

## **Joint Doctoral Degree Regulations**

**of**

**School II: School of Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law**

**(for its Department of Computing Science)**

**School V: School of Mathematics and Science**

**and**

**School VI: School of Medicine and Health Sciences  
of the University of Oldenburg**

**for the award of the doctoral degrees of *Doktor der Naturwissenschaften* (Dr rer. nat., Doctor of Science), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), *Doktor der Philosophie* (Dr phil.) or *Doktor der Ingenieurwissenschaften* (Dr-Ing., Doctor of Engineering Sciences)**

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Part 1

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### **Section 1 Purpose of the doctorate, doctoral degrees and required doctoral work**

- (1) The doctorate serves as proof of the ability to carry out in-depth, independent scientific work. The following achievements are required for the doctorate:
- a written doctoral thesis which has a subject belonging to the field of natural sciences, mathematics, computer science, engineering or psychology and corresponds to the desired degree. For details see Section 10.
  - an oral exam (the doctoral defence). For details see Section 14.
- (2) The School of Mathematics and Science (hereinafter referred to as School V), the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (hereinafter referred to as School VI) and the School of Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law on behalf of the Department of Computing Science (hereinafter referred to as School II/DFI) award, for doctoral work as defined in (1), doctoral degrees with the following possible titles: *Doktor der Naturwissenschaften* (abbreviated: Dr rer. nat., Doctor of Science); Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), *Doktor der Philosophie* (abbreviated: Dr phil., Doctor of Philosophy) or *Doktor der Ingenieurwissenschaften* (abbreviated: Dr-Ing., Doctor of Engineering) for advanced independent scientific achievements in the fields of science, mathematics, computing science, engineering or psychology. With their application for admission to the doctorate in accordance with Section 9 (1) and the application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure in accordance with Section 12 (2) (b) point IV, doctoral candidates must indicate which doctoral degree they are seeking. The decision on the title to be awarded is made by the responsible Doctorate Committee (Section 5).
- (3) School V, School VI and School II/DFI may also, depending on the focus of the work, award the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (Doctor rerum naturalium honoris causa, abbreviated: Dr rer. nat. h. c.), the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Doctor philosophiae honoris causa, abbreviated: Dr phil. h. c.) or the honorary degree of Doctor of Engineering (abbreviated: Dr-Ing. E. h.).

### **Section 2 Competences**

- (1) As the case may be, the following are involved in the process of the doctorate:
- if applicable, the Interfaculty Doctorate Council (Section 4),
  - the responsible Doctorate Committee (Section 5),
  - the Examination Committee (Section 6),
  - the first assessor (Section 7), who is usually the supervisor of the thesis (Section 11),
  - the Supervisory Committee, if established (Section 11 (2)),
  - one or more of the other assessors (Section 7),
  - the responsible Dean; in the case of School II/DFI, the Vice Dean for Computing Science replaces the Dean.

- (2) The Interfaculty Doctorate Council advises and decides on interdisciplinary matters regarding quality assurance and the implementation of doctoral degree procedures in the participating faculties.
- (3) The Doctorate Committee decides on admission and for all other procedural matters, unless the Doctoral Degree Regulations provide otherwise.
- (4) The Examination Committee executes the doctoral defence and grades it.
- (5) The first assessor, or the first assessor together with the other assessors, will assess the thesis. The assessment reports are prepared independently from each other.
- (6) The supervisor advises and supports the doctoral candidate during the preparation of the doctoral thesis. They are usually to be designated first assessor.
- (7) If a Supervisory Committee has been set up, it will accompany the supervision of the thesis (Section 11 (2)).
- (8) The Dean will complete the procedure with the delivery of the degree certificate.

### **Section 3 Interfaculty and international doctorates**

- (1) A doctoral degree procedure can be carried out across several schools, provided that the subject of the doctorate lies in the area of expertise of several schools and the respective schools have agreed to this arrangement.
- (2) Schools can engage in joint doctoral degree procedures with German universities and research institutions (hereinafter: 'cooperation partners') on the basis of cooperation agreements or in a joint scientific institution in accordance with Section 36a of the NHG (the Lower Saxony University Regulations).
- (3) Joint doctoral degree procedures (in the form of a bi- or multinational doctorate) can be implemented in the framework of international doctorate programmes or on the basis of a cooperation agreement with the University of Groningen (UG), the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) or another foreign university or research institution (hereinafter: 'cooperation partner').
- (4) In the cases mentioned in (1)-(3), the doctoral degree is awarded jointly by the School or Schools in conjunction with the competent institution of the cooperation partners, provided that the cooperation partners have the right to award doctorates.

### **Section 4 Interfaculty Doctorate Council**

School V, School VI and School II/DFI will together form a joint Interfaculty Doctorate Council. This will comprise the Deans, in accordance with Section 2 (1) (g), as well as two members of the Doctorate Committees of the involved schools. One of these members will belong to the group of professors and the other to the group of other academic research staff. The chair is held alternately by one of the Deans.

