

Inofficial translation¹

Doctoral degree regulations (Doctor of Natural Sciences / Dr. rer. nat.) of the University of Bremen Faculty 2 (Biology/Chemistry)¹

Dated 8 July 2015²

On 28 July 2015, the Rector of the University of Bremen approved, in accordance with § 110 (3) of the Bremen Higher Education Act ("BremHG") in the version published on 9 May 2007 (Bremen Law Gazette p. 339), last amended by Article 1 of the Act on 24 March 2015 (Bremen Law Gazette p. 141), the doctoral degree regulations for the degree of Doctor of Natural Science ("Dr. rer. nat.") awarded by the University of Bremen, as passed by the Faculty Council of Faculty 2 in accordance with § 65 (4) in conjunction with § 87 (1) and (2), in the following version:

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¹ Please note that this document is a non-binding convenience translation. Only the German version of the document entitled "Promotionsordnung (Dr. rer. nat.) der Universität Bremen für den Fachbereich 2 (Biologie/Chemie)", in the version currently approved has legal validity.

² Approved by the Faculty Council of Faculty 2 on 8 July 2015

§ 1

Purpose of the doctorate and the doctoral degree

(1) The Faculty 2 of the University of Bremen awards the academic degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat.) on the basis of completion of the doctoral procedure.

(2) The possibility of working towards a doctorate will be given in every field covered by academic teaching and research in the courses of study offered by Faculty 2.

(3) The doctorate serves to demonstrate the candidate's ability to undertake in-depth and independent academic research.

§ 2

Doctoral committee

(1) In order to award the doctoral degree in accordance with § 1, the Faculty Council of Faculty 2 appoints a doctoral committee. The doctoral committee deals with all matters connected to the doctoral procedure and monitors compliance with the doctoral degree regulations.

(2) The doctoral committee consists of four university teachers and one member each of the following status groups: students, research assistants, and other members of staff, who are elected by the Faculty Council. The university teachers and members of staff are elected for a period of two years, the students for a period of one year. The doctoral committee selects one of the university teachers on the committee as its chairperson.

§ 3

Appeal procedure

(1) Appeals against the decisions made by the doctoral committee shall be resolved by the appeals committee.

(2) The appeals committee is appointed by the academic senate. It consists of three university teachers, a member of staff, academic or otherwise, and a student.

(3) Reasons must be given for decisions to reject an appeal or for any other negative administrative decisions taken in line with these regulations and communicated to the candidate, accompanied by information on his/her legal rights.

§ 4

Acceptance as a doctoral candidate

(1) The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate must be submitted to the doctoral committee within two months of commencement of work on the thesis project. In order to be admitted to the doctoral examination procedure in Faculty 2, candidates must previously have been accepted as doctoral candidate of Faculty 2 and fulfil the requirements for the examination process as stated in § 5.

(2) The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate must include:

1. proof of award of an university degree according to § 5 (1), (2) or (3),
2. the candidate's curriculum vitae and a list of his/her academic publications,
3. a written statement declaring whether (or not) the candidate has already completed a doctorate or applied to enter the examination process elsewhere, including a statement on a respective result,
4. an outline of the research proposal for the doctoral project (including a time schedule) in accordance with the requirements stated in § 7, and a positive statement from the supervisor confirming support for the thesis project,
5. a statement from the supervisor confirming that an appropriate workplace and the necessary equipment is provided for the duration of the doctoral project.

(3) A decision concerning the acceptance of the candidate shall be made within six weeks after the application was received.

(4) Applicants are free to choose the topic of their thesis in accordance with § 1 (2).

(5) Doctoral candidates have to receive academic supervision. In agreement with the applicant, a university teacher of the University of Bremen has to be appointed as supervisor. On application, also a scientist with a doctoral degree working full-time (or to a comparable degree) in a privileged position at the University of Bremen, especially a habilitated researcher or a group leader of a structured programme, can be appointed as supervisor. On application, the doctoral committee can also grant the right of supervision to a person outside the University of Bremen: to a teacher at an university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) who has a record in academic research, or another scientist with a doctoral degree and a privileged position in accordance with sentence 2; in these cases a second supervisor according to sentence 2 can be appointed.

(6) Organisational details concerning the interactions between the candidate and the supervisor (time schedule and work plan for the doctorate, frequency of meetings to discuss the thesis, participation in a structured programme) may be documented in a written supervision agreement.

(7) Both the supervisor and the doctoral candidate may terminate the supervision relationship and/or the doctoral procedure for justified reasons. This requires the consent of the doctoral committee.

