

Regulations governing doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science of the University of Bern (PromR Phil.-nat. 19)

of December 12th, 2019

The Faculty of Science,

on the basis of Article 44 paragraph 1 litera c of the University Act of September 5th, 1996 (UniG)¹, Article 33 of the University Ordinance of September 12th, 2012 (UniV)² and Article 43 of the Statute of the University of Bern of June 7th, 2011 (Universitätsstatut, UniSt)³,

resolves the following:

I. General Provisions

SCOPE

Art. 1 ¹ These regulations govern the doctoral studies at the Faculty of Science (Faculty) of the University of Bern.

² Excepted are joint regulations with other faculties or universities.

³ Special agreements apply at Executive Board level for bi-nationally supervised doctoral theses.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

Art. 2 The Faculty shall award the following doctoral degree in accordance with the respective plan of studies:

PhD in ... [field of study stated in English], University of Bern.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCTORAL STUDIES

Art. 3 ¹ The doctorate is completed as a traditional individual doctorate, as part of a structured doctoral degree program or within a graduate school.

² The attainments of the doctoral studies consist of a monographic or a cumulative doctoral thesis and a doctoral examination as well as, if applicable, further attainments as specified in the plan of studies and in the Doctoral Agreement, respectively.

³ The scope and duration of the doctoral studies are stipulated in the corresponding plans of studies. As a rule, the duration of

¹ BSG 436.11

² BSG 436.111.1

³ BSG 436.111.2

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the doctoral studies is three to four years.

PLANS OF STUDIES

Art. 4 Details relating to the doctoral programs are governed by the corresponding plans of studies.

INVOLVEMENT IN FACULTY
TEACHING

Art. 5 Within the framework of their employment doctoral candidates may work up to an employment level of no more than ten percent in teaching and research at their institute or another organizational unit (Art. 89 para 1 UniV).

II. Admission and Acceptance

MATRICULATION

Art. 6 ¹ Doctoral candidates must be matriculated (Art. 6 para. 1 UniV).

² Anyone who is not matriculated or registered may not use the services of the University, specifically, they may neither attend courses nor take assessments (Art. 6 para. 3 UniV).

ADMISSION

Art. 7 ¹ Admission to doctoral studies of the Faculty, or submission of a doctoral thesis written independently of the Faculty, requires a master's degree from the Faculty or another degree recognized as being equivalent (Art. 31 para. 1 UniV).

² The plans of studies may stipulate a minimum Latin honor of "magna cum laude" (good) or a minimum grade of 5 for admission to the doctoral studies.

³ The decision on recognition of an equivalent degree and, as the case may be, on the equivalence of the final grade lies with the study committee.

⁴ Admission of students with a master's degree from a university of applied sciences and arts or a college of education is in accordance with the corresponding regulations of the Executive Board.

⁵ A further admission requirement is the approval of the doctoral intention of an empowered person pursuant to Article 10 paragraph 2, who is available to serve as a supervisor. There is no entitlement to provision of a supervisor by the Faculty.

ADDITIONAL ATTAINMENTS

Art. 8 ¹ Knowledge and skills not acquired in the completed master's degree program may be demanded as additional attainments. The additional attainments in the form of admission requirements shall be defined and decreed individually by the study committee.

² For doctoral candidates with a master's degree from a university, admission requirements up to 30 ECTS credits in value are possible.

³ Doctoral candidates with a master's degree from a university of applied sciences and arts or a college of education must

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fulfill admission requirements valued between 30 and 60 ECTS credits.

⁴ In the event of an admission with admission requirements, failure to fulfill the admission requirements shall lead to an exclusion.

⁵ Admission requirements may be defined either as individual courses or as existing modules of the master's degree programs.

⁶ Failed admission requirements may not be compensated by other attainments.

⁷ The admission requirements must be fulfilled during the doctoral studies within a time stipulated by the study committee.

⁸ Additional attainments shall be stated separately in the Diploma Supplement.

⁹ Details concerning the additional attainments are governed in the plans of studies.

TERMS OF ACCEPTANCE

Art. 9 The terms of acceptance to doctoral programs are defined in the respective plan of studies.

