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## **Regulations for doctoral studies as a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Medical Sciences or Dr. rer. med. at the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf dated 05.03.2018**

Based on Sec. 2 (4) and Sec. 67 (3) Sentence 2 Hochschulgesetz - HG [*Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen*: Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia] dated 16 September 2014 (GV.NRW. page 547), last changed on 07.04.2017 (GV.NRW. page 414) Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf has enacted the following regulations:

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## **§ 1 Definition of the Terms Doctorate and Doctoral Degree**

(1) The Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf confers the international title of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Medical Sciences subject to completing regular doctoral examination proceedings; alternatively, the title of Doctor rerum medicarum (Dr. rer. med.) can be conferred at the request of the doctoral researcher.

(2) The PhD programme is carried out by the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf with the involvement of partner institutions. These partner institutions are the other faculties at Heinrich Heine University, the DDZ [*Deutsches Diabetes-Zentrum: German Diabetes Center*], the IUF [*Leibniz-Institut für umweltmedizinische Forschung: Leibniz Research Institute for Environmental Medicine*] and *Forschungszentrum Jülich*.

(3) Proof of the academic qualification required for the regular doctoral examination proceedings must be provided through the doctoral components. These comprise

- a) a written piece of scientific work (dissertation) about a topic relating to one of the theme clusters of the PhD programme,
- b) successful completion of the structured training programme for the respective theme cluster as well as of the basic curriculum at the Medical Research School Düsseldorf (medRSD), and
- c) an oral exam (doctoral defence).

(4) The scientific work generally takes three to four years. Scientific work completed before the doctoral researcher is accepted to the PhD programme cannot be counted as doctoral components pursuant to § 1 (3).

## **§ 2 PhD theme clusters**

(1) The PhD programme comprises PhD theme clusters with a different content focus: Molecular Medicine, Diagnosis and Therapy of Diseases, Health and Society.

(2) The members of a cluster are the supervisors who assign the doctoral researchers to the respective PhD theme clusters as well as the co-supervisors of the allocated supervision group. It is possible to be a member of several PhD theme clusters.

(3) An application must be made to the Dean's Office for new PhD theme clusters. The following points must be presented in the application: a) added value of the new theme cluster; b) specific requirements; c) training concept, course contents and curriculum, persons involved.

(4) The annual meeting of members for a cluster appoints a Chair and a Vice Chair to represent the PhD theme cluster on the PhD Committee. The Chair convenes the members for the PhD theme cluster for regular meetings at least once per semester.

(5) The PhD theme clusters develop a structured training programme for the Professional Skills and Transferable Skills area in agreement with the respective other PhD theme clusters and the Medical Research School. All content matters are discussed at the cluster meetings, e.g. planning and further development of the training programme, collaboration with other PhD theme clusters, etc.

(6) All members of a PhD theme cluster are obliged to participate in the development and implementation of the training programme.

### § 3 PhD Committee

(1) The PhD Committee includes the following persons:

a) The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine or a Vice Dean:

b) Two members with *Habilitation* for each respective theme cluster. These representatives are elected at the annual meetings of members for the corresponding PhD theme clusters.

Their term of office is two years. They may be reappointed;

c) The spokesperson for the Medical Research School and

d) The Head of the Department for Academic Procedures of the Dean's Office for the Faculty of Medicine.

(2) The PhD Committee appoints a Chair and a Vice Chair from its members for a period of two years. Reappointment is possible.

(3) The PhD Committee takes decisions regarding acceptance to the PhD programme, allocation of the doctoral researcher to a PhD theme cluster and the composition and deployment of the respective supervision group. It advises the Dean at his/her own request in matters relating to completing a doctorate for a PhD at the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. Furthermore, the PhD Committee advises the Dean on preparing title revocation proceedings pursuant to § 16 (3) a.

(4) All members of the PhD Committee have voting rights. The PhD Committee takes decisions by simple majority.

(5) The Dean excludes members of the PhD Committee from discussions if there is a concern as to prejudice. Members are also excluded if they are directly involved in the doctoral examination proceedings that are the subject of the discussion, and their doctoral researchers are also excluded. They do have the right to be heard.

#### **§ 4 Prerequisites for admission for doctoral studies**

(1) For admission for doctoral studies in accordance with Sec. 67 (4) HG NRW, the applicant must

a) provide evidence of completion of a relevant university/higher education degree with a standard duration of study of at least eight semesters, for which a title other than 'Bachelor' is conferred, or

b) provide evidence of completion of a relevant master's study programme as defined by Sec. 61 (2) Sentence 2 HG NRW

c) and have completed the study programme listed in § 4 (1) a) and b) with one of the following grades:

i) an ECTS grade of at least B or

ii) a relative positioning among the best 25% of his/her year or

iii) grade 2.0 or better.

(2) Relevant degrees as defined in (1) above include diploma degrees at academic universities in the Federal Republic of Germany as well as master's degrees at universities in the Federal

Republic of Germany from a study programme that qualifies the applicant to take part in one of the theme clusters of the PhD programme.