(8) The status as a doctoral candidate ends five years after the acceptance of the candidate. Following a justified application for extension by the candidate and a positive statement by the supervisor, an extension may be granted for a defined period of time if the successful completion of the dissertation is likely.

§ 5

Requirements for admission to the examination process

(1) To be admitted to the examination process, the candidate must provide proof that he/she has completed an academic course of studies in a subject which must relate to the planned topic of the thesis, and thereby earned one of the following degrees: a Master's degree, or *Diplom*, *Magister*, or *Staatsexamen*. The last three shall have been awarded by an university.

(2) Candidates who hold a *Diplom* from a university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) or a Bachelor's degree with distinction from an institute of higher education, e.g., an university, university of applied sciences or an equivalent institution, may be admitted on condition that they have previously been accepted as a doctoral candidate in accordance with § 4, and that they provide proof of knowledge and skills corresponding to those gained through degree studies as listed in § 5 (1), by completing extra coursework in accordance with the current regulations of the corresponding Master's programmes of Faculty 2. The doctoral committee will define the extra coursework to be completed after consultation with the candidate, based on the supervisor's recommendations and a supporting statement by a university teacher who is involved in teaching the respective topics.

(3) § 5 (2) applies in the case of particularly well-qualified candidates with a degree from an university outside Germany which the Senate of Education and Sciences (*Senat für Bildung und Wissenschaft*) does not consider equivalent to the degree titles listed in § 5 (1).

(4) The doctoral committee can decide (in consultation with the Faculty Council) to accept a candidate, if the candidate has the relevant academic skills and his/her doctorate is in the best interests of academic research, even if the requirements stated in § 5 (1) and (3) are not fulfilled.

§ 6

Application for admission to the examination process

(1) The candidate applies for admission to the doctoral examination by submitting his/her doctoral thesis (§ 7) along with a specification of the type of degree he/she aims to achieve (§ 1). The application shall be addressed to the doctoral committee.

(2) The application documents must include:

1. the certificates required (§ 5) for admission to the examination process,

2. the candidate's curriculum vitae and a list of her/his academic publications,
3. a statement declaring whether (or not) the candidate has already completed a doctorate or applied for the examination process elsewhere, including a statement on a respective result,
4. a declaration in lieu of oath (affidavit) according to § 7 (7),
5. a statement confirming that the candidate accepts scanning of the doctoral thesis with appropriate software should it be necessary to investigate an accusation of plagiarism.

(3) The doctoral committee shall decide whether (or not) to grant admission to the examination process within four weeks after receiving the required documents listed in § 6 (1) and (2), or within six weeks outside the lecture period. The candidate will be informed of the decision in writing.

§ 7

Doctoral thesis/Dissertation

(1) The candidate must submit a doctoral thesis that meets academic standards and contributes to the advancement of science. The doctoral thesis should provide evidence of the candidate's ability for independent, in-depth academic research.

(2) The doctoral thesis may consist of a number of the candidate's own published articles (peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals and/or peer-reviewed book chapters) and, if appropriate, other publications (cumulative thesis), which the candidate must place in a scientific or research context. If the candidate submits articles which have been published with other authors, he/she must clearly indicate his/her own personal contribution to the work.

(3) The thesis may be published in full or in part before submission to the examination process.

(4) The thesis has to be written in German or in English and summaries must be included in both German and English. A cumulative thesis (§ 7 (2)) may be submitted partially or entirely in English or in German.

(5) A sufficient number (according to § 9) of printed copies of the thesis must be submitted, one of which remains with the examinations office (*Prüfungsamt*). The reviewers and the six members of the examination commission will receive one copy each.

(6) An identical digital copy of the thesis must be submitted to the examinations office together with the printed copies. This digital copy will be archived and may be used to check whether literature and other sources have been referenced correctly.

(7) The thesis must be accompanied by a declaration in lieu of oath (in accordance with § 65 (6) BremHG, (see appendix to these doctoral degree regulations), stating that

1. the candidate has completed the thesis independently, without unauthorised help from another person,
2. the candidate has not made use of any literature or resources other than those indicated,
3. the candidate has referenced all passages which contain quotations or paraphrases from the literature sources he/she has used,
4. the digital copy of the thesis, which is provided for the potential additional further examination, is identical to the printed copy submitted.

§ 8

Written evaluation of the thesis/admission to the oral examination (defence)

(1) After the written reviews on the thesis have been received, the candidate must defend his/her submitted thesis in an oral examination (thesis defence, colloquium).

