

**Reading version of the doctoral regulations at the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at  
Freie Universität Berlin**

This reading version compiles:

- Doctoral Regulations at the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin; Amtsblatt Nr. 21/2018 vom 31.05.2018
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This document is a translation of the official German version. In case of doubt, the German version will prevail. This reading version is not legally binding.

**Article I**

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## Section 1 Meaning of the doctoral degree program, doctoral degree

(1) The Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin awards the degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Doctor rerum naturalium, abbreviated: Dr. rer. nat.) or alternatively after completion of a structured doctoral studies program according to Section 1.2 the Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (abbreviated: Ph.D. in Natural Sciences) within the framework of a proper doctoral degree program according to the provisions below.

(2) <sup>1</sup>Successfully completing the doctoral degree program shows the candidate's capacity for in-depth scientific work through his or her own research efforts beyond the scope of one of the courses of studies offered by the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy. <sup>2</sup>The written doctoral degree assignments consist of a piece of scientific work (dissertation) i.e. a self-contained individual assignment (monograph) or several collected individual assignments (cumulative thesis) and an oral examination (defense) in the doctoral subject (biology, biochemistry, chemistry or pharmacy). <sup>3</sup>The Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (Ph.D. in Natural Sciences) also requires evidence in the form of a certificate and transcript or equivalent of the successful completion of a structured doctoral studies program in one of the subjects offered by the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy within the framework of the Dahlem Research School (DRS) or a doctoral studies program of equivalent structure. <sup>4</sup>The equivalency of a doctoral studies program must be confirmed by the doctoral board.

(3) An honorary degree in natural sciences may be awarded for particular scientific achievements in one of the subjects offered by the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy (Doctor rerum naturalium honoris causa, abbreviated: Dr. rer. nat. h. c.).

## Section 2 Doctoral board

(1) The department council uses a doctoral board to carry out the doctoral degree procedure.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The department council appoints the members of the doctoral board at the beginning of its term. <sup>2</sup>It is composed of four professors whose primary employment is with the university, each representing one of the subjects offered by the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy (biology, biochemistry, chemistry, pharmacy). <sup>3</sup>The doctoral board elects a chairperson and a deputy chairperson at its constitutive meeting.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral board decides whether to admit applicants and their dissertation proposals to the doctoral degree program. <sup>2</sup>It is obliged to advise applicants. <sup>3</sup>The doctoral board does not meet publicly. <sup>4</sup>It may permit participation by one or more representatives from other status groups in an advisory capacity regarding agenda points not relating to individual doctoral degree procedures.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral board may generally transfer decisions on individual cases or particular authorisations to the chairperson of the doctoral board or the four subject representatives for their respective subject. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral board may reverse the transfer at any time.

(5) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral board is supported by a doctoral office. <sup>2</sup>All applications, documents, evaluations, the dissertation and all other documents for the doctoral board and the doctoral committee must be submitted to the doctoral office.

(6) <sup>1</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral board must inform the Executive Board - Office of the General Counsel - of any fundamental procedural questions. <sup>2</sup>The deanship of the department must be made aware of this.

### Section 3 Admission requirements

(1) <sup>1</sup>One requirement for admission to the doctoral degree program is successful completion of a relevant course of studies at a university subject to the constitution by completion of a master's course equating to 300 credit points - including the prior foundation course - or the second state examination in pharmacy, or the third state examination in veterinary medicine or medicine or an equivalent examination with a minimum grade point average of "good".

<sup>2</sup>An applicant may be admitted after completing a bachelor's course or a master's course in a subject relevant to the doctoral degree program which did not follow on from successful completion of a foundation course, if the applicant can prove that he or she was in the best 3% of his or her cohort in the relevant course at the relevant university and two professors in a subject relevant to the doctoral degree program have successfully carried out a suitability assessment test. <sup>3</sup>The doctoral board shall decide on the form which the suitability assessment test should take. <sup>4</sup>If the doctoral candidate is admitted on the basis of completing a bachelor's degree, the credit points (corresponding to two years' coursework) must still be achieved, such that admission is subject to a condition.

(2) <sup>1</sup>If the applicant has completed a course other than those described in (1), he or she may be admitted to the doctoral degree program if his or her qualification for the doctoral subject is guaranteed. <sup>2</sup>The applicant may be admitted to the doctoral degree program on the condition that he or she provides academic records which are generally obtained in the university study required according to (1) or which is necessary to supplement the knowledge proven by the applicant for the desired doctoral degree program.

(3) <sup>1</sup>An equivalent examination at a university outside the scope of application of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (Framework Act on Higher Education) also counts as completion of a course of study according to (1). <sup>2</sup>If the degree does not belong to the equivalencies governed by the Central Office for Foreign Education in the secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States of the Federal Republic of Germany, confirmation of equivalency must be obtained from there. <sup>3</sup>If the Central Office for Foreign Education does not classify the grading of the foreign degree, the doctoral board shall check the comparability of this university degree grading with a minimum grade point average of "good". <sup>4</sup>If it is not established that the degree is equivalent, the doctoral board shall check whether it can be made equivalent by fulfilment of conditions in the sense of (2).