(3) Recognition as relevant as defined in (1) is also given to other degrees completed at universities in the Federal Republic of Germany if the degree alone or the degree in combination with PhD preparatory studies adequately prepare the applicant for the topic of the doctorate.

(4) Degrees completed at foreign universities are recognised as relevant accordingly pursuant to § 63 a HG NRW. If there are no equivalence agreements, the Dean decides on the equivalence of the educational qualification, generally involving the ZAB [*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen*: Central Office for Foreign Education].

(5) Admission pursuant to (3) and (4) can be made dependent on undertaking appropriate PhD preparatory studies. These serve as proof of suitability for the doctorate project. The studies should not last more than four semesters. The scope and content of these studies as well as the number and type of the credits and exam components are set out by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, taking into account the studies already completed that are relevant for the doctorate project.

(6) To be included in the PhD programme, the applicant must have sufficient knowledge of English or of German. Applicants completing their doctoral studies in English and whose native language is not English must provide proof of the required English language skills in accordance with the university regulations on proof of language skills pursuant to Sec. 49 (10) HG. The details are set out in the implementation rules for these Regulations.

(7) Pursuant to Sec. 67 (5) HG, the doctoral researcher is obliged to enrol at Heinrich Heine University as a doctoral researcher or a guest doctoral researcher (*Promotionshörer/in*) and must remain enrolled throughout the entire duration of the doctorate without interruption. In justified exceptional cases, the Dean can exempt the doctoral researcher from the obligation to enrol.

(8) For all research on or involving human subjects (also deceased persons), for research with human bodily materials and for research involving the collection or evaluation of personal data, approval must be obtained from the Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf or the respective Ethics Committee responsible before commencing the research requiring approval (see also the respective applicable version: Statutes of the Ethics

Committee of the Faculty of Medicine; *Berufsordnung für die nordrheinischen Ärztinnen und Ärzte* (Medical Association's Professional Code of Conduct, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany), Declaration of Helsinki.) If existing data are re-evaluated for research projects (meta-analyses) that were already the subject of an ethics vote, no new ethics vote is required. If study protocol amendments become necessary during the course of the research work, approval must likewise be obtained from the Ethics Committee for these amendments before the work commences.

(9) For work comprising findings from animal testing (in accordance with the TierSchG [*Tierschutzgesetz*: German Animal Welfare Act] as amended) or animal organs, the file reference allocated by the LANUV [*Landesamt für Natur-, Umwelt- und Verbraucherschutz*: State Agency for Nature, Environment and Consumer Protection North Rhine-Westphalia] during the approval procedure and the corresponding excerpt from the approval letter or, in the case of organ removals, the file reference allocated by the ZETT [*Zentrale Einrichtung für Tierforschung und wissenschaftliche Tierschutzaufgaben*: HHU Central Institute for Animal Research and Scientific Animal Protection Tasks] must be available before the testing commences. If animal testing was carried out in person, a declaration on completion of an introduction to laboratory animal science to obtain the proof of specialist knowledge pursuant to Sec. 9 TierSchG as amended or a qualification recognised as equivalent by the Animal Welfare Officer at Heinrich Heine University must likewise be provided.

## **§ 5 Supervision of the doctorate**

(1) The doctoral studies of a doctoral researcher are accompanied by a supervision group deployed by the Dean in agreement with the PhD Committee. The work of the doctoral researcher should be carried out in constant dialogue with this supervision group.

(2) The supervision group comprises the respective subject matter expert (hereinafter referred to as 'supervisor') and at least one additional scientist with a knowledge of the field (hereinafter referred to as 'co-supervisor') from the Faculty of Medicine or the partner institution of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. All supervisor/s and co-supervisor/s must belong to the group of university lecturers (including adjunct professors, junior professors,

*Privatdozenten/Privatdozentinnen* or persons with equivalent qualifications). At least one supervisor must work full time at the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University.

(3) The co-supervisor must be independent of the supervisor and cannot belong to the same institution. His/her task is to provide additional supervision for the doctoral researcher and to mediate in the event of conflict between the supervisor and the doctoral researcher. The supervisors must ensure and declare to the PhD Committee that the doctoral researcher is not burdened with tasks that do not serve completion of the PhD.

(4) In justified cases, the co-supervisor in a supervision group can be changed in accordance with § 5 (1) to (3). The supervisor and the doctoral researcher must notify the PhD Committee immediately of the change. This notification must contain the following information in particular:

- a) the name of the current co-supervisor;
- b) the name of the future co-supervisor as well as a declaration by that person confirming the willingness to act as co-supervisor.
- c) a justifiable reason for the change.

(5) Before commencing work on the dissertation, and no later than three months after acceptance to the PhD programme, the doctoral researcher holds a meeting with the supervision group. Other persons can also take part in this meeting. As a deliverable from the meeting, the doctoral researcher enters into a written supervision agreement (in accordance with § 67 (2) HG NRW) with the supervisor, which unambiguously sets out the entitlements, rights and obligations of both parties. In addition to a detailed project description, the supervision agreement includes the following information in particular:

- a) a list of the conditions that must be met for a successful doctorate from the perspective of the supervisor;
- b) an estimated time line for meeting these conditions;
- c) goals to be met in the first year of working on the dissertation;
- d) details on the planned funding for the doctoral researcher;
- e) details on ethics votes, approval for animal testing, etc.