(2) If the candidate had previously been accepted as a doctoral candidate at the University of Bremen and fulfils all the admission requirements in accordance with § 5, the doctoral committee will immediately open the examination process by appointing at least two reviewers, who have proven expertise in the field of the thesis and hold a doctorate. The two reviewers must be sufficiently independent from each other. The candidate may recommend reviewers and has to justify their

suitability to act as reviewers for the submitted thesis from their scientific expertise. One of the reviewers may be the supervisor. The doctoral committee may reject the candidate's choice of reviewers with justified reasons and appoint other reviewers who are academically better qualified in the field of the thesis. The doctoral committee assures that there is no reason to suspect bias (according to § 20, 21 VwVfG) between any reviewer and the doctoral candidate or between the appointed reviewers.

(3) The grade "summa cum laude" can only be awarded if the thesis is also evaluated by a third independent external reviewer. This external reviewer (not employed at an academic/scientific institution in the federal state of Bremen after the candidate started to work on his/her doctoral project) must not previously have worked or published with the candidate. If the candidate aims for the overall final grade "summa cum laude" he/she may suggest a third external reviewer together with his/her suggestions of the two compulsory reviewers, or after receiving two reviews which award the grade 1.0. The scientific expertise of the third external reviewer must also be justified in writing. The doctoral committee may reject the candidate's choice of a third external reviewer with justified reasons and appoint another reviewer who is academically better qualified.

(4) Each of the reviewers appointed according to § 8 (2) and (3) submits a review which recommends that the thesis should either be accepted or rejected, and awards a grade. The review must acknowledge all aspects of the doctoral thesis, state sufficient reasons for the decision and the grade. The reviews should contain suggestions for improvement, if required. In the event that one of the reviewers (appointed according to § 8 (2)) rejects the thesis, another reviewer according to § 8 (2) shall be appointed with the consent of the candidate.

(5) The reviews must be submitted within four weeks of the appointment of the reviewers. They will be forwarded to the candidate, the doctoral committee (only when the overall final grade "summa cum laude" is possible), and the members of the examination commission (§ 9) once these have been appointed. The reviews and the thesis must be available for inspection by members of the University of Bremen in the administrative office of Faculty 2 for at least 14 days. If a review is not received on time, the doctoral committee must issue a reminder, after which it may un-invite the respective reviewer and appoint another reviewer (according to § 8 (2)) with the consent of the candidate.

(6) If two reviewers (according to § 8 (2)) or three reviewers (according to § 8 (2) and (4)) recommend that the thesis should be accepted, the candidate will be admitted to the defence. If the thesis is rejected

1. in the case of § 8 (2), sentence 1 by two of the reviewers, or
2. in the case of § 8 (2), sentence 4 also by the additionally appointed reviewers,

the candidate will not be admitted to the defence. In this case the doctoral committee takes the decision, on the basis of the evaluations, to fail the doctoral thesis.

(7) If other statements regarding the candidate's thesis are submitted, they must be brought to the attention of the candidate and the members of the examination commission.

(8) The doctoral committee decides on the admission of the candidate to the defence on the basis of the reviews and according to the regulations stated in § 8 (2) to (7).

§ 9

Examination commission and oral examination (defence)

(1) The doctoral committee appoints an examination commission for the oral examination (thesis defence).

(2) The examination commission consists of:

1. four academics holding a doctoral degree, among them at least two university teachers of Faculty 2.
2. two further members of the University of Bremen, among them at least one student of Faculty 2.

The members of the examination commission are appointed by the doctoral committee. The reviewers may be appointed as examiners. The chair of the examination commission, who must be a full-time university teacher of Faculty 2 and cannot be reviewer or the supervisor, is suggested by the candidate and appointed by the doctoral committee. Members in category 1 must be sufficiently

independent of each other. Only the members in category 1 have a vote in the decision of the examination commission on the grade awarded for the defence. If a candidate is admitted to the defence on the recommendation of an additional reviewer according to § 8 (4), the reviewer who recommended rejection of the thesis may not become member of the examination commission. The reviewer who recommended that the thesis be rejected, but was outvoted, should not be mentioned in the published thesis.

(3) The doctoral committee defines the date for the defence of the thesis in consultation with the candidate and the chair of the examination commission. The defence has to be open to members of the University.

(4) The defence has to be held in German or in English language. The defence covers selected issues and topics on the subject addressed in the thesis and related areas. Aspects addressed in the written reviews may be discussed during the defence. Additional statements according to § 8 (7) will be included, if as a member of the examination commission or the candidate makes them part of the discussion. The examination commission awards a grade for the defence. The grade 1.0 can only be awarded unanimously.

(5) Within two weeks after the defence the examination commission submits a written report on the defence to the doctoral committee. The report shall include the reviews, the examiner's additional comments from the defence where applicable, as well as a protocol of the defence and the grade awarded for the defence, and the examination commission's statement whether the thesis must be revised before publication, and if so, to what extent.