(4) <sup>1</sup>If the degree was obtained in a diploma program at a university of applied sciences, evidence must be provided that the grade point average was at least "very good". <sup>2</sup>If this is not the case, the doctoral board shall check whether the degree can be made equivalent if the candidate passes a suitability assessment test according to (1) or with a condition according to (2).

## Section 4 Admission procedure

(1) <sup>1</sup>Applications for admission to a doctoral degree program must be made when the candidate begins experimental or theoretical work connected to the dissertation proposal, but at the latest two years before the dissertation is submitted. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral board may approve exceptions in individual cases. <sup>3</sup>Regardless of timely application according to (1), the doctoral degree program begins in the sense of the *WissZeitVG* (German Scientific Temporary Contract Act) when the topic of the doctoral degree program is issued. <sup>4</sup>The application for admission to the doctoral degree program must be submitted with the following documents:

- a) Suggestion of a supervisor. <sup>5</sup>The supervisor according to Section 6 must represent the subject of the dissertation in research and confirm his or her assumption of the role as well as provision of a workplace for the duration of the standard time to completion.
- b) <sup>6</sup>A representation of the objectives and <sup>6</sup>methods for the dissertation proposal signed by the doctoral student and his or her supervisor, as well as a schedule. <sup>7</sup>The dissertation proposal must come from a field represented by at least one research and teaching professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy.
- c) <sup>8</sup>If the supervisor belongs to the circle of persons set out in Section 6.3 or 6.4, the written confirmation according to Section 6.3 (3) or Section 6.4 (2),
- d) documents, especially certificates and evidence of qualifications, required according to Section 3,
- e) a personal data sheet,
- f) a declaration confirming that the applicant has not submitted a dissertation on this or a similar topic at another university or department,
- g) a declaration that the applicant is aware of applicable doctoral regulations (included in the application form).
- h) <sup>9</sup>If the doctoral degree program assignments are to be carried out in German, applicants who are not native speakers of German with a degree from a foreign university or equivalent institution must prove their German language skills by passing the German language examination for university admission at the DSH 2 level or prove equivalent abilities. <sup>10</sup>If the doctoral degree program assignments are to be carried out in English, evidence of English language skills at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) or evidence of equivalent ability,
- i) a copy of the existing supervision agreement (where available).

(2) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral board will generally decide on admission to the doctoral degree program within two months. <sup>2</sup>At the same time, the doctoral board will decide on the allocation of the procedure to a doctoral subject. <sup>3</sup>Rejections must be justified in writing.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The application for the doctoral degree program should be rejected if:

- a) the requirements set out in Section 3 are not met;
- b) the documents set out in Section 4.1 have not been submitted;

<sup>2</sup>The application to a doctoral degree program may be rejected for lack of specialist competence.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The date of admission shall be considered the date upon which the applicant begins their doctoral degree program.

## Section 5 Enrollment as a doctoral student

(1) <sup>1</sup>Doctoral students must be able to prove that they maintain a continuous affiliation with Freie Universität (enrolled at and/or employed by the university) until they submit their dissertation. <sup>2</sup>Doctoral students must prove their affiliation with Freie Universität at the doctoral office within two months of their successful admission to the doctoral degree program (dated from the date of the admission notification).

(2) <sup>1</sup>If enrollment is not applied for within the period prescribed in the notice of admission to the doctoral degree program (one month) or in the extension period, admission to the doctoral degree program shall lapse. <sup>2</sup>This does not exclude re-application for admission to the doctoral degree program.

## Section 6 Supervision of dissertation proposal, standard time to completion

(1) Decisions on admissions shall be made by the doctoral board. By admitting the doctoral student to the doctoral degree program, the department undertakes to ensure supervision and subsequent evaluation of the dissertation proposal.

(2) <sup>1</sup>Supervisors for a dissertation are generally professors from the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university. <sup>2</sup>The relevant professor is obliged to supervise the doctoral student on an ongoing basis, and he or she may not delegate this responsibility. <sup>3</sup>By making a declaration to the doctoral student and the department, the supervisor undertakes to supervise the dissertation proposal for a period of four years (standard time to completion according to (5)). <sup>4</sup>This includes the guarantee of a workplace for the duration of the standard time to completion. <sup>5</sup>External supervisors must guarantee proper supervision even if their professional activity is mostly outside the state of Berlin, and must in particular ensure that personal contact with the doctoral student is maintained. <sup>6</sup>Any supervision agreement to be concluded must include the appointment of a mentor. <sup>7</sup>He or she must have a doctorate and has a supporting supervisory role. <sup>8</sup>This does not, however, give him or her a claim to affiliation with the subsequent doctoral committee or participation in evaluating the dissertation.