The supervision agreement is signed by all persons who attended the meeting. Each of these persons and the office of the Medical Research School receive a copy of the signed supervision agreement.

(6) While working on the dissertation, the doctoral researcher and the supervision group meet at least once a year in order to prepare a progress report. Other persons can also take part in this meeting. The progress report describes in particular which goals were met since entering into the supervision agreement or since the last progress report and which goals need to be pursued in the coming year. The progress report also documents any changes in the information described in (5) b) and d) since entering into the supervision agreement or since the last progress report. In addition, the progress report contains the current personal and project-related data.

The progress report is signed by all persons who attended the meeting. The doctoral researcher, the supervision group and the office of the Medical Research School receive a copy of the progress report. The progress reports must be submitted to medRSD on time after the end of each year, starting on the date of acceptance to the PhD programme.

## **§ 6 Acceptance to the PhD programme and registration with medRSD**

(1) The Dean must be notified about the doctoral research project within the first three months of commencing the work. This happens by registering with and being accepted to medRSD. The following must be included with the notification:

- a) A CV in German or in English that contains precise information on the progress of training and studies to date as well as certificates and proof of study progress and the qualifications obtained,
- b) The supervision agreement signed by the doctoral researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor in accordance with Sec. 67 (2) HG.
- c) Details on the doctorate project and a project outline,
- d) If approval by the Ethics Committee is necessary to carry out the work (see also § 4 (8)), a copy of the approval must be included with the initial application prior to commencing the research requiring approval at medRSD. If study protocol amendments become necessary as

part of the doctorate project, the doctoral researcher is obliged, immediately and with the help of the supervisor, to make a corresponding application to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and to submit a corresponding copy of the approval for the respective amendment to medRSD at his/her own responsibility.

(2) If the prerequisites for doctoral studies pursuant to § 4 and § 6 (1) are not met, the student will not be admitted for doctoral studies. The doctoral researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor are notified in writing of the result.

(3) The Dean takes the decision regarding the appropriate requirements for the PhD preparatory studies in accordance with § 4 (5) as well as regarding recognition of relevance in accordance with § 4 (3).

(4) If the applicant is accepted to the PhD programme, he/she receives written confirmation of acceptance and of the Dean's decision in (3) as well as instruction on the Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. Furthermore, the dissertation is allocated to a PhD theme cluster pursuant to § 2 (1). The doctoral researcher is obliged to take part in the structured training programme in accordance with § 1 (3) b). He/she receives a certificate for successful completion.

(5) Acceptance of the doctorate project lasts for an initial period of three years. Within this period, the dissertation should be submitted and the application for admission for doctoral examination proceedings made. A written application can be made to extend this period by one year. The reason for the extension must be presented transparently in the application. The application for an extension must be sent to the Dean three months before the end of the three-year period. A further extension of one year can be granted if a special written application is made (*5 years in total*). If the total time for the doctorate project is exceeded or the doctoral researcher fails to apply for an extension on time, he/she can be excluded from medRSD.

(6) Upon acceptance to the PhD programme as well as throughout the doctorate, personal data are collected, automatically stored and processed by the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf to meet statutory requirements as well as for legislative and planning purposes at the university in accordance with the provisions of the applicable

*Hochschulstatistikgesetz* (German University Statistics Act). The nature and scope of the personal data are described in the implementation rules (Appendix 1) for these Regulations.

(7) The data are regularly transferred or passed on to the *Landesamt für Datenverarbeitung und Statistik NRW* (State Agency for Data Processing and Statistics North Rhine-Westphalia) with reference to the data collection characteristics of the applicable *Hochschulstatistikgesetz* as well as to the Statistics department of the Administration of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf for the purpose of presenting university statistics. The Faculty retains the documents on the completed doctoral examination proceedings for a period of 30 years. After this time, the documents are offered to the University Archives for further archiving.

(8) The doctoral researcher is obliged, at least once a year, to check the correctness of the data collected upon acceptance, to notify the Faculty of Medicine of any changes and to confirm that the doctorate project is still under way or has been discontinued. If there is no response within a specified time limit despite a reminder, the doctorate project can be classified as discontinued.

(9) The doctoral researcher can send the Dean written notice that he/she will not continue before submitting the application for admission for doctoral examination proceedings. In this case, the candidate is considered to have not attempted to complete the doctorate.

(10) The doctoral researcher is obliged to enrol at the University on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the doctorate pursuant to § 4 (7).

## **§ 7 Application for admission for doctoral examination proceedings**

(1) The application for admission for doctoral examination proceedings can be submitted in writing to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine by doctoral researchers if

- a) the doctorate project has been accepted pursuant to § 6
- b) the progress reports pursuant to § 5 (6) were submitted to medRSD on time and
- c) the training programme was completed successfully pursuant to § 6 (4).