### **Section 5 Doctorate Committee**

- (1) By a decision of their Faculty Council, School V, School VI and School II/DFI will each form, from their own ranks, a Doctorate Committee for the awarding of the degree, according to Section 1 (2).
- (2) In accordance with (3) and (4), each of the Doctorate Committees of Schools V and VI consists of members of the group of professors, as well as two members each from the group of other academic research staff and the group of doctoral students. The chair is a member of the University group of professors and is elected by the Faculty Council concerned for a term of two years.
- (3) In the Doctorate Committee of School V, the professors' group consists of one member in the role of chair and other members. The total number of members corresponds to the number of institutes of the School. The members of the status group of professors and their deputies are appointed by the members of the group of professors in the Institute Councils of the institutes of School V (one seat each) and must belong to these institutes.
- (4) In the Doctorate Committee of School VI, the professors' group consists of one member as chair and another four members. The majority of the members should have a doctorate in science or engineering or a relevant professorship.
- (5) The Doctorate Committee of School II/DFI consists of one member of the professors' status group, or one habilitated member, as chair, and usually four further members of the group of professors or habilitated members, as well as two members of the group of postdoctoral researchers. The members of the Doctorate Committee elect the chair and the deputy chair from their ranks.
- (6) All members of the respective Doctorate Committees have up to three deputies. The members and their deputies are selected from their respective status groups by the Faculty Council concerned. They are appointed for a term of two years, but for one year in the status group of doctoral students.
- (7) The responsible Doctorate Committee decides by a majority of votes. In the case of a tied vote, the matter will be decided by the chair's vote.
- (8) In joint doctoral degree procedures pursuant to Section 3, a joint Doctorate Committee may be set up in which members of the participating schools and cooperation partners should be appropriately represented. In the joint Doctorate Committee, the group of professors or habilitated members, the group of research staff with a doctoral degree and the group of doctoral students, who are advisory members, are represented in a ratio of 2:1:0 or 2:1:1. All members have up to three deputies. The Faculty Council concerned elects the members and their deputies from their respective status groups for a term of two years, but one year in the case of the group of doctoral students. The representatives of the cooperation partners are sent by them. All in all, the majority of the members of each joint Doctorate Committee must belong to universities with the right to award doctorates. The members of the joint Doctorate Committee elect the chair from their ranks. In case of doubt, the Interfaculty Doctorate Council decides on the composition of the respective joint Doctorate Committee.

## **Section 6 Examination Committee**

- (1) After accepting the thesis, the responsible Doctorate Committee appoints an Examination Committee and a chair for each doctoral degree procedure. The composition of the Committee

should adequately reflect the relevant fields of study. Fields of study outside the natural sciences, mathematics, computing science, engineering or psychology touched upon by the subject of the thesis should be taken into account as much as possible in the composition of the Committee. A majority of committee members should have a relevant doctorate as defined in Section 1 (2) or a relevant professorship.

(2) In the implementation of joint doctoral degree procedures pursuant to Section 3, members representing the cooperation partners should be given appropriate consideration in the composition of the committee. The requirements and rights pursuant to (1) apply equally to members of the Examination Committee who do not belong to the participating Schools V, VI or II/DFI.

(3) The Examination Committee consists of at least three authorized examiners (pursuant to Section 6 (4)), of whom at least one must be a member of the Doctorate Committee concerned:

- a) the first assessor of the thesis,
- b) another assessor of the thesis and
- c) another authorized examiner.

The Examination Committee may include one additional voting member from the group of researchers with a doctorate.

The responsible Doctorate Committee can name up to two other examiners.

The majority of the Examination Committee members must be professors.

(4) Individuals entitled to carry out examinations include members of the group of professors (according to Section 16 para. 2 sentence 4 no. 1 of the Lower Saxony University Act), private lecturers (Privatdozenten) not on leave of absence, honorary professors and retired or discharged members of the group of professors. Independent junior research group leaders holding a doctorate are also authorized to be examiners in the framework of externally assessed projects funded by recognized institutions for research or research funding. The Interfaculty Doctorate Council will decide whether a research or research funding organization belongs to the recognized institutions. At the suggestion of the Doctorate Committee concerned, the responsible Faculty Council may also determine the eligibility of persons with a doctorate in individual cases that do not fulfil these formal requirements.

(5) The majority of the members of the Examination Committee must belong to the University of Oldenburg. In duly substantiated cases, exceptions can be made. However, at least one person must be a member of the Schools concerned.

## **Section 7 Assessors**

(1) The respective Doctorate Committee appoints the first assessor for the assessment of the thesis, who is usually a member of the respective School and fulfils the requirements of Section 6 (4). In a joint, bi- or multinational doctoral degree procedure pursuant to Section 3, the first assessor may belong to the cooperation partner. In addition, the Doctorate Committee appoints one to three other assessors, who together cover the fields touched upon by the thesis in question.

(2) The doctoral candidate may make suggestions for the first assessor and up to three other assessors.

(3) The first assessor and at least one other assessor must be members of the Examination Committee, as defined in Section 6 of these Regulations. At the suggestion of the responsible Doctorate Committee, the responsible Faculty Council may allow exceptions in individual cases.

(4) In the case of a publication-based thesis, at least one of the assessments must be made by an assessor who is impartial towards the doctoral candidate, in accordance with the rules of good scientific practice of the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*).

(5) If the thesis has been developed in cooperation with non-university research institutions or firms engaged in research, the responsible Doctorate Committee can ask the responsible scientists at those organizations for an assessment, on the condition that they possess the qualifications defined in Section 6 (4) or the equivalent of a habilitation according to Section 11 (2).