(3) <sup>1</sup>Irrespective of Section 6.2, the heads of research groups/independent junior research teams and other members of external research institutes and educational establishments with equivalent responsibilities have the right to act as supervisors and reviewers for doctoral degrees as members of the doctoral committee, provided they have been granted this equivalent status in terms of their rights and obligations as part-time university instructors by means of a doctoral board resolution. <sup>2</sup>Resolutions pursuant to Sentence 1 may only be adopted for specific doctoral procedures. <sup>3</sup>This also applies to junior research group leaders employed by Freie Universität Berlin if the doctoral board has recognised their right to act as supervisors or reviewers for doctoral studies and in this capacity to act as members of the doctoral committee. <sup>4</sup>In such cases, the doctoral student must in consultation with the supervisor submit confirmation from a professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university, regarding assumption of the second evaluation.

(4) <sup>1</sup>Otherwise than in (2), professors in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is not with the university, visiting professors according to Section 113.1 BerlHG and professors not belonging to the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy may be appointed as supervisors. <sup>2</sup>In such cases, the doctoral student must in consultation with the supervisor submit confirmation from a professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university, regarding assumption of the second evaluation.

(5) <sup>1</sup>The subject of the dissertation proposal may be freely chosen, but the choice must be made in consultation with the supervisor. <sup>2</sup>The dissertation should generally be submitted after three-and-a-half years and the program completed after four years (standard time to completion).

(6) <sup>1</sup>If it is foreseeable that it will not be possible to submit the dissertation within the standard time to completion according to (5), the doctoral student must submit an application, also signed by the supervisor, for extension of the standard time to completion at least two months before the standard time to completion expires. <sup>2</sup>The status of the dissertation and the provisional time still required must be shown in the application. <sup>3</sup>If enrollment according to Section 5 has been carried out beforehand, the doctoral student must submit the application to the student administration after it has been approved by the doctoral board. <sup>4</sup>If the doctoral student does not submit the approved application for reasons which are his or her own fault after a request from the student administration, admission to the doctoral degree program shall lapse. <sup>5</sup>If the doctoral student has been enrolled as a student for a doctoral degree program, he or she shall be removed from the register of students. <sup>6</sup>If the supervisor does not endorse the extension of the standard time to completion, the doctoral board shall attempt to mediate between the doctoral student and the supervisor within the scope of its duty of care.

(7) <sup>1</sup>If the supervisor or doctoral student sees him- or herself as obliged to terminate the supervisory relationship for important reasons in the course of the work, he or she is obliged to inform the doctoral board and give reasons for the termination. <sup>2</sup>In these cases, the doctoral board will make a decision at its discretion and within six months as to whether the doctoral project is to be continued or terminated; any suggestions made by the doctoral student regarding a new supervisor are to be taken into consideration here. <sup>3</sup>Admission to the doctoral degree program is revoked where it is decided that the doctoral project shall be terminated. <sup>4</sup>A change of supervisor is only permitted with the doctoral board's consent.

(8) <sup>1</sup>If the supervisor's status changes, he or she shall have the right to complete the supervision of a dissertation which has already been started, write the evaluation and participate in the doctoral committee with a right to vote. <sup>2</sup>If the supervisor was previously a professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university, the change of status shall mean that he or she no longer belongs to the circle of professors, whose primary employment is with the university.

## Section 6a Supervision agreement

<sup>1</sup>The supervisor and the doctoral student enter into a supervision agreement. <sup>2</sup>By signing this supervision agreement, the supervisor agrees to supervise the doctoral project for at least for the duration of the standard time to completion for the doctoral degree.

## Section 7 Dissertation

(1) The written doctoral degree program assignments should demonstrate the candidate's ability to carry out in-depth scientific work, and to advance scientific knowledge.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The written doctoral degree program assignments, which should be written entirely in either German or English, may consist of

a) a monograph, i.e. an unpublished or completely or partially published assignment containing a self-contained representation of the research work and its results. <sup>2</sup>Pre-publication is only permitted if the doctoral student and the supervisor agree on it.

<sup>3</sup>or

b) a cumulative thesis consisting of at least two individual assignments which have been published or accepted for printing and containing work equivalent overall to a dissertation according to a). <sup>4</sup>The possible other individual assignments may be in the process of revision, submission or preparation. <sup>5</sup>The version of these individual assignments submitted in the cumulative thesis shall apply; it cannot be changed or updated in the further course of the doctoral degree program. <sup>6</sup>Only papers from journals with a peer review system shall be considered here. <sup>7</sup>The doctoral student must have a prominent position among the authors of this publication. <sup>8</sup>The doctoral student's position is adjudged to be prominent if he or she is the first author of the publication, or the corresponding author of the article, or in the event of co-authorship on the basis of a substantial contribution to the publication in question. <sup>9</sup>In the event of co-authorship, the doctoral student's substantial contribution must be confirmed by the supervisor. <sup>10</sup>Confirmation of acceptance of the manuscripts must be provided on submission. <sup>11</sup>Along with the details provided in Section 7.5, cumulative work which must have an overall title may consist of a list with the titles of the individual pieces of work, an introduction and connecting text presenting an overall interpretation, assessment and discussion of the individual pieces collected in the cumulative thesis. <sup>12</sup>The doctoral student's personal contribution must be indicated.

<sup>13</sup>If a cumulative thesis consists of articles in both German and English, the doctoral board shall decide whether the requirement for the work to be entirely in either German or English can be waived.