(2) The following must be included in the application for admission:

1. Four bound or stapled copies of the dissertation on paper,
2. One copy of the dissertation in electronic form as an unprotected Portable Document Format (PDF) in order to facilitate a plagiarism check using software. The doctoral researcher provides his/her written consent to the check in the application for admission.
3. a) a declaration regarding the doctoral researcher's own share of the dissertation, which is signed by the doctoral researcher and the supervisor and co-supervisor pursuant to § 5
4. b) in the case of publications involving the doctoral researcher, additionally a list of the contributions of the individual authors to the manuscript signed by the first author, the corresponding author and the doctoral researcher. The respective share in content of all authors must be explained in detail. The specific contribution of the doctoral researcher to the manuscript must be described. It is not sufficient to merely state percentages. The first author, the corresponding author and the doctoral researcher must confirm in writing that these details are correct. If a signature cannot be obtained, the reasons must be provided.
5. A one-page written summary of the dissertation in German and the same in English,
6. An affidavit that the exam component was written independently, without third-party assistance, and that no sources or aids other than those listed were used and that quotes were referenced, and that it was prepared in accordance with the Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. The exact wording is contained in the implementation rules for these Regulations. The affidavit must be dated and signed by the doctoral researcher in the application for admission.
7. A declaration of whether the doctoral researcher has already submitted the dissertation to another faculty; the declaration must also provide information on all previous unsuccessful and successful attempts at completing a doctorate;
8. A declaration by the doctoral researcher of whether the doctoral defence will be carried out in German or in English;
9. Proof of successful participation in the training programme for the corresponding PhD theme cluster and at the Medical Research School;

10. Pursuant to § 4 (8): a copy of the approval (including of all amendments) of the Ethics Committee responsible.
11. Pursuant to § 4 (9): the file reference allocated by the LANUV and the corresponding excerpt from the approval letter or, in the case of organ removals, the file reference allocated by the ZETT and/or the proof of specialist knowledge.
12. Proof of completion of the studies pursuant to § 4.
13. The course book / certificate of enrolment, showing the period spent completing a doctorate at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. Enrolment must be documented throughout the entire period of the doctorate. If necessary the exemption by the Dean from the obligation to enrol.
14. A CV in German or in English that contains precise information on the progress of training and studies to date and that is dated and signed;
15. A birth certificate or (if name has changed) marriage certificate of the applicant;
16. A certificate of good conduct (type O) that is no older than six months;
17. A photograph
18. A declaration of whether the title of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Medical Sciences or the title of Doctor rerum medicarum (Dr. rer. med.) should be conferred.

Certificates must be presented as originals or as certified copies.

(3) The doctoral examination proceedings including the related administrative tasks are carried out by the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine. The Dean decides whether to grant admission for doctoral examination proceedings. The doctoral researcher receives written notification of the decision regarding admission for doctoral examination proceedings.

(4) Admission can only be refused if the enclosed documents and declarations are incomplete, incorrect or contravene the provisions of these Doctoral Regulations, if unsuccessful attempts have already been made to complete a doctorate or the doctoral researcher does not meet the prerequisites for submission pursuant to § 4. The notice must contain grounds for the decision and instructions on the right of appeal.

## § 8 Dissertation

- (1) The dissertation should be of scientific merit and demonstrate the ability of the author to carry out independent research and present the research findings appropriately.
- (2) The topic of the dissertation is chosen by the doctoral researcher in agreement with the supervisor.
- (3) The dissertation must be written in German or in English. The title page of the dissertation and its back page must be formatted in accordance with Appendix 2 of these Regulations. The dissertation must include a summary in German and a summary in English.
- (4) In addition to the traditional form, an article-based dissertation can also be written. The prerequisite for this is at least three publications with at least two unshared first authorships by the doctoral researcher. The original articles must have been published or accepted for publication in an internationally recognised journal listed in PubMed or ISI Web of Knowledge that has a peer review procedure. An article-based dissertation has the chapters Introduction, Discussion and Summary. The Material and Methods sections as well as Results are replaced by the article. Additional methods, results or details not mentioned in the articles can be listed in the article-based dissertation. With an article-based dissertation, the doctoral researcher must ensure independently that all authors are informed of the use of the manuscripts as an article-based dissertation and that use of the manuscripts does not constitute a copyright infringement.
- (5) If parts of the dissertation were already published in advance, or if manuscripts were submitted for publication, all articles must be listed in the dissertation as a full reference with all authors. In addition, the text of the dissertation must make clear which texts, figures or data were taken from the author's own articles or from articles by other authors.
- (6) Experimental work for a dissertation must generally be carried out at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. With the agreement of the supervisor, experimental work can also be carried out at an institution outside of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf.
- (7) The doctorate can only be carried out full time on the PhD programme.

## § 9 Examination and acceptance of the dissertation

(1) The Dean generally appoints two, but no more than four, persons (examiners) to report on the dissertation. The examiners generally belong to the group of persons listed in § 5 (2). Contrary to Sentence 2, the Dean can appoint examiners from another faculty or another university if a justified application is made.