III. Supervision and Doctoral Agreement

SUPERVISION

Art. 10 ¹ A doctoral thesis shall be supervised by one or more empowered persons in accordance with paragraph 2. If a doctoral thesis is supervised by several persons (co-supervision), a principal supervisor must be appointed.

² Persons empowered to supervise a doctoral thesis are lecturers of the Faculty in accordance with Article 49 litera a to e1 UniV.

³ The study committee may authorize persons from the Faculty who are not within the categories specified in paragraph 2 as well as persons from other faculties within the meaning of paragraph 2 to serve as supervisor or co-supervisor.

⁴ Furthermore, persons who are not within the categories specified in paragraphs 2 and 3 may be authorized to serve as co-supervisor of doctoral theses, provided the responsibility is assumed by an empowered person within the meaning of paragraph 2.

DOCTORAL AGREEMENT

Art. 11 At the beginning of the doctoral studies a Doctoral Agreement is agreed upon between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor. The Doctoral Agreement specifies the process, goals, general conditions and, as the case may be, other attainments for the doctoral studies. The Doctoral Agreement may be adjusted if required.

ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT

Art. 12 The supervisor ensures that there is an additional

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ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR

independent associate supervisor to supervise the doctoral candidate. This person shall be stipulated in the Doctoral Agreement.

IV. Assessments

CONDUCTING ASSESSMENTS

Art. 13 With the exception of the doctoral examination, Articles 20 to 26 and 32 to 39 of the Regulations governing the studies and assessments at the Faculty of Science of May 24th, 2018 (Studienreglement Phil.-nat. Fakultät [RSL Phil.-nat. 18]) apply for conducting assessments.

GRADING

Art. 14 ¹ Sufficient attainments are graded according to the following grading scale:

6	=	excellent
5.5	=	very good
5	=	good
4.5	=	satisfactory
4	=	sufficient

² Insufficient attainments are graded according to the following grading scale: 3.5; 3; 2.5; 2; 1.5; 1.

³ Grades are rounded:

Grades ranging from		Rounded grade
5.75 ... to	6.00	6.0
5.25 ... to	< 5.75	5.5
4.75 ... to	< 5.25	5.0
4.25 ... to	< 4.75	4.5
4.00 ... to	< 4.25	4.0
3.25 ... to	< 4.0	3.5
2.75 ... to	< 3.25	3.0
2.25 ... to	< 2.75	2.5
1.75 ... to	< 2.25	2.0
1.25 ... to	< 1.75	1.5
1.00 ... to	< 1.25	1.0

⁴ Ungraded assessments are evaluated as a “pass” if they are sufficient, or as a “fail” if they are insufficient.

RETAKING OF INSUFFICIENT ASSESSMENTS

Art. 15 Insufficient assessments may be retaken once.

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V. Doctoral Thesis

FORM OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

Art. 16 ¹ The doctoral thesis consists of original research work in a field of study represented at the Faculty through research or teaching. The thesis may also be of interdisciplinary nature.

² Doctoral theses may take the form of a monograph or consist of publications that have already been submitted or published (cumulative doctoral thesis).

³ A cumulative doctoral thesis must contain a synopsis and annotations in an introductory text.

LANGUAGE

Art. 17 ¹ A doctoral thesis shall be written in German, French or English.

² Exceptions may be granted upon request by the study committee.

DECLARATION

Art. 18 The doctoral thesis must contain the following declaration, including the date and a handwritten signature:

“I declare herewith that this thesis is my own work and that I have not used any sources other than those stated. I have indicated the adoption of quotations as well as thoughts taken from other authors as such in the thesis. I am aware that the Senate pursuant to Article 36 paragraph 1 litera r of the University Act of September 5th, 1996 and Article 69 of the University Statute of June 7th, 2011 is authorized to revoke the doctoral degree awarded on the basis of this thesis.

For the purposes of evaluation and verification of compliance with the declaration of originality and the regulations governing plagiarism, I hereby grant the University of Bern the right to process my personal data and to perform the acts of use this requires, in particular, to reproduce the written thesis and to store it permanently in a database, and to use said database, or to make said database available, to enable comparison with theses submitted by others.”

VI. Completion of the Doctoral Studies

1. Evaluations and Grading of the Doctoral Thesis

EVALUATIONS

Art. 19 ¹ The supervisor compiles the primary evaluation. If there is a co-supervisor, the co-supervisor shall compile the primary evaluation together with the supervisor.