(3) <sup>1</sup>For written doctoral degree program assignments according to (2) created in collaboration with other scientists, the doctoral student's contribution must be clearly identifiable and assessable.

<sup>2</sup>The doctoral student is obliged to describe his or her part in conception, execution and reporting.

<sup>3</sup>The declaration must be attached to the dissertation and published with it.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral student must provide details of all tools and help, and ensure that he or she wrote the work independently on this basis. <sup>2</sup>The assignment may not already have been accepted in a previous doctoral degree program, or have been deemed inadequate or rejected. <sup>3</sup>In case of doubt, work from previous doctoral degree programs should be submitted for comparison.

(5) <sup>1</sup>The dissertation's title page must include the name of the author, a designation as "a dissertation submitted to the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin" and the year of submission, as well as a facing sheet for the names of the reviewers. <sup>2</sup>A summary of its results in English and German must be attached along with a list of publications derived from the dissertation. <sup>3</sup>With the doctoral student's consent, it should include a short CV of the doctoral student.

(6) <sup>1</sup>The dissertation must be submitted electronically. <sup>2</sup>A standard format that is also suitable for archiving is to be chosen for this purpose; the doctoral board may decide upon more specific details. <sup>3</sup>Prior publications of sections of the dissertation are to be submitted in the same format. <sup>4</sup>The dissertation may be subjected to an electronic plagiarism check; data protection regulations are to be upheld during this process.

(7) Doctoral students should participate in a course on good scientific practice.

## Section 8 Evaluation of the dissertation

(1) After the dissertation is submitted, the doctoral board shall immediately appoint the reviewers for the dissertation as well as the doctoral committee according to Section 9.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The supervisor of the dissertation proposal should generally be appointed as a reviewer for the dissertation. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral board shall appoint a further reviewer in consultation with the doctoral student. <sup>3</sup>At least one reviewer must be a professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university. <sup>4</sup>Both reviewers generally belong to the field relevant to the dissertation. <sup>5</sup>If significant methodological or factual aspects of the dissertation relate to another field, the other reviewing professor should belong to this field. Section 6.3 shall remain unaffected, i.e. the circle of persons described in Section 6.3 may be appointed as reviewers, subject to the requirements set out there.

(3) <sup>1</sup>Evaluations are to be completed independently of one another and submitted within six weeks of being requested. <sup>2</sup>Reasons for exceeding this deadline are to be provided in writing. <sup>3</sup>As a general rule, the reviewers may exceed the original deadline twice; in each case they will receive a formal warning and a new deadline by which to submit their evaluation. <sup>4</sup>If, following expiry of the second deadline, no evaluation has been submitted and no reasons for the delay have been provided, the doctoral board and the doctoral student may relieve the reviewer of their role and appoint a new one. <sup>5</sup>The members of the doctoral board and the doctoral committee must treat the evaluations as confidential. <sup>6</sup>The evaluations must convey the significance of the dissertation, present its results in a wider context, and acknowledge any shortcomings. <sup>7</sup>If one of the reviewers believes that any of these shortcomings can and must be remedied, they must clearly indicate this in their evaluation. <sup>8</sup>In cases such as these, the reviewer may recommend that the doctoral student revise the dissertation; however, the reviewer must then provide a list of shortcomings and recommendations for remedying them. <sup>9</sup>In their overall evaluation, each reviewer must recommend that the dissertation is accepted (providing a grade for the work in accordance with Section 10), rejected, or returned to the doctoral student to remedy certain shortcomings before being presented for evaluation once more. <sup>10</sup>If an evaluation does not provide information to the extent required for making a final decision regarding the dissertation, the doctoral board will return the evaluation to the reviewer for improvement. <sup>11</sup>If, following receipt of both evaluations, a reviewer has recommended that the dissertation be returned to the doctoral student for revision, the doctoral board will invite the doctoral student to revise and re-submit their dissertation based on the reviewers' evaluations, which must be made available to the doctoral student (with the recommendation for revision as well as specific indications of what needs to be revised) – something which the doctoral student may do only once. <sup>12</sup>Generally, the doctoral student will be given three months to make the necessary changes to their dissertation, whereby requests for an additional extension beyond this deadline may also be submitted to the doctoral board. <sup>13</sup>The resubmitted dissertation is to be submitted as one finalized ("clean") printed copy, one finalized ("clean") electronic copy, and one electronic copy in which all changes to the first submitted dissertation are clearly visible.



(4) <sup>1</sup>If the marks given in the evaluations differ by more than one mark, the doctoral board shall appoint a third reviewer. <sup>2</sup>This shall also apply if one evaluation recommends rejection and the other recommends giving a grade, regardless of how large the difference in marks is.

(5) <sup>1</sup>After the evaluation is completed, the dissertation should be displayed with the reviewers' suggested marks for ten working days (Monday-Friday) when courses are in session. <sup>2</sup>The display period shall be doubled on days when courses are not in session. <sup>3</sup>All professors and postdoctoral department members may view the dissertation and suggested marks and submit a written opinion, which should be attached to the doctoral studies documents. <sup>4</sup>This circle of persons must be informed in an appropriate manner when the dissertation is being displayed. <sup>5</sup>The members of the doctoral board and the relevant doctoral committee also have the right to view the evaluations during the display period. <sup>6</sup>If opinions are submitted during the display period, the doctoral board may appoint a further reviewer.