(2) At least one examiner must be a full-time faculty member at the Faculty of Medicine. In justified exceptional cases, the Dean can deviate from the arrangement described in the previous sentence.

(3) The reports on the dissertation must be presented within six weeks of the appointment in the form of a report containing detailed grounds. The reports must conclude with a vote on whether the dissertation is of scientific merit as defined by § 8 (1), demonstrates the ability of the author to carry out independent research and presents the research findings appropriately and whether the examiner recommends that the dissertation be accepted or refused.

(4) If the vote is positive, the work must be graded using the following grades and intermediary grades: *summa cum laude* (excellent, 0.0 or 0.3), *magna cum laude* (very good, 0.7; 1.0 or 1.3), *cum laude* (good, 1.7; 2.0 or 2.3) or *rite* (sufficient, 2.7 or 3.0). If the vote is negative, the work must be graded as *non sufficit* (insufficient, 4).

(5) If requested reports on the dissertation are not provided or not provided on time, or if the examiner does not meet the formal requirements concerning review, the examiner may be released from his/her duties and a different person may be appointed in their place.

(6) If the grades proposed in both reports are at least *rite* (sufficient, 3.0), the grade for the written doctoral component is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the two grades.

(7) If the grades proposed in both reports are *non sufficit* (insufficient, 4), the grade for the written doctoral component is 'insufficient' (4).

(8) If one of the two grades is *non sufficit* (insufficient, 4) and the other grade is at least *rite* (sufficient, 3), the Dean generally appoints an additional person to review the dissertation. In this case, (3) to (5) apply accordingly.

The grade for the written doctoral component is then calculated as the arithmetic mean of all grades that are at least *rite* (sufficient, 3.0). If two of the three grades are *non sufficit* (insufficient, 4), the final grade is *non sufficit* (insufficient, 4).

(9) The dissertation with all reports is available for inspection in the Dean's Office for 10 working days. In addition to the supervisors and co-supervisors, inspection is open to the persons appointed to review the dissertation, the doctoral researcher and all members of the Faculty of Medicine who belong to the group of persons listed in § 5 (2) Sentence 2. The beginning of the inspection period is announced.

(10) If the reports pursuant to (3) and (4) vote that the dissertation constitutes a sufficient performance as defined in § 8 (1) and if no justified objection to acceptance by a member of the group of persons described in (9) is received by the Dean at least two working days after the end of the inspection period, the dissertation is accepted.

(11) If all reports pursuant to (3) and (4) vote that the dissertation does not constitute a sufficient performance as defined in § 8 (1) and if no justified objection to refusal by the doctoral researcher or by a member of the group of persons described in (6) is received by the Dean at least two working days after the end of the inspection period, the dissertation is rejected.

(12) In the event of an objection pursuant to (10) or (11), the Dean requests all examiners to review their reports. The examiners may then revise their reports. Supplementary reports must be obtained if necessary. The Dean then decides whether to accept or reject the dissertation based on all reports. The decision is prepared by the PhD Committee.

(13) The applicant must be notified of acceptance or rejection of the dissertation. If the dissertation is rejected, the notice must refer to the provisions in § 13 (1) on repeating the dissertation.

(14) If all reports vote that the dissertation constitutes an excellent performance (*summa cum laude*, 0.0 or 0.3), the Dean obtains an additional, external report.

## **§ 10 Examining Board and date of doctoral defence**

- (1) After the dissertation is accepted, the Dean appoints an Examining Board for the defence of the doctoral thesis.
- (2) The Examining Board generally includes the following persons: the two examiners, a member of the PhD Committee, who chairs the Board, and at least one other member (no more than two other members) of the Faculty of Medicine who belongs to the group of persons listed in § 5 (2) Sentence 2. The Chair belongs to a different theme cluster than the doctoral researcher being examined.
- (3) The Dean sets the date for the doctoral defence, invites the doctoral researcher and ensures that the examiners are notified. The defence must take place no later than six months after the end of the inspection period. Otherwise, it is deemed to have been failed unless the doctoral researcher is not responsible for the delay. In this case, an appropriate extension must be granted. The date for the doctoral defence is announced no later than 14 days before the planned defence.
- (4) An exam can only take place if all expected members of the Examining Board are present.
- (5) The Dean can change the Examining Board used after hearing from the doctoral researcher if the doctoral examination proceedings cannot otherwise be continued within a reasonable period.

## **§ 11 Doctoral Defence**

- (1) The doctoral defence is held in German or in English as an individual exam by the Examining Board in the form of an exam panel.
- (2) Before the defence, the Examining Board discusses the reports on the dissertation in a closed meeting.
- (3) The defence comprises a presentation of no more than 30 minutes in length by the doctoral researcher and questions by the Examining Board for at least 30 minutes. The questions should relate to the topic covered in the doctoral thesis or presentation.

(4) The doctoral defence is generally public for the Faculty. The Chair can take questions from the auditorium.

(5) A written record is prepared during the defence that records the content, development and result of the exam. The record is kept by a member of the Examining Board determined by the Chair.