(6) If the defence has failed to satisfy the examiners, it may be repeated once. In the event of failure, the chair of the doctoral committee shall inform the candidate of the decision, which is open to appeal, on the basis of the report (as per § 9 (5)), and point out that the examination can be repeated once. If the candidate fails the repeat defence, the doctoral procedure will be terminated as unsuccessful. The defence should be repeated within a year of the notification of failure.

7) If a thesis requires revision, the doctoral committee will make a final decision in accordance with § 10 (1) only after the examination commission has confirmed the successful revision of the thesis. The examination commission can delegate the checking and confirmation of the revision to one or more of the reviewers or another suitable person. In case of doubt the decision is made by the doctoral committee. The examination commission determines a time frame for the revision of the thesis, normally not to exceed six months.

§ 10

Decision regarding the doctoral degree

1) The doctoral committee bases its decision on the reviews and the report on the defence.

2) If the doctoral committee has doubts regarding the examination commission's report on the defence or the contents of the reviews on the thesis, it will instruct the examination commission to review the case again, stating the relevant reasons. The votes of members of the examination commission who do not hold a doctorate may advise but do not vote in the decision-making process.

3) If the doctoral committee has doubts regarding the examination procedure which cannot be resolved by the examination commission, the doctoral committee may, with the support of the appeals committee, appoint a new examination commission (as per § 9) and arrange an new defence.

4) § 10 (3) applies accordingly, if the examination commission fails to present the report on the defence within a defined time frame and does not respond to a reminder from the doctoral committee.

5) The overall performance of the doctoral candidate will be given a grade based on the weighted average of the grades for the component parts; the evaluation of the thesis accounts for 70%, the defence 30%.

- Overall grade 1.0 = summa cum laude (with distinction, excellent)
- Overall grade >1.0 to <2.0 = magna cum laude (very good)
- Overall grade 2.0 to <3.0 = cum laude (good)
- Overall grade 3.0 to 4.0 = rite (passed)

6) The names of the reviewers, their respective institutions, as well as the grades given in the thesis reviews and the defence will be recorded in a doctoral transcript to be signed by the Dean of Faculty 2 and the chair of the doctoral committee. This transcript will be given to the candidate on completion of all components of the doctoral procedure.

§ 11

Invalidity of components of the doctorate

(1) If, after submission of the thesis, there are indications that the candidate may have copied substantial parts of the work from another, unreferenced source (plagiarism), the defence will not take place until the candidate has been cleared of the suspicion of cheating. The candidate is requested to cooperate in the process of clarification.

(2) If evidence is provided before the doctoral certificate has been issued demonstrating that the candidate cheated when providing the requested documents and statements for admission to the examination procedure, or in the thesis or in the defence, or that essential conditions for admission to the examination procedure were invalid, the doctoral committee will declare the doctorate invalid. Before taking such a decision, the doctoral committee will ask for a statement from the supervisor.

§ 12

Publication of the thesis

(1) The thesis must be published in book form, in a journal, as a mimeographed manuscript or in digital form; this also applies to a cumulative thesis. Previously published parts of a thesis do not need to be published again in the process of publishing the thesis. In addition to the copies required in the examination process, the candidate must present the State and University Library (*Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek*) with the following copies free of charge for the purpose of publication:

- a) 30 letterpress or photographic-print copies for circulation by the University, or
- b) 10 copies on long-lasting, wood- and acid-free paper together with proof of a print run of at least 150 copies which will be distributed through the publishing trade by a commercial publisher. In this case it must be indicated on the inside front cover that the publication is a doctoral thesis, and where the doctorate was obtained. Alternatively, it may be published via a book-on-demand service, or
- c) 10 copies on long-lasting, wood- and acid-free paper together with proof of publication of the thesis in a journal, or
- d) 6 copies on long-lasting, wood- and acid-free paper plus a digital copy which complies with the current regulations of the State and University Library regarding the submission of digital publications (*Richtlinie zur Abgabe von elektronischen Publikationen*). In this case the candidate transfers to the State and University Library Bremen, the German National Library (DNB) in Frankfurt/Leipzig and, if applicable, the Special Subject Collections Library of the German Research Foundation (*DFG-Sondersammelgebietsbibliothek*) the right to publish the digital version in data networks.

(2) The thesis can be published in revised or shortened form. Revisions or shortenings must be agreed on between the candidate and the chair of the examination commission or another member of the examination commission appointed by the chair. Changes must be recorded in the form of a list, and the list signed by both the candidate and the chair of the examination commission. The published version must contain an indication of the extent to which the doctoral thesis has been revised or shortened.