### **Section 8 Admission requirements**

(1) To be admitted to the doctoral programme, candidates must have completed a relevant degree programme by obtaining a Master's degree, a *Diplom* or *Magister* certificate, the certificate of the first State Examination for Teaching at Gymnasium Schools or a State Examination in Medicine, or another diploma that has been deemed equivalent by the responsible Doctorate Committee. The recognition of other corresponding degrees acquired abroad is subject to approval by the responsible Doctorate Committee. The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (BGBl. 2007, part II, pp. 712 ff.) applies. The Doctorate Committee may also base its decision on a recommendation of the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) at the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK). In case of doubt, agreement must be reached with the Interfaculty Doctorate Council.

(2) The responsible Doctorate Committee may admit applicants who have a degree, as defined in (1), in a non-relevant degree programme, on the condition that they fulfil specified supplementary academic requirements prior to the start of the doctoral degree procedure pursuant to Section 12.

(3) Applicants who do not hold a degree as described in (1) or (2) may be admitted if they have completed the following:

- a) a relevant university degree (e.g. in a teacher training programme for primary and certain secondary schools) with a standard period of study of at least eight semesters and an above-average grade, and
- b) qualifying coursework and examinations as part of a supplementary course (usually of two semesters) leading to the subject area of the thesis. The required coursework and examinations are determined by the responsible Doctorate Committee in consultation with the future supervisor. In the case of a doctorate in a doctoral programme or degree programme, these achievements are determined by the Admissions Committee of the doctoral programme or study programme in consultation with the future supervisor, and approved by the responsible Doctorate Committee.

(4) Applicants with special qualifications who have a relevant Bachelor's degree can apply for a combined Master's and doctoral programme, called the fast-track option. They may be admitted to doctoral studies if they have demonstrated their ability to work scientifically in an aptitude test, in conjunction with successfully completing the procedure for admission to the doctoral programme or

degree programme. Further details are regulated by the corresponding admission regulations and, if necessary, by a separate fast-track regulation. An admission to the doctoral programme expires if the Master phase of the fast-track programme is not successfully completed.

(5) The responsible Doctorate Committee will refuse admission to the doctorate if the applicant has not withdrawn an application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate or for initiation of a doctoral degree procedure at another university. The Doctorate Committee may deny admission to the doctorate without providing reasons if the applicant has already unsuccessfully undergone a doctoral degree procedure.

### **Section 9 Admission to the doctorate, acceptance, enrolment**

(1) The application for admission to doctoral studies and thus to 'acceptance as a doctoral candidate' must be addressed in writing to the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee, stating the desired title and degree pursuant to Section 1 (2). In the case of a doctorate in a doctoral programme or degree programme, the application is submitted via the responsible Graduate School.

(2) As a condition for admission, the application must be accompanied by:

- a) a presentation of the applicant's scientific career,
- b) the topic of the thesis (working title), with a brief description of the research plan, which has been agreed by the intended supervisor,
- c) a declaration by a person authorized to examine, in accordance with Section 6 (4), who is usually a member of School V, School VI or School II/DFI, indicating their willingness to supervise the applicant's planned doctoral thesis,
- d) the names of the members of the Supervisory Committee, if established (Section 11 (2)),
- e) diplomas and evidence as defined in Section 8 or documents proving the completion of an equivalent relevant degree programme at a foreign university with evidence of examinations taken there and degrees obtained,
- f) a statement of any previous unsuccessful applications for a doctorate with details of the date of the first application, the academic university and the faculty or department to which the thesis was submitted, as well as the topic of the thesis,
- g) if applicable, an application for a joint doctoral degree procedure or a bi- or multinational doctorate (Section 3) specifying the faculties and/or the cooperation partners involved,
- h) a statement that the applicant is aware of the regulations on good scientific practice of the University of Oldenburg and is following them,
- i) a statement that no commercial recruitment or consulting services (doctorate advice) have been used in connection with the doctoral project,
- j) a list of the texts that the candidate has already published and
- k) a Supervision Agreement between the doctoral student and the first supervisor or a Supervisory Committee (Section 11 (5)), which contains an explanation of (b), (c), (g) and (h).

All submitted documents – except for originals and diplomas, which are to be presented as certified copies or with an original for inspection – become the property of the University.

(3) If, pursuant to (2) (e) above, evidence of foreign degrees has been submitted, the responsible Doctorate Committee will check whether they are equivalent to the German degrees. Recognition

may be subject to certain requirements and conditions, such as retrieval of a missing diploma or Master's thesis, or the passing of knowledge examinations.

(4) After examination of the documents submitted in accordance with (2) or (3), the responsible Doctorate Committee will decide on the admission of the applicant to the doctorate programme. In well-founded individual cases, the applicant can be admitted despite a previous failed application for a doctorate. Through admission, the applicant receives the status of doctoral candidate. This status ends when the candidate successfully completes the doctorate or definitively fails to meet the requirements for the doctorate, as well as in the case of late application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure (Section 12 (1)) or upon withdrawal of the doctoral application (Section 19).

(5) After admission to doctoral studies, doctoral candidates should enrol as doctoral students, if applicable, in one of the doctoral programmes or degree programmes of the Graduate School.