## **§ 12 Assessment of the oral doctoral component and overall grade**

(1) Directly after the end of the oral doctoral exam, the fully assembled Examining Board decides in a closed meeting whether to award the defence a pass or a fail grade.

(2) If the grade for the oral exam is poorer than 3.0 (*rite*), the exam is deemed to have been failed. The defence is likewise failed if the doctoral researcher does not attend the defence or discontinues the defence without providing reasonable grounds.

(3) If the doctoral defence is given a pass grade, the Examining Board determines the precise grade for the defence and the overall grade for the doctorate at the same meeting and makes a note of these grades in the exam record.

(4) A doctoral defence that obtains a pass must be rated using the following grades and intermediate grades: *summa cum laude* (excellent, 0.0 or 0.3), *magna cum laude* (very good, 0.7; 1.0 or 1.3), *cum laude* (good, 1.7; 2.0 or 2.3) or *rite* (sufficient, 2.7 or 3.0). The grade for the oral doctoral component is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the individual grades awarded by the individual Board members.

(5) The dissertation grade counts for two thirds of the overall grade, with the oral exam accounting for the remaining third. The overall grades are as follows: from 0.0 to below 0.5: *summa cum laude* (excellent); from 0.5 to below 1.5: *magna cum laude* (very good); from 1.5 to below 2.5: *cum laude* (good); from 2.5 to 3.0: *rite* (sufficient). The overall grade must be given to one decimal point.

(6) The doctoral researcher must be informed orally of the result of the doctoral defence and the grades (if the dissertation passes) immediately if possible. If the student has passed the exam,

reference must be made to the provisions on publication of the dissertation in § 14 and on the start of the entitlement to use the title of Doctor in § 15 (3). If the student has failed the exam, reference must be made to the provisions on repeats in § 13 (2).

### **§ 13 Repeating doctoral components**

(1) If the dissertation was rejected, there is one opportunity to present a new dissertation. The new dissertation must be materially new compared to the rejected dissertation or must have a different topic; § 8 also applies in this case. The new dissertation can be submitted no earlier than one year after the rejection. Doctoral researchers who want to make use of the option to repeat must notify the Dean's Office in writing within three months of rejection of the dissertation. The complete documents and declarations in § 7 (2) 1 to 17 must be submitted again with the new dissertation; No. 6 must refer to the refusal of the first dissertation. All unsuccessful attempts (also at other universities) are counted if the study programme is the same or a comparable study programme and the exam component is the same. The Dean decides whether to grant admission for doctoral examination proceedings with the new dissertation pursuant to § 7 (3). After admission, the proceedings are continued in accordance with §§ 8 to 12 of these Regulations.

(2) A failed doctoral defence can be repeated once. The repeat must take place no earlier than two and no later than six months after the unsuccessful defence. In particularly justified exceptional cases, the Dean can, in agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral researcher, extend or shorten the deadline for repeating by a period agreed upon in the individual case. §§ 10 to 12 apply with regard to the repeat exam.

(3) If the candidate fails the oral exam a second time, the doctoral exam as a whole is definitively failed.

### **§ 14 Publication of the dissertation**

(1) Permission to print the dissertation is granted by the Dean after the oral exam has been passed. The version of the dissertation intended for publication must be presented for this purpose.

(2) The dissertation copies must include the following note: “As an inaugural dissertation printed by permission of the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

signed:

Dean:

Examiner/s: Name A, Name B

(3) The supervisor and the examiners give their consent to the printing of the dissertation in the revision note (Appendix 3). This can take place after purely editorial changes to the dissertation as necessary; no subsequent content changes are permitted. The Dean grants permission to print after receiving the revision note. In exceptional cases, permission to print can also be granted if the revision note has not been received and the doctoral researcher is not responsible for this.

(4) The dissertation must be published within a year of passing the oral doctoral exam. This deadline can be extended once by 3 months on application for due cause. If the deadline is not met, the doctoral examination proceedings are ended without success.

(5) The dissertation is published by submitting:

- a) an electronic version to the University and State Library. The data format and data carrier must be agreed upon with the University and State Library, and
- b) two bound copies of the dissertation to the University and State Library, which is also assigned the right to produce and disseminate or make available in data networks further copies of the dissertation within the framework of the statutory tasks of the university library.

(6) In exceptional cases, the Dean can permit publication without an electronic version subject to a written explanation. In such a case, the following must be submitted:

two bound copies each of the dissertation to the supervisor and the co-supervisor and 10 copies to the University and State Library in Düsseldorf; instead of the 10 copies, three copies are enough if a commercial publisher with a minimum print run of 150 copies takes responsibility for dissemination via bookshops and the publication details are provided on the back of the title page of the dissertation, stating the location of the dissertation.

(7) In all cases, the Dean's Office must be provided with a receipt from the University and State Library in Düsseldorf for the planned copies of the dissertation and of the electronic version of the dissertation if applicable. If § 14 (6) applies, an informal confirmation by the supervisor and the co-supervisor that they have received the planned number of copies of the dissertation must additionally be provided.

