

*This is an English translation of the original and signed "PROMOTIONSREGLEMENT der Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences der Universität Bern" issued in German. The German version is legally valid.*

## **Rules for conferring a doctorate at the Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences of the University of Bern**

*The Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Medicine and the Vetsuisse Faculty of the University of Bern,*

on the basis of Article 44 paragraph 1 letter c of the University Law dated 5 September 1996 (Universitätsgesetz, UniG<sup>1</sup>), Article 122b paragraph 1 of the University Decree of 27 May 1998 (Universitätsverordnung, UniV<sup>2</sup>) and Article 82 of the Statute of 17 December 1997 of the University of Bern (Universitätsstatut, UniSt<sup>3</sup>),

*have decided:*

### **Scope**

**Art. 1** These rules govern the PhD study programme at the Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (hereinafter called GCB), which leads to a final qualification with the one of the following titles:

- a PhD of Science in ... (specialist area according to Study rules), University of Bern,*
- b PhD in Biomedical Sciences, University of Bern,*
- c PhD in Immunology, University of Bern,*
- d PhD in Neuroscience, University of Bern,*
- e PhD in Biomedical Engineering, University of Bern,*
- f MD, PhD (Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy), University of Bern,*
- g DVM, PhD (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Philosophy), University of Bern,*
- h DDS, PhD (Doctor of Dentistry and Philosophy), University of Bern.*

### **Purpose**

**Art. 2** The PhD study programme assures high-quality theoretical and practical training in experimental research. During the PhD study, doctoral candidates work independently on a research project that is presented in a written dissertation.

### **Admission**

**Art. 3** <sup>1</sup> Admitted are applicants with a Master's degree or a Diplom/Lizentiat/Staatsexamen from a faculty of science or medicine at a Swiss university.

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent degrees from a Swiss or foreign university can be recognised by the most appropriate faculty for the subject.

<sup>3</sup> The doctoral candidates are registered with the Faculty (Art. 100 of the University Decree, UniV) to which the thesis supervisor belongs.

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<sup>1</sup> BSG 436.11

<sup>2</sup> BSG 436.11.1

<sup>3</sup> BSG 436.111.2

**Application procedure**

**Art. 4** <sup>1</sup> Applications are submitted to the GCB secretariat in English. Written applications must include:

- a A curriculum vitae,
- b Certified copies of certificates for all university degrees and preliminary diplomas,
- c A letter of recommendation from the thesis supervisor (with confirmation of the work place and salary in accordance with SNF guidelines),
- d An independently prepared description of the proposed research project,
- e The completed application form.

<sup>2</sup> The co-advisor (Article 5 paragraph 3) submits a written statement on the project.

<sup>3</sup> The thesis supervisor and the candidate jointly apply to the GCB for acceptance of the candidate, if necessary subject to Article 3 paragraph 2. The application for admission must be submitted to the GCB within the first four months of starting the research project.

<sup>4</sup> The Expert Committee applies to the PhD Committee for the application to be accepted, based on the quality of the candidate's application and a personal interview in English. The application for admission contains formal confirmation that the candidate meets the criteria in terms of quality and technical expertise for the project. The Expert Committee assigns a mentor from among its members.

<sup>5</sup> Upon acceptance, a doctoral agreement is signed between the Thesis Committee and the candidate. This contains the scope and type of the taught courses that the candidate must attend, as well as further training and additional courses. Additional courses may be required by the Expert Committee to ensure that the doctoral candidate has a well-rounded standard of academic training.

**Thesis Committee**

**Art. 5** <sup>1</sup> The doctoral candidates are supervised by the Thesis Committee which is made up of at least one thesis supervisor, co-advisor and mentor. On the Thesis Committee, at least the thesis supervisor or co-advisor must be a lecturer (or have an equivalent qualification) at and work at the University of Bern or at the Vetsuisse Faculty.

<sup>2</sup> Those authorised to supervise a dissertation in the GCB are individuals who lead an independent research group, particularly the lecturers of the three faculties. The PhD Committee can accept further individuals upon application.

<sup>3</sup> Co-advisors are experts working in the research area of the dissertation, who do not work at the same institute or clinic as the thesis supervisor. The co-advisor is proposed by the thesis supervisor and confirmed by the Expert Committee.

<sup>4</sup> The mentor is a member of the relevant Expert Committee and represents the GCB in the Thesis Committee. He or she defines the doctoral agreement together with the doctoral candidate and the thesis supervisor. The mentor is also the person to contact if conflicts arise between the thesis supervisor and the doctoral candidate.

**Supervision**

**Art. 6** <sup>1</sup> The Thesis Committee has a responsibility to the doctoral candidate for the research project's progress. It provides support through supervision and consultation and ensures that the required infrastructure is in place.

<sup>2</sup> The doctoral candidate receives academic support primarily from the thesis supervisor.

<sup>3</sup> The co-advisor discusses the research project with the doctoral candidate at least twice a year.

<sup>4</sup> If conflicts arise within the Thesis Committee or between the Thesis Committee and the doctoral candidate, which cannot be resolved by the parties involved themselves, they must consult the Expert Committee responsible. The PhD Committee can summon the persons involved at any time to attend a face-to-face discussion.

#### Curriculum

**Art. 7** <sup>1</sup> The PhD programme generally lasts three years. The Expert Committee may authorise a part-time PhD; the dissertation period is extended accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> Doctoral candidates acquire further academic training in their research area by attending training and course lectures. The scope and content of the lectures are described in the Study rules and defined individually in the doctoral agreement.