### **Section 10 Thesis**

(1) The thesis must demonstrate the author's capacity for in-depth and independent scholarly work and verifiably constitute a contribution to the advancement of science in a particular field of science, mathematics, computer science, engineering or psychology.

(2) The thesis should be written in German or English. Writing in another language requires the approval of the responsible Doctorate Committee. The thesis must contain an abstract in German and English of at most three pages.

(3) Several scientific papers in internationally recognized peer-reviewed scientific journals can be recognized as a thesis at Schools V and VI if they are related in content and in their entirety fulfil the requirements of Section 1 (publication-based thesis). The applicant is required to explain comprehensively in the thesis how they are related. If other researchers are also involved as co-authors in these individual papers, their own contribution must be presented in detail. The correctness of the explanation must be confirmed in writing by the supervisor.

### **Section 11 Supervision**

(1) The topic of the thesis should be agreed upon with a person with a qualification according to Section 6 (4) of the relevant subject area. They will supervise the thesis. The supervisor is usually the first assessor. The applicant can ask the responsible Doctorate Committee to recommend a supervisor.

(2) If the doctorate is part of a doctoral programme or degree programme, it should be accompanied by a Supervisory Committee. Moreover, at the request of the doctoral candidate, a Supervisory Committee may be appointed. The doctoral candidate can make suggestions. In exceptional and soundly argued cases, scientists from non-university research institutions or from industry can also be assigned as members of the Supervisory Committee, on the condition that they have a doctorate and at least five years of professional experience in a responsible research position. As a rule, another doctoral candidate, a research assistant or a research associate should also be a member of the Supervisory Committee if their expertise is close to the research area of the thesis. The details are regulated by the responsible Doctorate Committee.

- (3) The responsible Doctorate Committee will appoint the supervisor and, if applicable, the members of the Supervisory Committee, taking into account the suggestions of the doctoral candidate.
- (4) A person with qualifications according to Section 6 (4) of another university or a cooperation partner according to Section 3 may also be appointed as the first supervisor.
- (5) The relationship between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor and, if applicable, the Supervisory Committee is regulated in a Supervision Agreement. This states, in particular, the topic of the thesis, the expected timeframe, and, if applicable, a second supervisor, members of the Supervisory Committee, any agreements on regular meetings between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor and any approvals that may need to be obtained from, for example, the ethics committee, a research institution or a company.
- (6) After careful consideration, the supervisor can, exclusively for objective or personal reasons, terminate the supervisory relationship. This decision must be promptly communicated by the supervisor to the doctoral candidate and the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee, with a statement of the reasons. In this case, the Doctorate Committee will seek to appoint a successor to the supervisor as soon as possible.
- (7) If serious problems arise between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate, the candidate can seek the help of the responsible Doctorate Committee. In such a case, the Doctorate Committee will mediate between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor, or the Supervisory Committee, and seek a solution.

## **Section 12 Initiation of the doctoral degree procedure**

- (1) The doctoral candidate applies to the responsible Doctorate Committee for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure. As a rule, the application can be submitted, at the earliest, one year after admission and, at the latest, within five years from the date of admission to the doctorate. Upon request, if sound arguments are presented, these periods may be shortened or extended by a reasonable period, after the doctoral candidate and the supervisor have been heard. If the application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure is not submitted on time, or if the deadline or final warning is not heeded, the admission is deemed to have been withdrawn. The chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee will notify the doctoral candidate and the supervisor of the thesis accordingly.
- (2) The application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure must be accompanied by the following documents:
  - a) at least one copy of the thesis in print-ready condition for each member of the Examination Committee, as well as a copy for the files of the responsible Doctorate Committee;
  - b) a statement:
    - i. that the candidate has written the thesis independently and that the resources used have been fully specified,

- ii. a statement that indicates whether the thesis has already been published in part or in full; in this case, a list of publications must be enclosed,
  - iii. that the thesis has not been submitted in part or in its entirety to another university for assessment in a doctoral degree procedure,
  - iv. which doctoral degree is desired,
  - v. if necessary, whether the diploma of the desired degree should refer to the candidate in the feminine or the masculine form,
  - vi. that the regulations for good scientific practice of the University of Oldenburg have been observed,
  - vii. if necessary, evidence pursuant to Section 9 (5) on enrolment as a doctoral student,
  - viii. a declaration that no commercial recruitment or consulting services (doctoral coaching) have been used in connection with the doctoral project;
- c) Suggested names for the other assessors.

(3) The responsible Doctorate Committee will initiate the doctoral degree procedure by appointing the assessors, according to Section 7, who will examine the thesis, bearing in mind the suggestions and the declaration of the doctoral candidate. The chair will immediately inform the doctoral candidate of the decisions of the Doctorate Committee.

### Section 13 Assessment of the thesis

(1) In general, the assessors provide a written report within 4 weeks, but no more than 8 weeks, and recommend either acceptance of the thesis and continuation of the procedure, or modification or rejection of the thesis. If the thesis is accepted, the assessors will at the same time propose one of the following grades:

<i>sehr gut</i>	(magna cum laude)	[with distinction] =	1
<i>gut</i>	(cum laude)	[credit] =	2
<i>genügend</i>	(rite)	[pass] =	3

In the case of a truly outstanding performance, the committee can propose that the thesis be given the grade 1, with the distinction *ausgezeichnet* (summa cum laude, with high distinction). If the majority of the assessors proposes to accept the thesis, the procedure described in Section 4 will continue.