(8) In exceptional cases, e.g. for reasons relating to patent law, which must be presented to the Dean for review and approval, the supervisor can defer publication by the University and State Library in Düsseldorf for a year. Dissertations subject to such an embargo must be kept in the University and State Library in Düsseldorf subject to the agreed confidentiality duties. The Dean decides whether to extend the aforementioned periods on application from the supervisor. The doctoral researcher provides proof of submitting the dissertation by presenting a written confirmation from the University and State Library in Düsseldorf to the Dean's Office.

### **§ 15 Ending the doctoral examination proceedings**

(1) Once the dissertation has been duly submitted to the University and State Library in Düsseldorf pursuant to § 14 after permission to print is granted and once submission is confirmed, a doctoral certificate is issued that states the overall grade pursuant to § 12 (5) in Latin and as a decimal figure. The certificate is dated from the date of publication, signed by the Dean and awarded to the doctoral researcher. This marks the successful ending of the doctoral examination proceedings and the doctorate is completed.

(2) If it emerges before the doctoral certificate is awarded that the prerequisites for admission for doctoral examination proceedings are not met, the doctorate is not completed.

(3) Once the doctorate is completed, the student has the right to use the Doctor title. It is not permissible to use this title or similar titles before this time.

(4) A doctoral certificate acquired through the regular doctoral examination proceedings can be renewed after 50 years at an honorary ceremony. (doctoral anniversary)

(5) The doctoral attempt is deemed not to have been made if

a) the doctoral researcher withdraws the application for admission for doctoral examination proceedings with the Dean's consent prior to admission pursuant to § 7, or the Dean revokes admission during the proceedings because key admission requirements are no longer met or were never met and were erroneously assumed to have been met, or

b) it is not possible to continue the doctoral examination proceedings for reasons for which the doctoral researcher is not responsible.

(6) The doctoral examination proceedings are deemed to have ended unsuccessfully if

a) the dissertation was rejected and the intention to repeat the dissertation was not communicated in good time or admission with the new dissertation was refused (§ 13 (1)) or the new dissertation was likewise rejected, or

b) the oral exam was once again failed during the repeat, or

c) the doctoral researcher fails to meet a deadline set out in these Regulations or set by the Dean despite a reminder and potential extension and is responsible for such failure, or

d) the Dean revokes admission during the proceedings,

i) because the doctoral researcher is guilty of deceit when providing proof of the admission requirements, or

ii) if doctoral components are declared invalid before the doctoral certificate is awarded because the doctoral researcher is guilty of deceit when providing proof of these doctoral components, or

iii) the Dean has found that the doctoral examination proceedings cannot be continued in accordance with the provisions in these Regulations for reasons for which the doctoral researcher is responsible.

## **§ 16 Deceit and revocation of the Doctor title**

(1) If it emerges before the doctoral certificate is awarded that the doctoral researcher is guilty of attempted deceit, deceit or scientific misconduct, the doctorate is not completed. The decision is

taken by the Dean after the doctoral researcher has had an opportunity to make a written statement.

(2) After the doctoral certificate is awarded, the title of Doctor can be revoked if it emerges that it was acquired based on incorrect information regarding the prerequisites for the doctorate or through deceit, threat or bribery or if there has been scientific misconduct.

(3) Proceedings to revoke the Doctor title are initiated if the Dean obtains knowledge that a matter exists which would lead to revocation of the title pursuant to (2). The proceedings comprise up to two stages.

a) The first stage serves to carry out preliminary investigations and protect from false accusations. During this stage, the Dean examines whether more details regarding the suspicion can be obtained that would justify further investigations or whether the suspicion is unfounded. The Dean seeks advice from the PhD Committee described in § 3 to carry out this examination. During the preliminary investigations, the doctoral researcher concerned is given an opportunity to submit a statement. After the preliminary investigations have concluded, the Dean reports to the Faculty Council on the findings of the preliminary investigations. The members of the Faculty Council with a doctorate and voting rights then decide either to discontinue the proceedings without revoking the title or to continue with the second stage of the proceedings.

b) The second stage serves to investigate all relevant facts in a comprehensive and unbiased manner and to reach a final decision regarding revocation of the title. To do this, the members of the Faculty Council listed in (3) a) appoint at least two and no more than four persons to make a report. At least one of the persons appointed to make a report cannot be a member of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. The persons appointed to make a report prepare their reports independently of each other based on the documents provided to them and their own investigations. The report details all facts that appear relevant to the reporting persons. These facts are weighted, and a closing recommendation is made to the Faculty Council. The doctoral researcher concerned is given an opportunity to inspect the reports and make a statement. Taking into account all information then available, the members of the Faculty Council listed in (3) a) decide whether to revoke the Doctor title. Otherwise the provisions in

the *Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz NRW* (Administrative Procedure Act for North Rhine-Westphalia) apply, in particular with respect to revoking administrative acts.

### **§ 17 Special rights of the Dean**

- (1) If it is impossible to carry out or continue doctoral examination proceedings in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations, the Dean decides how to best proceed in accordance with these Regulations.
- (2) If the Dean is prejudiced with respect to doctoral examination proceedings, the proceedings are transferred to a Vice Dean. This applies in particular if the Dean is directly involved in doctoral examination proceedings as the supervisor or co-supervisor.