(6) Until a third evaluation is submitted, the name of the further reviewer shall be kept confidential.

## Section 9 Doctoral committee

(1) The doctoral board shall form a doctoral committee for pending doctoral degree procedures and appoint a chairperson, who must be a professor in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral committee shall consist of both reviewers, two professors, and one academic staff member employed by Freie Universität Berlin who holds a doctoral degree. <sup>2</sup>In cases where a third reviewer is appointed in accordance with Section 8.4 or Section 8.5<sup>6</sup>, the doctoral committee shall consist of the three reviewers, one professor, and one academic staff member employed by Freie Universität Berlin who holds a doctoral degree; where a fourth reviewer is appointed in accordance with Section 8.4 and Section 8.5<sup>6</sup>, these four reviewers shall comprise the group of professors for the doctoral committee in its entirety. <sup>3</sup>In the event of interdisciplinary doctoral projects, the doctoral committee can be expanded at the discretion of the doctoral board. <sup>4</sup>The doctoral committee must include at least two professors within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy whose primary employment is with the university. <sup>5</sup>The committee should not contain more than one professor who has been released or retired from their position. <sup>6</sup>The majority of doctoral committee members must belong to the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy. <sup>7</sup>One alternate shall be appointed to stand in for members of the doctoral committee who were appointed in the capacity of professor, and another alternate shall be appointed to stand in for academic staff who hold doctoral degrees. <sup>8</sup>Section 6.3 remains unaffected, i.e., the group of individuals listed in Section 6.3 may be appointed as members of the doctoral committee under the provisions specified there.

(3) <sup>1</sup>If one or more members of the doctoral committee are indisposed, the doctoral board shall decide whether to wait until they are available or to appoint a new member to replace the indisposed member. <sup>2</sup>A replacement appointed according to (2) or another person may be appointed as a new member.

(4) The duties of the doctoral committee are:

a) assessing the dissertation on the basis of available evaluations and any opinions according to Section 8.5,

b) arranging and carrying out the defense,

- c) evaluating the defense,
  - d) determining the overall grade in view of individual assessments for the dissertation and the disputation according to Section 11 and 12.
- (5) The doctoral committee does not meet publicly.
- (6) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral committee makes resolutions by a majority of members entitled to vote. <sup>2</sup>All consultations on performance evaluations shall be open, and abstention from voting is not permitted.

## Section 10 Decisions on the dissertation and arranging the defense

(1) <sup>1</sup>After the display period expires, the doctoral committee shall decide whether to accept or reject the dissertation, whether to admit the doctoral student to defense and set the grade for the dissertation. <sup>2</sup>If the dissertation is accepted, the committee shall use the following grades:

- with distinction (summa cum laude)
- very good (magna cum laude)
- good (cum laude)
- satisfactory (rite).

<sup>3</sup>The grade “summa cum laude” may only be given to the dissertation if the work was assessed at “summa cum laude” by both reviewers and the dissertation was not returned to the doctoral student for rectification of defects and re-submission before final evaluation. <sup>4</sup>If the dissertation is rejected, the doctoral committee shall declare without arranging the defense that the doctoral degree program has not been passed and shall justify the decision. <sup>5</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral board must inform the doctoral student of the rejection in writing and give reasons for it.

(2) <sup>1</sup>After the display period ends, the date for the defense shall be set in consultation with the doctoral student. <sup>2</sup>The defense should be carried out within four months of the last evaluation being received. <sup>3</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral committee should issue the invite to the defense; the doctoral office shall send it out. <sup>4</sup>The doctoral committee shall decide whether to accept or reject the dissertation and shall inform the doctoral student of its decision. <sup>5</sup>If it is accepted, the defense shall take place following the committee meeting. <sup>6</sup>If at least one evaluation recommends that the dissertation be rejected, the doctoral committee must decide whether to accept or reject the dissertation before setting a date for the defense.

(3) <sup>1</sup>If the doctoral student waives participation in a defense, the doctoral degree program shall not be passed. <sup>2</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral board must inform the doctoral student of this in writing.

## Section 11 Defense

(1) <sup>1</sup>The defense is intended to demonstrate the doctoral student’s ability to verbally present and discuss scientific problems. <sup>2</sup>The defense must be held in either German or English. <sup>3</sup>The defense may take place in person – either on Freie Universität Berlin’s campus or in the immediate vicinity – or