(2) If one or more of the assessors have made reasoned proposals for amendments, the responsible Doctorate Committee will decide by a simple majority of its members, after hearing the doctoral candidate, whether the thesis will be returned with instructions for amendment, or whether the procedure will continue. The chair of the Doctorate Committee will notify the doctoral candidate in writing of the instructions, and explain the reasons for requiring changes. A reasonable deadline

will be set for the revision. After the revision of the thesis, all assessors will comment on the revised version in writing within one month; the Doctorate Committee may appoint a further assessor. The thesis can only be returned for revision once.

(3) If the majority of the assessors have proposed the rejection of the thesis, the responsible Doctorate Committee will reject acceptance of the thesis. The candidate will have failed the doctoral degree procedure, which is therefore terminated. If a minority of the assessors proposes to reject the thesis, or if the votes pro and contra are tied, the Doctorate Committee will appoint an additional assessor. If, after considering this additional assessment, the majority of the experts propose to accept the thesis, the procedure will continue according to (4). If, after submission of this additional assessment, the thesis is rejected by at least half of the assessors, the candidate will have failed the doctoral degree procedure and it will be closed. The chair shall inform the doctoral candidate in writing. The rejected thesis and the reports on it will be added to the files of the responsible School.

(4) If the requirements for the continuation of the doctoral degree procedure have been met, the responsible Doctorate Committee will submit the thesis and the reports to the participating Schools for an inspection period of two weeks. Persons from the participating Schools with qualifications, as defined in Section 6 (4), will be able to view the thesis and the associated reports and submit expert opinions during the inspection period. If no expert opinions have been received after expiry of the inspection period, the thesis will be accepted.

(5) Upon receipt of expert opinions, the responsible Doctorate Committee may, within four weeks, commission further appraisals. The Doctorate Committee will decide by a simple majority of votes cast by university professors or, if applicable, habilitated employees, whether to consider the expert opinions and further appraisals, and which conclusions to draw from them regarding the assessment of the thesis. If the decision is made to consider the expert opinions and further appraisals, these documents and the thesis will again be made available for inspection for two weeks.

(6) After expiry of the period, the responsible Doctorate Committee will decide on the acceptance or rejection of the thesis, taking into account all the reports, expert opinions and further appraisals considered. This decision must be communicated to the doctoral candidate in writing.

(7) If all of the assessors have proposed acceptance of the thesis, the overall grade of the thesis will be the arithmetic mean of the individual grades pursuant to (1), as follows:

from 1.0 to less than 1.5	= <i>sehr gut</i>	= magna cum laude [with distinction]
from 1.5 to less than 2.5	= <i>gut</i>	= cum laude [credit]
from 2.5 to less than 3.5	= <i>genügend</i>	= rite [pass]

If all of the assessors propose the grade 1 with the distinction *ausgezeichnet* (summa cum laude, with high distinction), the overall grade *ausgezeichnet* (summa cum laude) will be awarded to the thesis. In this case, the thesis, with a grade of 1.0, will be included in the overall evaluation of the doctoral performance, according to Section 15. If the thesis was rejected by an assessor, the thesis was returned for revision or expert opinions were submitted (pursuant to (3) and (5)), the responsible Doctorate Committee will decide whether the expert opinions are to be taken into account in the marking process. Rejection by an assessor will enter into the overall grade as a grade of 4.0.

(8) The chair of the Doctorate Committee concerned will inform the doctoral candidate of the approval of the thesis. Pursuant to Section 6 (1), the Doctorate Committee will at the same time

appoint the Examination Committee and announce the date of the defence, after consultation with all participants and bearing in mind the suggestion of the doctoral candidate. The defence should take place within six weeks after approval of the thesis. If the doctoral candidate is not able to attend on the scheduled date of the defence, they must notify the committee immediately, stating the reasons.

#### **Section 14 Thesis defence**

(1) The chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee will invite the doctoral candidate and the members of the Examination Committee to the defence and announce the event in School V, School VI and School II/DFI. The defence is open to all members of the University. If the doctoral candidate consents, other persons may attend and listen.

(2) The defence consists of a lecture of about 30 minutes, open to all members of the University, on the goals, methods and results of the thesis, or a part of it, and a subsequent discussion of 30 to 60 minutes at the most led by the chair of the Examination Committee. The discussion will extend to the entire field of studies related to the topic. The assessments of the thesis can also be included in the discussion. For this purpose, the doctoral candidate is to be granted access to the reports, without prejudice to the provisions of Section 21, when the candidate is informed that the thesis has been accepted. At the request of the doctoral candidate, part of the discussion may take place in private with the Examination Committee. Minutes of the defence proceedings are to be taken.

(3) Immediately following the defence, the Examination Committee shall decide in closed session whether the candidate has passed the oral examination. If the candidate has passed, the Examination Committee will determine the overall grade for the defence. Each member of the Examination Committee will award a grade in accordance with Section 13 (1) and (7). The chair of the Examination Committee will immediately inform the doctoral candidate of the overall grade of the defence.