(3) The thesis should be published within one year of the candidate's passing the examination. In special cases, the time limit stated in sentence 1 may be extended. This may be granted by the doctoral committee on application by the candidate. If the time limit is not kept due to the fault of the candidate, all rights acquired previously during the examination process will become invalid.

§ 13

Using the title of doctor, revocation of degree

(1) After the successful completion of the doctoral process, a certificate signed by the Rector and the Dean of Faculty 2 is issued to the candidate.

(2) The title “doctor” can be used only after receipt of the doctoral certificate.

(3) The doctoral certificate and the transcript documenting the components of the doctoral examination are issued after the thesis has been published in accordance with § 12 or publication is guaranteed.

(4) The doctoral degree can only be revoked, if it became evident that the candidate cheated in order to obtain it. The decision on revocation is made by the Faculty Council of Faculty 2, on the basis of a statement by the doctoral committee. The candidate must be given the chance to comment before a final decision is reached.

§ 14

Doctorate under joint supervision with a foreign university

(1) Doctoral procedures may be conducted in conjunction with a second supervisor from a foreign university, provided that there is a contractual agreement with that university which has been approved by the doctoral committee.

(2) The present doctoral degree regulations apply to a doctorate under joint supervision with a foreign university, unless other regulations have been agreed.

(3) The agreement according to § 14 (1) shall specify

- the names of the thesis supervisors at each of the universities,
- periods of study that the candidate will spend at each of the universities,
- the university where the oral or the final thesis examination will be held,
- the evaluation criteria and, if necessary, the grading scheme,
- the composition of the examination commission, which must have at least one examining member from each of the universities,
- the languages in which the dissertation and the summaries are to be written,
- the type of doctoral degree the universities will confer if the candidate is successful.

(4) For the candidate's admission to the examination process with joint supervision at the University of Bremen it is imperative that he/she meets the requirements for admission to the examination process at both universities.

(5) The candidate's examination commission shall consist of at least one university teacher from the foreign university and one university teacher from the University of Bremen; these may be the reviewers and/or the supervisors. The members of the examination commission from the University of Bremen are appointed by the doctoral committee. The members of the examination commission must be sufficiently fluent in the language of the dissertation and the language used during the oral examination (defence) to be able to participate in the oral examination (defence) and the deliberations of the examination commission.

(6) After successful completion of the doctoral procedure the universities shall issue a joint certificate signed by both universities. Alternatively, each university may issue its own certificate, in which the doctoral procedure with joint supervision will be clearly indicated. The certificate is issued to the candidate once he/she provides proof that the thesis has been published.

§ 15

General rules of procedure/rights and duties of the parties concerned

(1) In accordance with § 2 (2) No. 2, Bremen Administrative Procedures Act ("BremVwVfG") dated 15 November 1976 (Bremen Law Gazette p. 243), §§ 20 to 27, 29 to 38, 40 to 52, 79, 80 and 96 of the BremVwVfG apply to the doctoral examination procedure.

(2) The Bremen Administrative Procedures Act applies without restriction to the acceptance as a doctoral candidate and admission to the examination process.

§ 16

Final and transitional provisions

1) These regulations become valid on approval by the Rector of the University of Bremen.

2) At the same time the doctoral regulations from 14 March 2007 and 23 May 1984 cease to be valid for all procedures of Faculty 2.

3) The regulations from 14 March 2007 apply to candidates who were admitted to the examination process (§ 6) before these doctoral regulations became valid.

4) On application by the candidate, the regulations of 14 March 2007 may remain valid to a candidate if he/she was accepted as doctoral candidate (§ 4) before these doctoral regulations were approved. Such an application can only be made within one year after approval of the present regulations (*final date of such an application is 27 July 2016*).

Bremen, 28 July 2015

Rector of the University of Bremen

This is an inofficial translation:

Please note that the official German version of this statement is requested for the submission of the thesis.

Appendix 1 to the doctoral degree regulations

Declaration in lieu of oath

I, _____

(first name, surname, address, matriculation number)

on affixing my signature to this document, declare in lieu of oath that I have produced the above work independently and without the help of others, that I have marked all passages that I have quoted or paraphrased from other publications, and that I have used no sources or resources other than those named in this work.

I declare in lieu of oath that the statements made herein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I have not concealed anything.

I am aware that to make a false affidavit is a criminal offence which is liable to punishment in accordance with § 156 of the German Criminal Code (StGB) of up to three years' imprisonment or a fine in the case of intentional commission of the offence, or in accordance with § 161 (1) of the German Criminal Code up to one year's imprisonment or a fine for negligent commission of the offence.

Place, date

Signature