### **§ 18 Binational doctorates**

The requirements for the doctoral proceedings and content arising from these Regulations also apply to binational doctorates. The collaboration agreement to be concluded individually for each doctoral researcher concerning joint doctoral examination proceedings between Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf and a foreign university can include individual exceptions to the extent that the special proceedings of a binational doctorate necessitate such exceptions. All exceptions require the approval of a simple majority of the members of the PhD Committee listed in § 3.

### **§ 19 Transitional provisions**

For doctoral researchers who have already registered for doctoral examination proceedings at medRSD before these Regulations enter into force, the following transitional provisions apply:

- a) Contrary to the provisions in § 6 (5), the three-year period does not commence until these Regulations enter into force. The deadline can be extended pursuant to § 6 (5).
- b) They are obliged to enrol at Heinrich Heine University in the semester following on from these Regulations entering into force in accordance with § 4 (7).

c) They are excepted from the provisions in § 4 (1) c).

## **§ 20 Entry into force**

These Regulations enter into force on the day after they are published in the Official Bulletin of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf.

Issued pursuant to the resolution by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine dated 25.01.2018.

Düsseldorf, 05.03.2018

The President  
of Heinrich Heine University  
Düsseldorf

Anja Steinbeck  
(Univ.-Prof. Dr. jur.)

Convenience translation, meant only for your information. Only the German version is legally binding.

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Implementation rules for the Regulations for the PhD programme at the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf as part of the Medical Research School dated 05.03.2018**

#### **Implementation rules for § 4 Prerequisites for doctoral studies**

To be accepted to the PhD programme, the applicant must have sufficient knowledge of English or of German. Applicants completing their doctoral studies in English and whose native language is not English must provide proof of the required English language skills by means of one of the following language certificates:

- a) Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL, paper  $\geq 500$  / computer  $\geq 200$  / iBT  $\geq 80$ );
- b) International English Language Testing System (IELTS, Academic  $\geq$  level 6);
- c) Cambridge Main Suite of English examinations (CAE, level C1);
- d) an equivalent language certificate.

(2) Applicants completing their doctoral studies in German and whose native language is not German must provide proof of the required German language skills by means of one of the following language tests:

- a) DSH-2 (Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang/German language examination for university entrance, at least level 2);
- b) TestDaF with at least TDN 4 in all exam components;
- c) Kleines or Großes Sprachdiplom from the Goethe Institute;
- d) an equivalent language certificate.

#### **Implementation rules for § 6 Acceptance to the PhD programme**

The following personal data will be processed with acceptance to the PhD programme:

- a) Personal information (title, name, date of birth and place of birth, country of birth, gender, nationality, university registration number, contact address, e-mail address, telephone number, photo);
- b) Education information (e.g. type of university, subject/s, type and grade of undergraduate/graduate degree and/or final exams);
- c) Dissertation information (e.g. doctoral subject, type of dissertation, overall doctoral grade, topic, supervisor, co-supervisor).
- d) Periods employed at the university, scholarships, collaboration (with universities of applied sciences, binational doctoral degrees, etc.)

### **Implementation rules for § 7 Application for admission for doctoral examination proceedings**

The doctoral researcher issues an affidavit that the work was written independently, without third-party assistance, and that no sources or aids other than those listed were used and that quotes were referenced as such. The affidavit must be dated and signed by the doctoral researcher. The wording of the affidavit is as follows: “I solemnly swear that the dissertation was prepared by me independently and without impermissible third-party assistance in accordance with the Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf as well as the Guidelines of the Faculty of Medicine for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice. The content taken directly or indirectly from third-party sources has been referenced. I accept that any infringement of the above affidavit will always lead to a fail grade in the doctoral component concerned and will also mean that the Faculty will decide whether to revoke the academic title of Doctor (§ 16 Doctoral Regulations). I am aware of the criminal law consequences of a false sworn affidavit (Sec. 156 StGB [*Strafgesetzbuch*: German Criminal Code]). Furthermore, any infringement can be punished with a monetary fine pursuant to Sec. 63 (5) HG.”

## Appendix 2 to the Regulations for the PhD Programme of the Faculty of Medicine

### Title page

From the ... Clinic/From the ... Institute  
at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

Title of the doctorate

- subtitle if applicable

Dissertation

to obtain the academic title of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Medical Sciences  
from the Faculty of Medicine at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

submitted by

First name and last name of the author  
(Year of doctoral examination proceedings)

**Page 2 (Examiner details)**

You will be notified of the exact text for page 2 once print approval is granted. You do not include this page in your work until after print approval.

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signed:

Dean:

Examiner/s: Name A, Name B

Dedication or quote (optional)

Parts of this work have been published:

Müller, U., Meier, R., Schulze, A., Schmidt, R., (Year), Title of the work. *Journal*, (Volume)  
page number - page number

Enter your summary (German and English) here

Enter your dissertation here

Last page (Acknowledgements if applicable)

Enter any acknowledgements on this page.

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