(4) If the doctoral candidate has not passed the defence, they shall be informed of the result of the defence and of the opportunity to repeat it once, if they write to the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee within a month requesting a resit. The oral re-examination can be taken, at the earliest, four weeks after the application and, at the latest, before the end of the year.

(5) If the doctoral candidate fails to attend the defence without submitting an excuse, they will be deemed to have failed the examination. In the case of an excused absence, a new appointment will be made. The Examination Committee will decide whether to accept the excuse.

#### **Section 15 Assessment of the doctoral work and completion of the doctorate**

(1) Following the defence, the responsible Examination Committee will determine how the candidate's achievements in the doctorate should be assessed in their entirety. The overall score is determined by the arithmetic mean of the unrounded grade for the defence, which counts once, and the unrounded grade for the thesis, which counts twice. The doctoral degree procedure is concluded when the Examination Committee decides that the candidate has passed the defence.

(2) For particularly outstanding achievements, the overall grade 'passed with high distinction' (summa cum laude) may be awarded on the recommendation of the Examination Committee. This

recommendation is only permissible if all assessors rated the written exam performance as 1.0 with the distinction *ausgezeichnet* (high distinction), and all members of the Examination Committee rated the oral doctoral degree defence as 1.0 and endorsed the distinction *ausgezeichnet*. Detailed reasons must be provided for the recommendation. At least one of the assessments must have come from an external assessor.

If necessary, an additional external assessment can be obtained. Assessors who are not present at the defence will give their appraisal in writing. The relevant Doctorate Committee will decide on the recommendation. Only the representatives of the group of University professors and, if applicable, habilitated employees are entitled to vote on this matter. No reasons will be provided for this decision.

(3) The chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee shall notify the doctoral candidate in writing of the grades awarded for the thesis, the defence and the doctorate as a whole.

### **Section 16 Publication of the thesis**

(1) Within one year of the successful completion of the defence, the doctoral candidate shall make the thesis accessible to the scientific public in an appropriate manner by copying and processing it. For this purpose, the doctoral candidate must provide to the Library and Information System of the University free of charge:

- a) 40 copies of the thesis in book or photocopy form, or
- b) three copies of the thesis and proof of publication of the thesis or its essential parts in a journal, or
- c) three copies of the thesis, as well as proof of dissemination of the thesis by a bookshop or a commercial publisher with a minimum circulation of 150 copies; on the back of the title page, the publication shall be indicated as a thesis, indicating the place of origin of the thesis, or
- d) an electronic version of the thesis, the data format and data carrier of which must be agreed with the University Library, and five printed and durable copies of the thesis, as well as:
  - e) two summaries in German and English of a maximum of 1000 characters each that have been approved by the first assessor, and,
  - f) if applicable, an affidavit stating that the content and form of the electronic version are in conformity with the printed version.

In the cases of (a) and (d), the doctoral candidate of the University of Oldenburg will transfer the right to produce and disseminate in print or data networks further copies of the thesis as is legally required from university libraries. This will not affect the author's intellectual property rights.

(2) The items delivered shall be provided with a title page, the front and back of which shall be in accordance with the model in Annex 1.

(3) A brief description of the doctoral candidate's academic education and development can be added at the end of the thesis.

(4) The final draft for publication must be submitted to the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee. They will give the permission to print. The Doctorate Committee and the doctoral candidate can agree on deviations from the thesis.

(5) In duly justified cases, the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee may, upon request, extend the deadline for publication in accordance with Section 1.

### **Section 17 Completion of the doctorate**

(1) The doctorate is completed by the leadership of the School issuing the doctoral degree certificate. Prior to this, the doctoral candidate does not have the right to assume the title associated with the doctorate.

(2) Upon the awarding of the doctoral certificate, the doctorate is completed. However, if the doctoral candidate so requests, the Doctorate Committee may rule that the doctorate has been completed after the decision of the Examination Committee that the candidate has successfully defended the thesis (Section 14). This request can be made before the defence.

(3) The doctoral certificate is issued in accordance with the model in Annex 2. Upon request, the qualification will also be delivered in an English translation in accordance with the model in Annex 3. Pursuant to Section 3 (4), the certificate for a cross-faculty or bi- or multinational doctorate can be issued as a joint certificate in accordance with Annexes 2 and 3. The doctoral certificate will carry the date of the oral examination (defence), but will be awarded only after fulfilment of the obligation to publish in accordance with Section 16.

### **Section 18 Unsuccessful completion of the doctoral degree procedure**

(1) The doctoral degree procedure is terminated unsuccessfully if the thesis is definitively rejected or the defence has definitively been pronounced inadequate. The chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee will notify the doctoral candidate in writing of the result.

(2) A renewed application for a doctorate is only permitted once and only after a year has passed. This also applies if the first unsuccessful doctoral application was made at another university. A rejected thesis may not be submitted again for the purpose of obtaining a doctorate in the same or a slightly modified form.

### **Section 19 Withdrawal of the doctorate application**

An application for a doctorate can be withdrawn as long as the doctoral candidate has not submitted the thesis for assessment. Thereafter, a withdrawal is possible only for important personal reasons that are not related to the doctoral degree procedure. This is decided upon by the responsible Doctorate Committee upon written request. Subsequently, the doctoral candidate can request a re-opening of the procedure in the same way.

