

# Doctorate Regulations for the degree of *Doctor scientiarum humanarum* (Dr.sc.hum.) in the Medical Faculties of the University of Heidelberg

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## § 1 Nature, purpose and execution of a doctorate

- (1) The Medical Faculties award the academic degree of *Doctor scientiarum humanarum* (Dr.sc.hum.) on the basis of work completed during the doctoral studies.
- (2) The conferral of a doctorate is proof of the candidate's aptitude for independent academic work.
- (3) The doctoral studies are conducted at the Medical Faculty of Heidelberg or the Medical Faculty of Mannheim.
- (4) The Medical Faculties accept the key recommendations of the Senate of the University of Heidelberg for promoting the rising generation of scientists<sup>1</sup> and implement them accordingly.

## § 2 Elements of doctoral studies

The elements of the doctoral studies consist of:

1. A dissertation graded as "adequate" or better;
2. Successful completion of an oral examination in one main subject and two subsidiary subjects.

## § 3 Doctoral Committee

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<sup>1</sup> "Leitende Empfehlungen des Senates der Universität Heidelberg zur Förderung des Wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses"

- (1) The members of the Faculty Council of the relevant faculty with a voting right elect a Doctoral Committee (*Promotionsausschuss*). This committee is responsible for the tasks arising from these Doctorate Regulations and ensures that the terms of the Doctorate Regulations are observed.
- (2) The Doctoral Committee consists of a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 13 professors or associate professors from the relevant faculty, with professors constituting the majority. The Doctoral Committee elects the chair and vice chair from among its members.
- (3) The Doctoral Committee is elected for a period of two years. Individual members can be re-elected. The term of office begins at the point of election.
- (4) The ongoing business of the Doctoral Committee is managed by the chair.
- (5) The Doctoral Committee takes decisions on the basis of a majority vote of its members. If there are an equal number of votes, the chair has the casting vote.

#### **§ 4 Requirements for acceptance**

- (1) Only candidates who can produce evidence of having successfully completed a course of studies (*Diplom, Master, Staatsexamen*) in one of the following subjects at a university or a comparable academic institute of higher education with a standard minimum study period of 4 years will be accepted for doctoral studies:

Medical informatics  
Physics  
Chemistry  
Mathematics  
Biology  
Microbiology  
Psychology  
Biochemistry  
Information technology  
Pharmacy

- (2) The responsible Doctoral Committee can on application also accept candidates with a *Diplom* or *Master* degree acquired in a different subject if the candidate's field of study is relevant to the planned doctoral studies and the work has a link to medicine. The degree must have been obtained at a university or a comparable academic institute of higher education. Graduates from technical colleges may also be accepted for doctoral studies if:

- a) He or she has gained a high degree from this college; and
- b) The aptitude assessment process has been successfully completed.

The aptitude assessment process is initiated by the relevant Doctoral Committee and serves to demonstrate that the candidate has the requisite skills for doctoral studies in the field of the dissertation. The Doctoral Committee specifies the study and test elements required to demonstrate academic aptitude. The aptitude assessment process is generally to be completed within three semesters of submission of an application. If one or more tests in the aptitude assessment process is not passed, a first retake of a test cannot take place until at least 14

days later. The test(s) can be repeated a total of two times. If one of the subjects is not passed on the second retake of the test, the aptitude assessment process is not passed overall.

- (3) The relevant Doctoral Committee will decide whether any tests or studies a candidate may have completed at a foreign academic institute of higher education are to be recognised, after hearing the views of the *Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen der Kultusministerkonferenz*<sup>2</sup>.
- (4) Any candidate who has already acquired a doctorate will not be accepted for doctoral studies for the degree of Dr.sc.hum. unless a second degree has been successfully completed as described in paragraph 1.
- (5) Candidates for doctoral studies must have worked for at least two years in a medical clinic or medical biology institute in the respective faculty or in a co-opted research institution or academic teaching hospital at the university. A contract of employment with the relevant administration must be produced. Acceptance of contracts of employment with any other institutions is subject to the consent of the Doctoral Committee. The only candidates exempt from this requirement are those who have acquired their *Diplom* or *Master* degree in medical informatics from the Medical Faculty of the University of Heidelberg.
- (6) The subject for the dissertation may only be chosen from one of the subject areas covered by the respective Medical Faculty.