online via video conference. <sup>4</sup>The doctoral board shall determine the individual details surrounding the types of formats in which a defense may be held, including hybrid types that combine both formats mentioned in Section 11.1<sup>3</sup>. <sup>5</sup>The final decision about the format of the defense shall be made by the chairperson of the doctoral committee; this decision shall require the agreement of all committee members and the doctoral student; where no agreement on the format of the defense can be made, the doctoral board shall determine the format thereof by resolution and in consultation with the doctoral student. <sup>6</sup>Unless the doctoral student objects to this, the defense shall be open to the public.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The defense shall begin with a presentation of around thirty minutes, in which the doctoral student presents and explains the results of the dissertation and their significance in a wider academic context. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral student then defends the dissertation against criticism and answers questions from members of the doctoral committee. <sup>3</sup>The questions should relate to the placing of the problems addressed in the dissertation in larger scientific contexts. <sup>4</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral committee may then permit the public to ask questions on the subject of the defense. <sup>5</sup>The discussion must last at least thirty minutes and should not last more than sixty. <sup>6</sup>Slides may only be used in the discussion if they were already part of the presentation.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral committee coordinates the scientific discussion and decides on the priority and if necessary the admissibility of questions. <sup>2</sup>He or she may exclude the public if the proper execution of the defense renders this necessary; the members of the doctoral board are not part of the public.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The members of the doctoral committee shall appoint one of its members as a secretary. <sup>2</sup>The secretary shall take minutes on how the defense proceeds. <sup>3</sup>The minutes should be included in the doctoral degree program documents. <sup>4</sup>The minutes must include the following information:

- Day/time/location of the defense
- Register of members of the doctoral committee
- Grade given to the dissertation
- Bullet point list of contributions to the discussion
- Grade for the defense including evaluation of the presentation and discussion
- Overall grade according to Section 12
- Particular incidents.

<sup>5</sup>The minutes must be signed by the secretary and the chairperson of the doctoral committee.

(5) <sup>1</sup>If the doctoral student misses the defense without good reason, this counts as a fail. <sup>2</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral board must inform the doctoral student of this in writing.

## Section 12 Decision on the defense and the doctoral degree program

(1) <sup>1</sup>Following the defense, the doctoral committee shall evaluate the defense in a closed session according to Section 10.1. <sup>2</sup>The discussion should generally be accorded greater weight in evaluating the defense than the presentation. <sup>3</sup>The dissertation should be accorded greater weight in the overall grade than the defense. <sup>4</sup>The doctoral committee shall then determine the overall grade using the grades given in Section 10.1. <sup>5</sup>If the grade given for the defense deviates from the grade for the discussion or the overall grade deviates from the grade for the dissertation, this must be justified

accordingly in the minutes. <sup>6</sup>The doctoral committee shall inform the doctoral student of individual assessments for the dissertation and defense as well as the overall grade. <sup>7</sup>The grade “with distinction (summa cum laude)” may only be given as overall grade if the dissertation achieved this grade.

(2) <sup>1</sup>After the doctoral committee has determined the overall grade, the doctoral student shall receive a confirmation from the doctoral office containing the title of the dissertation, the individual grades for the dissertation and defense as well as the overall grade. <sup>2</sup>On request, the doctoral student shall also receive an interim report signed by the dean. <sup>3</sup>Neither confirmation nor the interim report entitles the doctoral student to hold a doctoral degree.

(3) <sup>1</sup>If the defense is not passed, the committee must inform the chairperson of the doctoral board of its justified decision within two weeks. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral student must be informed of the decision by the chairperson of the doctoral board within four weeks. <sup>3</sup>The defense may then be repeated once after between three and six months.

(4) <sup>1</sup>If the second defense is also not passed, the doctoral committee shall declare that the doctoral degree program has not been passed and shall justify its decision. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral student shall be informed of the decision in writing within four weeks.

## Section 12a Meetings and examinations by audiovisual means

(1) <sup>1</sup>Meetings of the doctoral board/committee may take place via audiovisual means, provided data protection regulations are followed. <sup>2</sup>Secret ballots may only be carried out when the corresponding technologies used provide for this. <sup>3</sup>The chairperson will make the decision as to whether to carry out meetings and examinations by audiovisual means at their own discretion.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The defense may also take place via audiovisual means, provided data protection regulations are followed and the doctoral student agrees to this. <sup>2</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral committee will make the decision as to whether to carry out the defense by audiovisual means at their own discretion.

## Section 13 Additional doctoral subjects

(1) If the doctoral student has acquired knowledge in additional subjects in the course of training relating to research and wishes to complete an associated examination, he or she should be given the chance to do this.

(2) <sup>1</sup>Before admission for examination in an additional subject, minimum admission requirements must be set in consultation with the department responsible for the subject. <sup>2</sup>An examination in the additional subject shall last around thirty minutes. <sup>3</sup>It must occur after submission of the dissertation and before and independent from the defense.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral student may apply to the doctoral board for the inclusion of an examination passed in the additional subject according to (1) in the doctoral certificate. <sup>2</sup>The examination shall be assessed according to the relevant department’s applicable examination regulations.

## Section 14 Publication of the dissertation and delivery obligation

(1) <sup>1</sup>The dissertation should be made accessible to the scientific public in an appropriate manner by copying and dissemination. <sup>2</sup>This has been achieved when the doctoral student delivers the following to the university library free of charge in addition to the printed copy and the electronic version specified in Section 7.6:

- a) Printed copies, quantity depending on the university library's requirements or
- b) three original copies, if a commercial publisher takes over dissemination via sale of books and evidence has been provided of a minimum run of 150 copies, or
- c) two printed copies together with a masterfiche and microfiches, the quantity of microfiches depending on the university library's requirements or
- d) an electronic version in PDF format as well as two printed copies.