## **Section 20 Invalidity of doctoral work**

- (1) If the doctoral candidate is found to have committed fraud in their doctoral studies, in fulfilling the requirements for admission to the doctoral programme or in the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure, the responsible Doctorate Committee shall declare the doctoral work invalid.
- (2) If the acts referred to in (1) become known after the doctoral certificate has been awarded, (1) shall apply accordingly and the responsible Faculty Council shall decide, after hearing the recommendation of the Doctorate Committee, in accordance with the law, whether the award of the doctoral degree is to be revoked or withdrawn. The same applies if the award of the degree was obtained by threat or bribery. Sections 48 and 49 of the VwVfG (Administrative Procedures Act) remain unaffected. The award of the higher education degree may also be revoked if the holder has seriously violated the scientific authority conferred by the degree, e.g. in the case of a final conviction for a crime leading to a loss of the status of civil servant in Lower Saxony, or if the holder of the doctorate has abused the scholarly rigour certified by the university degree.
- (3) If the requirements for admission to the doctoral programme or the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure were in fact not fulfilled but this was not due to fraud on the part of the doctoral candidate, and this fact becomes known only after the doctoral certificate has been awarded, this deficiency will be deemed to have been repaired by the successful completion of the doctorate.
- (4) Prior to a decision, the person concerned must be given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the responsible Doctorate Committee.
- (5) An incorrect doctoral certificate must be withdrawn and, as appropriate, replaced by a corrected certificate.

## **Section 21 Access to the doctoral records, retention period**

- (1) Upon completion of the doctoral degree procedure, doctoral students who request access to their dossier of doctoral documents will be allowed to inspect them.
- (2) The doctoral documents must be kept for 50 years. Even after this time, it must be ensured that information can be provided on the basis of registers regarding the outcome of a doctoral degree procedure.

## **Section 22 Objections and appeal**

- (1) Decisions to reject doctoral work that are taken in accordance with these Doctoral Degree Regulations must be substantiated in writing, offer information on opportunities for protest and appeal and published in accordance with Section 41 of the VwVfG (Administrative Procedures Act).
- (2) Appeals against a decision of the examiners that is based on an assessment of a student's work can be made in writing within one month after receipt of the decision or in accordance with Section 68 et seqq. of the *Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung* (Code of Administrative Procedures) by the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee. Otherwise, legal proceedings must be instituted. The appeal should be substantiated within one month after filing. No appeal is possible in procedures for the award of an honorary doctorate (Section 23).

(3) The competent Doctorate Committee will rule on objections, as the appeal authority. It is responsible for carrying out the appeal procedure. If matters of principle are at stake regarding decisions pursuant to Section 9 (3), the Doctorate Committee must reach agreement with the Interfaculty Doctorate Council. No costs are charged for appeal procedures.

(4) If the grounds of appeal are directed against a decision of the Examination Committee, the chair of the responsible Doctorate Committee shall forward the objection of the Examination Committee for review. If the grounds of appeal concern the decision of an assessor, the chair of the Doctorate Committee shall refer the objection to the assessor. The outcome of the review and appeal is to be forwarded to the Doctorate Committee and the Interfaculty Doctorate Council.

(5) If the Examination Committee or the assessor changes their decision as requested, the responsible Doctorate Committee will have resolved the objection. Otherwise, the responsible Doctorate Committee will fully examine the examination decision, and especially check whether:

- a) the examination procedure was carried out properly,
- b) whether the assessment was based on incorrect information,
- c) whether general assessment principles have not been observed,
- d) whether a reasonably acceptable solution based on sound arguments was deemed incorrect, and
- e) whether the assessor was guided by extraneous considerations.

(6) The responsible Doctorate Committee can appoint ex officio an assessor for the appeal procedure. If it is requested by the appellant, an assessor must be appointed. This assessor must possess the qualifications stated in Section 6 (4).

(7) If the responsible Doctorate Committee detects a deficiency as stated in (5) Sentence 2 above, but is not willing or able to counter the objection at this stage of the procedure, the work of the candidate will be re-examined by assessors who were not previously involved, or, as the case may be, a second defence will be organized.

(8) Objections and appeals must be definitively settled within three months of being filed. If the appeal is not upheld, reasons must be provided for the rejection, and information on options for legal remedies must be provided.

(9) The objection or appeal procedure may not lead to a lowering of the examination grade.

### **Section 23 Honorary doctorates**

(1) In recognition of outstanding personal achievements of a scholarly or scientific nature, characterized by research that has contributed significantly to the development of a field of study associated with School II/DFI, School V or School VI, the school responsible can award an honorary doctorate, as defined in Section 1 (3) as a rare distinction.

(2) The nomination for an honorary doctorate must state the scientific achievements and must include the professional and/or scientific CV and a list of the publications of the person to be honoured.

(3) The Faculty Council responsible will appoint an Honours Committee, chaired by the Dean, to advise on the nomination for an honorary doctorate. This Committee will include at least three additional members who must have a qualification in accordance with Section 6 (4). The Committee

will draw up a written report on the personality and academic achievements of the nominee. For this purpose, at least two external scientific opinions must be obtained. The reports and expert opinions are submitted to the Interfaculty Doctorate Council, which should respond within 4 weeks.

