

(1) The Faculty of Human Sciences may confer the degree of an honorary *Doktor/Doktorin der Philosophie (Dr. phil. h.c.)* in appreciation of outstanding scientific and other intellectual achievements in the academic fields represented at the Faculty. Honorary doctorates will not be conferred for achievements that are solely based on a non-academic promotion of science.

(2) At least three faculty members, who either hold a professorship or have completed a postdoctoral qualification, must apply for the conferral of an honorary doctorate (Dr. phil. h.c.). The proposal is then submitted to the Doctoral Committee and reviewed by a commission appointed according to § 8, para. 2. The commission prepares a written statement that will be submitted for decision to the members of the faculty who hold a professorship or have completed a postdoctoral qualification. The decision requires a majority of faculty members who hold a professorship or have completed a postdoctoral qualification; written votes shall be permitted.

§ 21 Opening Clause

The Faculty of Human Sciences may decide to join international cooperation agreements of the University of

Potsdam to conduct joint doctoral procedures. If individual provisions of such cooperation agreements contradict these doctoral degree regulations, the Faculty Council may decide to conduct the doctoral procedure on the basis of different provisions. The decision must detail the repealed provisions for such joint doctoral procedures.

§ 22 Junior Professorship and Junior Research Groups

(1) Junior professors at the University of Potsdam shall have the same rights deriving from these doctoral degree regulations as full professors.

(2) Academic members of the University of Potsdam who lead a junior research group funded by an academic organization shall have the same rights deriving from these doctoral degree regulations as full professors.

§ 23 Effective Date/ Expiration of Regulations

The doctoral degree regulations shall come into effect one day after their publication in the Official Announcements of the University of Potsdam. The doctoral degree regulations of 17 October 2006 (AmBek. UP No.1/2007, p. 56) and the amended regulations of 28 April 2010 (AmBek. UP No. 9/2010, p. 128) and of 29 September 2010 (AmBek. UP No. 14/2011, p. 408) become invalid with this announcement.

Die doctoral degree regulations of 17 October 2006 (AmBek. UP No. 1/2007, p. 56) shall remain in force for doctoral candidates whose application for opening the doctoral examination proceedings was submitted during the validity period of the previous doctoral degree regulations.