<sup>3</sup>In the case described in a), the university library is obliged to retain an appropriate quantity of excess exchange copies for four years. <sup>4</sup>In the case described in b), it must be published as a dissertation, giving the location of the dissertation. <sup>5</sup>In the cases described in a) and c), the doctoral student shall grant Freie Universität Berlin the right to make and disseminate further copies of his or her dissertation if required.

(2) If a dissertation is distributed by a commercial publisher ((1) b)) and a printing costs subsidy is granted from public funds, the university library must be provided with two further copies for exchange purposes.

(3) <sup>1</sup>Publication and fulfillment of the delivery obligation according to (1) must occur within a year, calculated from the date of the defense. <sup>2</sup>Completely or partially published work as well as published individual pieces in a cumulative work shall be published according to (1) d). <sup>3</sup>The electronic version in PDF format ((1) d)) must include the as-yet-unpublished parts of the dissertation and a DOI link for the parts already published, and the two printed copies must contain the full texts of the publications.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral student may apply for a block on publication in justified exceptional cases, especially if the results contained in the dissertation shall be patented. <sup>2</sup>The application must be submitted and justified in writing before delivery within the period of a year according to (3) 1). <sup>3</sup>The doctoral board shall decide whether to block publication. <sup>4</sup>If the application is sustained, the dissertation shall be published three years at the latest after the defense. <sup>5</sup>The doctoral student is obliged to deliver an electronic version in PDF format, two printed copies and a notification that the block on publication has been granted to the university library. <sup>6</sup>After the three-year period set out in (4) has expired, the dissertation shall be published on the university library's document server, unless the doctoral student decides on another form of publication and provides the university library with evidence of this before the deadline. <sup>7</sup>Even if a block on publication is granted, the doctoral student shall receive the doctoral certificate after the delivery obligation has been fulfilled.

## Section 15 Doctoral certificate

(1) A certificate shall be made out for the doctoral degree program in German, and on request in English.

(2) The certificate must include the following details:

- a) the name of Freie Universität Berlin and the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy,
- b) the name, date of birth and place of birth of the graduate,
- c) the awarded degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Doctor rerum naturalium, abbreviated: Dr. rer. nat.) or Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (Ph.D. in Natural Sciences),
- d) the title of the dissertation and the subject of the doctoral degree program,
- e) the date of the defense, which counts as the date of the doctoral degree program,
- f) grades of the dissertation and defense as well as the overall grade of the doctoral degree program,
- g) Examinations passed in the additional subject according to Section 13, if the doctoral student has applied for this,
- h) names of the reviewers,
- i) name and signature of the dean,
- j) seal of Freie Universität Berlin.

(3) Doctoral students who have proven that they have fulfilled the requirements for the award of the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (Ph.D. in Natural Sciences) may on request be granted the degree of a Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (Ph.D. in Natural Sciences) instead of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat.).

(4) Doctoral students are obliged before the doctoral certificate is issued to submit a confirmation signed by their supervisor that the primary data which the dissertation is based on will be retained under the responsibility of the supervisor in his or her department for a period of ten years.

(5) If it emerges before the doctoral certificate is issued that

- 1. the applicant has committed deception regarding important requirements for the award of the doctoral degree or
- 2. it has been erroneously assumed that important requirements for the award of a doctoral degree have been fulfilled, without the case described in (1) applying, the doctoral certificate shall not be issued unless the doctoral board decides otherwise, and in the case of the doctoral degree program according to Sections 1 to 12 the whole examination shall be declared not to have been passed.

(6) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral certificate should be issued within six weeks after notification is received that the delivery obligation according to Section 14.1, 14.3 or 14.4 has been fulfilled. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral certificate entitles the student to hold the degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Doctor rerum naturalium, abbreviated: Dr. rer. nat.) or after completing a doctoral studies program according to Section 15.3 the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (abbreviated: Ph.D. in Natural Sciences).

## Section 16 Right to inspect files

After the doctoral degree program is completed, the whole process must continue to be treated confidentially; after the defense has been passed until a year after the doctoral certificate is issued, the postdoc shall have the right according to these regulations to view the doctoral file.

## Section 17 Appeal

<sup>1</sup>An appeal against the result of the doctoral degree program must be submitted to the chairperson of the doctoral board with written justification within three months of the result being announced. <sup>2</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral board is responsible for proper execution of the appeal procedure. <sup>3</sup>He or she shall forward the appeal to the members of the doctoral committee. <sup>4</sup>The doctoral committee shall generally decide on the appeal within a month. <sup>5</sup>The assessments made and the reasons for them should be checked here. <sup>6</sup>The results of this check including the grade must be justified in writing. <sup>7</sup>The chairperson of the doctoral board shall inform the affected party of the committee's decision on his or her appeal.