² Upon consultation with the doctoral candidate, an external referee shall be designated by the supervisor at least three

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months before the completion of the doctorate and notified to the study committee via the Dean's Office for approval.

³ The external referee shall be from a different university or academic institution.

⁴ In exceptional cases the supervisor may designate two external referees.

⁵ The external referee shall compile the external evaluation.

GRADING OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

Art. 20 ¹ Provided the formal requirements (Art. 16 to 18) are met, the doctoral thesis shall be graded independently by the supervisor and the external referee within six weeks. The evaluations each contain one request to accept or reject the doctoral thesis and one proposal of a grade pursuant to Article 14. The doctoral thesis with the evaluations shall be made available for inspection.

² In the case of Article 10 paragraph 4, the primary evaluation is to be signed by both persons involved.

³ If there is a co-supervisor, the supervisor and the co-supervisor shall agree on a grade pursuant to Article 14. In the event that two external referees have been designated, they shall agree on a grade pursuant to Article 14.

⁴ If a doctoral thesis was written as a group work, the parts of each participant shall be graded independently.

⁵ A third expert report is required if the grading of the primary evaluation and the external evaluation differs by more than one full grade. The person assigned to compile the third evaluation shall be appointed by the supervisor following consultation with the doctoral candidate. The grade of the third evaluation and the grade of the external evaluation are added together (unrounded arithmetic mean).

⁶ The evaluations and grades are reviewed by the study committee on behalf of the Faculty Council.

⁷ Acceptance of the doctoral thesis requires a minimum grade of a 4.0 in the evaluations. The grade for the doctoral thesis corresponds to the unrounded arithmetic mean of the two individual grades.

REPETITION

Art. 21 If the doctoral thesis is rejected, the doctoral candidate may revise it once.

2. Doctoral Examination

REGISTRATION, PREREQUISITES, DEREGISTRATION

Art. 22 ¹ Registration for the doctoral examination is made at the Dean's Office.

² The prerequisites for taking the doctoral examination are:

- a matriculation as a doctoral candidate,

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- b* assessments rated as sufficient pursuant to the plan of studies and the Doctoral Agreement,
- c* evidence that admission requirements have been fulfilled,
- d* a doctoral thesis rated as no less than sufficient (acceptance pursuant to Article 20 paragraph 6),
- e* payment of the fee pursuant to Article 31.

³ If these prerequisites are met, the doctoral candidate shall be invited by the Dean's Office to take the doctoral examination.

⁴ Deregistration in writing is possible for valid reasons and must be received by the supervisor and the Dean's Office at the latest one day before the scheduled doctoral examination.

FORM, DURATION, PUBLIC ACCESS

Art. 23 ¹ The doctoral examination consists of a public presentation and an examination part. The duration is 60 to 180 minutes.

² Upon request, the study committee may consent to exclude the public for health reasons.

EXAMINERS, CHAIRPERSON, LANGUAGE OF THE EXAMINATION

Art. 24 ¹ The doctoral examination shall be conducted by a minimum of two examiners pursuant to Article 10.

² An examiner shall serve as the chairperson. He or she must be a full professor of the Faculty (ordentlicher Professor oder ordentliche Professorin, ausserordentlicher Professor oder ausserordentliche Professorin) and may not concurrently be the supervisor of the doctoral thesis.

³ If recruiting a chairperson from the Faculty is not possible, the chairperson pursuant to paragraph 2 may also be recruited from a different faculty of the University of Bern.

⁴ In the event of absence of a person involved, the doctoral examination may, in exceptional cases, be conducted by video conference.

⁵ The protocol of the doctoral examination shall be taken by the chairperson or by a person designated by the chairperson.

⁶ The doctoral examination shall be conducted in the language of instruction or in a language agreed upon between the examiners and the doctoral candidate. Article 11 UniG remains reserved.

GRADING

Art. 25 ¹ The examiners grade the doctoral examination with one grade each pursuant to Article 14. The grade of the doctoral examination corresponds to the unrounded arithmetic mean.

² The doctoral examination is passed if it is graded with at least the grade 4.0.

³ A failed doctoral examination may be retaken once.