## **§ 5 Admission as a doctoral student**

- (1) If the status of doctor is being sought, an application for acceptance as a doctoral student must be made with the relevant Doctoral Committee before a dissertation is embarked upon. The following must be enclosed with the application:
  - a) Proof of having completed a university degree or a degree at a comparable academic institute of higher education and, where applicable, proof of successful completion of the aptitude assessment process (§ 4);
  - b) Specification of the area of work (main subject) and the two subsidiary subjects according to § 9, paragraph 3, including the examiners;
  - c) A declaration from a professor or associate professor in the respective responsible faculty that he or she will take care of the candidate's academic supervision; the supervisor must have the *venia legendi*<sup>3</sup> for the main subject;
  - d) Specification of the provisional working title of the dissertation with a brief description of the research project;
  - e) A declaration by the candidate that he/she has not submitted an application for acceptance as a doctoral student or for the initiation of doctoral studies to any other institution.

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<sup>2</sup> Central Office for Foreign Education at the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs

<sup>3</sup> Permission to lecture

- (2) The Doctoral Committee decides whether or not the candidate is to be accepted as a doctoral student. The candidate is notified in writing of his or her acceptance. In so doing, the Doctoral Committee can issue the candidate with written conditions on how he or she is to familiarise him-/herself with the main subject and subsidiary subjects, or conclude additional agreements with the candidate. A negative decision must be set out in writing with reasons for the decision and instruction on the right to appeal.
- (3) In accepting the candidate as a doctoral student, the faculty undertakes to grade a dissertation on the specified subject as an academic piece of work and support the doctoral student in the preparation of the same.
- (4) The doctoral student is obliged to register with the university unless he or she is already a member on the basis of a contract of employment. Registered doctoral students have the same rights and duties as a student.
- (5) The doctoral studies should generally be completed within three years. A doctoral student can register for a maximum of five years.
- (6) The work is generally to be completed at an academic institution in the relevant faculty or at another research institution co-opted by the relevant faculty, or at an academic teaching hospital at the university. The Doctoral Committee will decide whether exceptions to this will be accepted.
- (7) In exceptional cases, the Doctoral Committee can consent to a change to the professor or associate professor responsible for the candidate's academic supervision.

## **§ 6 Academic supervision of doctoral student**

- (1) The professors in the faculty must give doctoral students as much supervision as they possibly can, limited as this is by their research, teaching and self-administration commitments.
- (2) Please refer to the key recommendations of the Senate for promoting the rising generation of scientists for more information regarding the supervisory relationship between the doctoral student and supervisor.

## **§ 7 Dissertation**

- (1) The dissertation must be in line with scientific standards, be an independent piece of work by the doctoral student and contribute to scientific progress. The clearly defined and separately assessable contribution of the doctoral student to a piece of group work can be recognised as a dissertation if the contribution meets the requirements of a dissertation.
- (2) Subject to the consent of the supervisor, results set out in the dissertation can be published, either in part or in their entirety, before the initiation of the doctoral process.
- (3) The dissertation must be written in German or English. In exceptional circumstances, the Doctoral Committee may permit the doctoral student to submit a dissertation written in a different language if assessment by the faculty is possible.

## **§ 8 Acceptance of dissertation**

- (1) On completion of the dissertation, the doctoral student applies to the Doctoral Committee for conferral of the doctorate. The Doctoral Committee decides whether the candidate should be admitted.
- (2) The following must be enclosed with the application for acceptance:
  - a) Copies of the dissertation in the quantity required by the faculty responsible;
  - b) A declaration by the candidate that the dissertation submitted is his/her own work and that he/she has not used any sources or aids other than those explicitly quoted;
  - c) A declaration of whether he or she is applying, or has ever applied to any other institution for the conferral of a doctorate;
  - d) A curriculum vitae in tabular form particularly showing the candidate's course of studies and nationality;
  - e) Study records and certificates for state or academic examinations already completed and, where applicable, the evidence described in § 4, paragraph 2;
  - f) Specification of the subsidiary subjects according to § 10 paragraph 3;
  - g) Proof of at least two years' of employment in any of the institutions described in § 4, paragraph 5;
  - h) A certificate of good conduct issued by the *Bundesamt für Justiz*<sup>4</sup>.

