

**Recommendations for Evaluating Inaugural Dissertations to attain the title  
*Dr. sc. hum.* at the Medical Faculty Heidelberg of the University of Heidelberg**

The following criteria are to be used by the responsible member in the doctoral committee and reviewers in evaluating a dissertation:

1. The candidate's competency in performing scientific work and capability of critical thinking, including the ability to independently develop solutions to the problems at hand, using comprehension gained from the study of literature and the methodical basis taught by the supervisor. The candidate's personal involvement and timely conclusion of the doctoral project should also be considered.
2. The relevance of the subject matter, including the originality of the thesis and the expected gain for scientific knowledge.
3. The systematic planning of procedure. For observational studies and experimental work, adequate preparation is of particular importance.
4. The quality of results achieved. For observation work and experimental work, adequate methods of evaluation are of particular importance.
5. Editorial aspects of the dissertation: length and proportioning of the work, presentation of fundamentals, of the object of investigation, of investigative methods, and of results (including charts and illustrations); discussion of results, including reference to literature; style and expression; structure of the thesis.

An **evaluation sheet** is provided to help in the assessment of dissertations. This is to be attached to the review.

In addition to these general criteria, the following recommendations are provided for grading \*:

**3 = rite:**

- a) Observation work, e.g. case summaries of a simple nature, casuistic of rare cases.
- b) Experimental, essentially reproducible work under supervision and using established methods.
- c) Theoretical work of a simple, predominantly referential nature.

**2 = cum laude:**

- a) Independently carried out observation work, with clear presentation of novel scientific aspects whenever possible, above all by investigating control and experimental groups to verify and falsify existing views.
- b) Experimental work incorporating various established but complex methods with independently carried out experiments, consequential planning of work and consequential structuring of task complexity by the doctoral candidate.

- c) Work as specified in 3c) above, which reveal noticeable doctoral candidate's own initiative in developing systematic solutions to the scientific problems presented.

**1 = magna cum laude:**

- a) High level observation work leading to new scientific findings, planned and carried out on the whole by the doctoral candidate independently. A further requirement is the acceptance of a publication in a recognized scientific journal with the doctoral candidate as first or second author. Exceptions require detailed justification.
- b) Experimental, methodically complex work leading to new scientific findings (generally accepted for publication in a recognized scientific journal), making use of new methods or methods modified by the candidate, planned and carried out on the whole independently. A further requirement is the acceptance of a publication in a recognized scientific journal with the doctoral candidate as first or second author. Exceptions require detailed justification.
- c) Theoretical work, supported by comprehensive review of the literature and a critical analysis of existing views, lead to a thesis in which the doctoral candidate has independently developed and convincingly substantiate new scientific knowledge or opinion. A further requirement is the acceptance of a publication in a recognized scientific journal with the doctoral candidate as first or second author. Exceptions require detailed justification.

**summa cum laude:**

- a) Work leading to significant scientific findings with new, original investigative or observation methods beyond those of *1a)* above, developed and utilized by the candidate independently. A further requirement is the acceptance of a publication in a recognized scientific journal with the doctoral candidate as first author. Exceptions require detailed justification.
- b) Experimental work with new, significant scientific findings, going beyond *1b)* to the extent that these discoveries were made on the basis of an independently conceived experimental plan and with independently developed investigative methods. A further requirement is the acceptance of a publication in a recognized scientific journal with the doctoral candidate as first author. Exceptions require detailed justification.
- c) Theoretical work leading to new, significant scientific findings. These were made possible by way of a new, original conception approach and a complex theoretical model which the candidate herself/himself developed and convincingly presented. A further requirement is the acceptance of a publication in a recognized scientific journal with the doctoral candidate as first author. Exceptions require detailed justification.

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\* For the purposes of these recommendations, work is *experimental* when influencing factors to be studied are controlled by the investigator or by way of processes built up by the investigator, e.g., in-vitro experiments, animal experiments, and randomized clinical studies. Work in which influencing factors are only ascertained – e.g., case-control studies or cohort studies – are understood here as *observation work*. Work is understood here as *theoretical* in which no compilation of data is made during the work itself.

**Please note that the English-language translation is a non-binding convenience translation. Only the German language version has legal validity (s. Medizinische Fakultät Heidelberg: Begutachtung ([uni-heidelberg.de](http://uni-heidelberg.de))).**