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3. *Doctoral Degree*

PASSING STANDARDS

Art. 26 The doctoral studies are passed if:

- a the doctoral thesis has been graded with at least the grade 4.0,
- b the doctoral examination has been graded with at least the grade 4.0,
- c any other attainments pursuant to the plan of studies and the Doctoral Agreement have been passed and
- d any admission requirements have been fulfilled.

OVERALL GRADE AND LATIN HONORS

Art. 27 ¹ The overall grade is calculated from the unrounded grades of the doctoral thesis and the doctoral examination according to the weighting defined in the plan of studies. The rounding is pursuant to Article 14 paragraph 3.

² The doctoral certificate is awarded with one of the following Latin honors:

- 6 summa cum laude
- 5.5 insigni cum laude
- 5 magna cum laude
- 4.5 cum laude
- 4 rite

³ The result of the doctoral studies shall be decreed in writing with instructions on the right to appeal.

ACCESSING FILES

Art. 28 ¹ Access to the protocol of the doctoral examination has to be granted.

² The directives of the Executive Board on accessing files and the obligation to keep files in relation to assessments at the faculties apply.

CERTIFICATE

Art. 29 ¹ The doctoral certificate shall be issued in English with the doctoral degree of a PhD in ... [special qualification stated in English], University of Bern.

² The doctoral certificate states the awarded doctoral degree and the title of the doctoral thesis with Latin honors.

³ The doctoral certificate is signed by the rector and the dean.

⁴ A German translation with the designation doctor philosophiae naturalis (Dr. phil. nat.) without stating the field of study will be enclosed with the doctoral certificate.

⁵ A Diploma Supplement will be issued with the doctoral certificate.

STATUTORY COPIES

Art. 30 ¹ The study committee shall define the form, quantity

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and labelling of the statutory copies and where they are to be submitted to.

² The referees may require the doctoral candidate to make editorial changes to the doctoral thesis prior to submitting the statutory copies.

FEES

Art. 31 The fee for the doctorate is in accordance with the directorial decree of January 31st, 2011, on the fees for doctorates and habilitations at the University of Bern (GebDV PHab)⁴.

VII. Exclusion from the Doctoral Studies and Revocation of the Doctoral Degree

EXCLUSION FROM THE DOCTORAL STUDIES

Art. 32 ¹ If the outcome of retaking insufficient assessments or admission requirements, of making revisions to the doctoral thesis or retaking the doctoral examination is insufficient a second time, the doctoral studies may not be continued. The study committee shall decree the doctoral candidate's exclusion.

² The supervisor may, in consultation with the competent directorate of studies, submit a request for exclusion to the study committee if:

- a provisions of the Doctoral Agreement are not adhered to without a valid reason,
- b there is no prospect of a successful completion of the doctoral studies, namely in the event of significant shortcomings in the execution of research work.

³ The study committee shall decree the exclusion pursuant to paragraph 2 after hearing the person concerned.

REVOCATION OF THE DEGREE

Art. 33 ¹ Revocation of the doctoral degree is in accordance with Article 69 UniSt and Article 36 paragraph 1 litera r UniG.

² The right to disciplinary measures pursuant to university legislation and penal action remains reserved.

VIII. Judicature

Art. 34 ¹ Appeals may be filed against announcements issued by the Faculty bodies within 30 days to the Appeal Committee (Rekurskommission).

² The University Act of September 5th, 1996 (UniG) and Administrative Judicature Act (Gesetz über die Verwaltungsrechtspflege, VRPG) of May 23rd, 1989 are applicable for proceedings.

⁴ BSG 436.111.3

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³ In the case of appeals against examination results, the plea of inadequacy is inadmissible.

IX. Final Provisions

ENTRY INTO FORCE

Art. 35 These regulations governing doctoral studies replace Articles 54 to 64 of the Regulations governing the studies and assessments at the Faculty of Science (Philosophisch-naturwissenschaftliche Fakultät) of April 14th, 2005, and shall enter into force on February 1st, 2020.

Bern, December 12th, 2019 On behalf of the Faculty of Science
The Dean:

Prof. Dr. Zoltan Balogh

Approved by the Ministry of Education (Erziehungsdirektion):

Bern, January 31st, 2020 The Minister of Education (Erziehungsdirektorin):

Christine Häslar

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