Acceptance must be denied if the requirements for acceptance cited in § 4 are lacking or if the documents cited in a) to g) are incomplete. Acceptance can be denied if there are grounds which would justify the retraction of an academic degree or an academic degree has already been withdrawn.

## **§ 9 Assessment of dissertation**

- (1) Once the dissertation and the supervisor's report have been submitted, the committee checks that the formal criteria for the composition of the dissertation and the proposed grade have been met. It immediately appoints two professors or associate professors as assessors, one of whom must belong to the faculty. The Doctoral Committee can grant exceptions to this. The doctoral student or supervisor can suggest the names of possible assessors to the Doctoral Committee, although this will not constitute grounds for legal claims. The reports should be produced independently of each other.
- (2) The assessors suggest whether the dissertation should be accepted or rejected, and if they decide to accept it they grade the dissertation using the system set out in § 11, paragraph 2. The reports should be submitted within six weeks of receipt of the dissertation.

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<sup>4</sup> Federal Office of Justice

- (3) On receipt of all the reports, the Doctoral Committee rules on the acceptance of the written element of the doctoral studies. The committee is entitled to impose conditions for corrections. The members of the Faculty Council with a voting right are informed of the committee's decisions and the reports are released for 14 days for viewing in the deanship.
- (4) If a report suggests that the dissertation be rejected, the doctoral student has the right after viewing the reports to propose a third assessor. In this case, the Doctoral Committee additionally appoints this assessor plus a further assessor. All reports collected are given equal consideration in the grading of the written element of the doctoral studies.
- (5) If the majority of assessors suggest that the dissertation should be rejected, the doctoral studies are rejected and the proceedings for the conferral of a doctorate are regarded as ended. The dean issues a written notice, with reasons, to this effect which must also include instruction on the right to appeal.
- (6) Once the dissertation has been rejected, a retraction of the application for the conferral of a doctorate is no longer permissible.

#### **§ 10 Examining committee and oral examination**

- (1) If the conferral of a doctorate is not turned down as described in § 9, paragraph 5, the Doctoral Committee appoints an examining committee consisting of at least four professors or associate professors. The supervisor as representative of the main subject, the assessors and the examiners for the two subsidiary subjects as specified in § 9, paragraph 3 are members of the examining committee. The doctoral student has a right to put forward names for the examining committee, whose members should represent various disciplines; this will not constitute grounds for legal claims. The examining committee is chaired by a member of the relevant Doctoral Committee.
- (2) The Doctoral Committee sets the date for the oral examination in consultation with the members of the examining committee and the doctoral student.
- (3) In the oral examination before the examining committee, the doctoral student must display knowledge in one main subject and two subsidiary subjects. The main subject comprises the subject area from which the dissertation has been taken. The doctoral student chooses the subsidiary subjects from the clinical and theoretical medical subjects covered by the relevant faculty.
- (4) The oral examination should last about an hour. A report of proceedings in the oral examination must be produced.
- (5) On request, doctoral students from the faculty who have already been accepted by the Doctoral Committee for a "Dr.sc.hum." doctorate can sit in on the oral examination as silent listeners, space permitting. Discussions and announcements of the results of the examination are not public. Public access can be restricted or precluded at the request of the doctoral student or where there is good cause.
- (6) After the oral examination, the examining committee decides whether the doctoral student has passed the oral examination. If the oral examination is not passed, it can be retaken once. The examining committee sets a date for this; the

“Dr.sc.hum” Doctoral Committee can call further professors into the exam as required. If the retake is not passed, the doctoral studies are rejected and the proceedings for the conferral of a doctorate are regarded as ended.

### **§ 11 Decision on conferral of doctorate**

- (1) If the oral examination is passed, the examining committee specifies the overall grade on the basis of the grades suggested by the supervisor and the assessors for the dissertation and the performance in the oral examination.
- (2) The following grading system is applied: for an outstanding achievement - summa cum laude; for an excellent achievement - magna cum laude; for a good achievement - cum laude; for an adequate performance - rite
- (3) The doctoral student must be notified immediately of the results of his or her doctoral studies.
- (4) To award the overall grade of “summa cum laude”, both written reports on the dissertation must grade the work “summa cum laude”.