## Section 18 Joint doctoral degree program with foreign universities or equivalent education or research institutions

- (1) The doctoral degree program may be carried out together with foreign universities or equivalent education or research institutions if
  - a) the applicant fulfils the requirements for admission to the doctoral degree program in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin and
  - b) the foreign institution has the right to award doctorates according to its national legal regulations and the degree to be granted by this institution should be recognised within the scope of application of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (HRG).
- (2) <sup>1</sup>The execution of the joint doctoral degree program must be contractually regulated and it must be ensured that the essential provisions of the doctoral regulations at the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin are complied with. <sup>2</sup>If the supervisor from Freie Universität Berlin is not a professor within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university, the doctoral board shall in consultation with the doctoral student appoint a reviewer from the group of professors within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university.
- (3) The doctoral student must be admitted by the participating institutions.
- (4) <sup>1</sup>The work may be written in German or English. <sup>2</sup>It must have summaries of its results attached in German and English and in a third language if necessary.
- (5) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral committee shall be composed on equal terms of two professors as well as a postdoctoral academic employee from each participating institution. <sup>2</sup>The reviewers should generally be members of the committee. <sup>3</sup>The committee may on request be expanded by up to two further professors, whereby its equal composition must be maintained. <sup>4</sup>It must be ensured that all the members of the doctoral committee are fluent in the language of examination.

(6) <sup>1</sup>If the grading systems employed in the two countries are different, there must be agreement on how the jointly-determined examination grades are to be determined and documented on a unified basis. <sup>2</sup>The assessment scale of the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) should be used as a basis here:

A = outstanding = summa cum laude,

B = very good = magna cum laude,

C = good = cum laude,

D = satisfactory = rite,

F = unsatisfactory = non rite.

(7) <sup>1</sup>Both institutions shall collaborate to produce a bilingual doctoral certificate. <sup>2</sup>This gives the doctoral student the right to hold the doctoral degree either in the German or in the foreign form. <sup>3</sup>However, only one doctoral degree shall be awarded.

## Section 19 Honorary doctorate

<sup>1</sup>The department council may, at the request of the dean, the research committee or at least three professors from the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy, whose primary employment is with the university, award the degree of an Honorary Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat. h. c.) for outstanding scientific achievements in natural sciences which are significant for one of the fields represented by the department. <sup>2</sup>A doctoral committee should be appointed by the doctoral board according to Section 9 to evaluate these achievements and to submit a recommendation to the department council in view of two external evaluations. <sup>3</sup>The resolution of the department council requires a majority of the members of the department council authorised to hold a doctoral degree.

## Section 20 Revocation of a doctoral degree

The revocation of a degree according to Section 1 is governed by the legal regulations.

## Section 21 Halting the procedure, withdrawal, new doctoral degree program

(1) <sup>1</sup>If no application for extension has been made when the standard time to completion comes to an end, the doctoral board may halt the procedure after obtaining written consent and an opinion from the supervisor and consultation of the doctoral student. <sup>2</sup>If the doctoral student has been enrolled as a student on the doctoral studies course, he or she shall be removed from the register of students. <sup>3</sup>This does not exclude re-application for admission to the doctoral degree program.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral student has the right to withdraw until the first evaluation is received. <sup>2</sup>Following withdrawal, the previous steps in the procedure shall not count as a doctoral degree program.



(3) If the doctoral degree program as a whole have not been passed, admission to a new doctoral degree program may be applied for and the new dissertation submitted after a year at the earliest.

## Section 21a Administrative Modernization and Digitization

<sup>1</sup>The term “written” shall also be used throughout this ordinance to include digital formats. <sup>2</sup>A qualified electronic signature or another substitute form pursuant to Section 3.a of the German Federal Administrative Procedure Act (*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz*) may only be permitted in cases in which the written form must be substituted within the meaning of Section 126 of the German Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, BGB). <sup>3</sup>Doctoral certificates pursuant to Sections 15, 18, and 19 must always be issued in written form within the meaning of Section 126 of the German Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, BGB).

## Section 22 Entry into force, abrogation and transitional provisions

(1) <sup>1</sup>These doctoral regulations shall enter into force the day after they are published in the official announcements (Official bulletin of Freie Universität Berlin). <sup>2</sup>At the same time, the doctoral regulations at the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy of 10 January and 11 July 2007 (Freie Universität Berlin official announcements 52/2007), amended on 12 December 2007 (Freie Universität Berlin official announcements 4/2008) and on 26 October 2011 (Freie Universität Berlin official announcements 2/2012) shall be abrogated.

(2) <sup>1</sup>Doctoral students who have already been admitted to a doctoral degree program at the time these regulations enter into force may still complete the doctoral degree program according to the previous regulations provided that they submit a request to their department (doctoral office) to remain in the previous regulations; this request must be submitted within one year of these regulations entering into force and before submitting their dissertation. <sup>2</sup>All other procedures shall apply from the time that these regulations enter into force. <sup>3</sup>Section 22.2<sup>2</sup> shall apply provided that Section 6.a only applies to new admissions.

### Article II

This ordinance enters into force on the day following its publication in *FU-Mitteilungen* (the official bulletin of Freie Universität Berlin).