(4) In a meeting of the Faculty Council preceding the one at which the decision is to be taken, the Dean responsible will declare that a decision is needed on an application for an honorary doctorate. At the same time, the Dean will point out that the application, the expert opinions and the report of the Honours Committee are available at the Dean's office for confidential inspection by the members of the Faculty Council concerned and for academic staff members with qualifications according to Section 6 (4).

(5) The competent Faculty Council will decide in a secret ballot on the award of the honorary doctorate. A qualified majority of 80% of the Faculty Council members is required for a decision to approve the application for the award of the honorary doctorate.

(6) After the acceptance of the application, the Dean of the responsible School will confer the honorary doctorate by awarding a certificate. The Dean will issue invitations to a celebratory tribute and select the speaker of the eulogy.

(7) The honorary doctorate is to be communicated to German universities with the right to confer doctorates as well as to the Ministry of Science and Culture.

(8) Applicants must be informed of a negative decision.

**Chapter II**

(1) This amendment shall enter into force after the approval of the Presidential Chair on the day following its publication in the Official Bulletin of the University of Oldenburg.

(2) By way of derogation from (1), the following applies to doctoral candidates already admitted at the time of entry into force of this regulation: the Doctoral Degree Regulations valid at the time of admission will continue to apply. On request, but at the latest with an application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure, these persons have the opportunity to pursue their doctorate according to these Doctoral Degree Regulations.

**Annex 1**

**Model for the title page of the thesis**

**Front page:**

.....  
(Title of the thesis\*)

The School/Schools\* of Mathematics and Science/Medicine and Health Sciences/Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law of the University of Oldenburg, has/have\* accepted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree and title of \*

.....  
(indication of degree \*) (abbreviation \*)

the above-mentioned thesis

by Ms/Mr\* ..... (first and surname)

born on ..... in .....

**Overleaf:**

Supervisor: .....\*

Other assessors: \*

.....

.....

Date of thesis defence: .....\*

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• Please insert what is needed and delete what does not apply

**Annex 2: Doctoral certificate (in German)**

Die Fakultät für Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften/  
Fakultät für Medizin und Gesundheitswissenschaften/  
Fakultät für Informatik, Wirtschafts- und Rechtswissenschaften\*  
der Universität Oldenburg  
verleiht/verleihen\* mit dieser Urkunde\*\*

Frau/Herrn\*) .....

geboren am: ..... in .....

Grad und Titel einer/eines\*)

**Doktorin/Doktors\* der .....**

nachdem sie/er\* in ordnungsgemäßem Promotionsverfahren durch ihre/seine\* mit der Note ....<sup>1)</sup>  
beurteilte Thesis mit dem Thema

.....

und durch die mit der Note ....<sup>1)</sup> beurteilte Defence am (TT.MM.JJJJ\*) ihre/seine\* wissenschaftliche  
Befähigung erwiesen und dabei das Gesamtprädikat

....<sup>1)</sup>

erhalten hat.

Oldenburg, den .....

\_\_\_\_\_  
Die Dekanin/Der Dekan\*  
der Fakultät für Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften/  
Fakultät für Medizin und Gesundheitswissenschaften/  
Fakultät für Informatik, Wirtschafts- und  
Rechtswissenschaften\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Die/Der\* Vorsitzende des Promotionsausschusses  
der Fakultät für Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften/  
Fakultät für Medizin und Gesundheitswissenschaften/  
Fakultät für Informatik, Wirtschafts- und  
Rechtswissenschaften\*

\* Zutreffendes einfügen

\*\* auf Grundlage der gemeinsamen Promotionsordnung der Fakultät für Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften, der Fakultät für Medizin und Gesundheitswissenschaften und der Fakultät für Informatik, Wirtschafts- und Rechtswissenschaften

<sup>1)</sup> Noten: magna cum laude (sehr gut), cum laude (gut), rite (genügend) und ggf. das Prädikat summa cum laude (ausgezeichnet)

**Annex 3: Doctoral certificate in English**

The School of Mathematics and Science/  
School of Medicine and Health Sciences/  
School of Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law\*  
of the Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg (Germany)

hereby confers/confer\*\* on

Mr/Ms\* .....

born..... \*in .....

who has presented their\* doctoral thesis titled\*

.....

and passed the oral examination

the Degree of\*

**Doctor of .....**\*

Doctoral thesis grade:.....<sup>1)</sup>

Oral examination grade:.....<sup>1)</sup>

Overall grade:.....<sup>1)</sup>

Oldenburg, ..... (Day, Month, Year\*)

\_\_\_\_\_\*  
(Signature)  
Dean of the School of  
Mathematics and Science/Medicine and Health Sciences/  
Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law \*

\_\_\_\_\_\*  
(Signature)  
Chair of the Doctorate Committee  
Mathematics and Science/Medicine and Health Sciences/  
Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law \*

\* Insert what is needed, delete what does not apply and sign where appropriate

\*\* Based on the joint Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Schools of Mathematics and Science, of Medicine and Health Sciences, and of Computing Science, Business Administration, Economics and Law

<sup>1)</sup> Grades: summa cum laude (high distinction), magna cum laude (distinction), cum laude (credit), rite (pass)

Please note: This is an unofficial translation provided for your convenience only and does not have any legal binding effects! Only the German version is legally binding!