### **§ 12 Resubmitting**

If the dissertation has been rejected as described in § 9, paragraph 5 or the conferral of a doctorate has been turned down in accordance with the last sentence of § 10, paragraph 6, the doctoral student can reapply under the terms of § 5, submitting a new topic for the dissertation. Any further resubmission is precluded.

### **§ 13 Publication**

- (1) The dissertation must be published. Publication takes place in consultation with the supervisor. The candidate complies with the obligation to publish his or her dissertation by submitting to the faculty either
  - a) 150 copies as a bound book or as a photocopy for the purposes of dissemination;  
or
  - b) six copies if the dissertation is to be published in a journal;  
or
  - c) six copies if a commercial publisher takes responsibility for dissemination through book retail and evidence of a minimum circulation of 150 copies can be provided;  
or
  - d) three copies in a copyable typescript together with the master copy and 150 further copies in the form of microfiches; in this case, the doctoral student assigns the university the right to produce and distribute further copies of his or her dissertation in the form of microfiches;  
or

e) an electronic version of the dissertation in a data format and on a data carrier to be agreed with the university library, plus the minimum quantity of bound typewritten copies of the dissertation required by the faculty;

and

an abstract of the dissertation approved by the supervisor on an electronic data carrier, for publishing by the faculty.

A contribution to expenses may be levied for publications by the faculty.

- (2) If the candidate does not comply with the obligation to publish his or her dissertation within two years of completing the doctoral studies, all rights acquired through the doctorate lapse. In special circumstances and where the doctoral student submits a reasoned application in due time before the cut-off date, this period can be extended. The chair of the Doctoral Committee, and beyond this the Doctoral Committee, will decide whether or not to grant an extension of up to six months.

#### **§ 14 Use of title of doctor, doctorate degree certificate**

- (1) Once all elements of the doctoral studies and the obligation to publish the dissertation have been fulfilled, the dean of the Medical Faculty responsible issues the doctorate degree certificate. The doctoral student is only entitled to use the title of doctor on receipt of this certificate.
- (2) The doctorate degree certificate contains the title and overall grade of the dissertation and the date on which the overall grade was determined as the date on which the doctorate was awarded.

#### **§ 15 Retraction and revocation of acceptance; invalidity of elements of doctoral studies**

- (1) If it transpires before the doctorate degree certificate is presented that the doctoral student has lied about a requirement for acceptance or that material requirements for acceptance were erroneously supposed to be fulfilled, the Doctoral Committee can revoke the student's admission as a doctoral student or acceptance for the conferral of a doctorate. The same applies if circumstances become known which according to regional law would justify the retraction of a doctorate.
- (2) If it transpires before the doctorate degree certificate is presented that the doctoral student has lied about an element of his or her doctoral studies, the Doctoral Committee can declare this or all previously completed elements of the doctoral studies invalid or, in serious cases, revoke the acceptance for the conferral of a doctorate once and for all.
- (3) Before a ruling is made, the doctoral student concerned must be heard. The reasons behind the ruling must be given in writing.

#### **§ 16 Retraction of a doctorate**

- (1) The retraction of a doctorate is based on regional legal provisions. If these provisions do not stipulate which body is responsible for revoking a doctorate, the responsibility falls to the Faculty Council. This decides how and to what extent the

Doctoral Committee is to be involved in the proceedings for stripping the holder of a doctorate of this doctorate.

- (2) Before a ruling is made, the holder of the doctorate concerned must be heard. The reasons behind the ruling must be given in writing.

### **§ 17 Coming into force, transitional provisions**

1 These Doctorate Regulations come into force on the first day of the month following publication in the Rector's Bulletin. They simultaneously supersede the Doctorate Regulations in the Medical Faculties at the University of Heidelberg for the conferral of the degree of *Doctor scientiarum humanarum* (Dr. sc. hum.) dated 4 October 1982 (*Wissenschaft und Kunst*<sup>5</sup> dated 17.01.1983, page 15), amended on 25 March 1996 (*Wissenschaft und Forschung*<sup>6</sup> dated 20.05.1996, page 155).

2 For doctoral studies already commenced, the previous regulations can be applied on application, provided that the *Landeshochschulgesetz*<sup>7</sup> does not preclude this.

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<sup>5</sup> Science and Art

<sup>6</sup> Science and Research

<sup>7</sup> State law on universities and colleges