<sup>3</sup> Doctoral candidates keep a study record of progress with their dissertation; this is presented to the Thesis Committee once a year and must be approved by the mentor.

<sup>4</sup> After two years, at the latest, the doctoral candidate presents the research data gathered up to this point to the Thesis Committee in the form of a presentation/seminar and the Thesis Committee awards a grade according to Article 9 paragraph 3 (mid-term evaluation).

<sup>5</sup> A doctoral symposium for all doctoral candidates and thesis supervisors takes place once a year. From the second year onwards, doctoral candidates present their research projects in the form of posters or brief lectures.

<sup>6</sup> The doctoral candidates are given the opportunity to present the results to national and international conferences.

#### Teaching

**Art. 8** Doctoral candidates can become appropriately involved in lecturing at their Faculty, up to an employment level of no more than ten percent (Article 46g paragraph 2 UniV). Lecturing work is assigned at the suggestion of the thesis supervisor and with the agreement of the Institute concerned. The thesis supervisor also assumes responsibility for providing support for the lecturing work.

#### Examinations

**Art. 9** <sup>1</sup> The scope and type of the examinations are described in the study rules and defined in the doctoral agreement.

<sup>2</sup> Unsatisfactory examinations can be repeated once within a maximum of six months.

<sup>3</sup> Some examinations are graded, and for others no mark is given. Graded examinations are assessed using a scale of marks between 1 and 6, awarded in increments of half a mark. Marks of 4 and higher are satisfactory.

<sup>4</sup> For examinations where no mark is given, doctoral candidates receive a "pass" for satisfactory work or "fail" for unsatisfactory work.

<sup>5</sup> Examinations are generally in English.

#### Dissertation

**Art. 10** <sup>1</sup> A doctoral candidate must be the principal author of at least one published research paper in a peer-reviewed journal, or have had such an article accepted for publication. Exemptions must be supported by the external co-referee and accepted by the Expert Committee responsible.

<sup>2</sup> The dissertation must be written in English.

<sup>3</sup> The dissertation must be submitted at the latest one year after completion of the research work. The PhD Committee decides on exemptions.

<sup>4</sup> Further details regarding the dissertation are specified in the Study rules.

#### Assessments

**Art. 11** <sup>1</sup> The thesis supervisor assesses the dissertation and awards marks as set out in Article 9, paragraph 3. This assessment is completed within five weeks of receiving the dissertation and submitted to the Expert Committee.

<sup>2</sup> An external co-referee assesses the dissertation and awards marks as set out in Article 9 paragraph 3 within five weeks of it being handed in. This assessment is submitted to the Expert Committee.

<sup>3</sup> External co-referees are internationally recognised researchers in the research area of the dissertation. They provide an independent assessment of the work at the end of the dissertation. External co-referees are proposed by the Thesis Committee at the latest at the end of the second year and confirmed by the Expert Committee.

<sup>4</sup> If the dissertation is given an unsatisfactory mark, doctoral candidates may revise the dissertation once within six months.

#### Admission to thesis defence

**Art. 12** <sup>1</sup> Following approval of assessments and marks, the Expert Committee makes a decision regarding acceptance of the thesis and admission to the thesis defence.

<sup>2</sup> If the dissertation is rejected by the Expert Committee, the doctoral candidate may revise the dissertation once and resubmit it within six months.

<sup>3</sup> The prerequisites for admission to the thesis defence are:

- a Submission of the dissertation and acceptance of the dissertation by the Expert Committee,
- b Submission of the fully completed application form,
- c Proof that the doctoral agreement has been satisfied,
- d Assessment in support from the thesis supervisor and an independent assessment in support from the external co-referee,
- e Proof that the fees for the PhD programme have been paid.

#### Thesis defence

**Art. 13** <sup>1</sup> The thesis defence is a public lecture. The lecture lasting 40 to 45 minutes ends with a discussion, which takes between 20 and 60 minutes. The examiners are the thesis supervisor, the co-advisor and the mentor. The lecture is chaired by the mentor.

<sup>2</sup> The examiners assess the thesis defence according to Article 9 paragraph 3.

<sup>3</sup> Following a successful thesis defence, the PhD Committee decides on the definitive acceptance of the dissertation.

<sup>4</sup> If the candidate fails the thesis defence, it can be repeated once within 6 months.

#### Fees

**Art. 14** <sup>1</sup> The fees per semester are set out in Article 116 of the University Decree (UniV).

<sup>2</sup> The fees for conferring a doctorate are set out in the GebDV Phab (English: Board of Directors regulations on fees for habilitation and conferring a doctorate at the University of Bern )<sup>4</sup>.

#### Criteria for a pass

**Art. 15** Doctoral studies are passed if:

- a The doctoral agreement has been satisfied,

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<sup>4</sup> BSG 436.111.3

- b* The thesis supervisor and co-advisor have each awarded the dissertation a satisfactory mark,
- c* The thesis defence has been passed with a satisfactory mark,
- d* Further requirements as defined in the study rules have been met.

**Overall grade**

**Art. 16** <sup>1</sup> The overall grade is obtained on the basis of the weighted mean figure of:

- a* The thesis supervisor's assessment of the dissertation,
- b* The external co-referee's assessment of the dissertation,
- c* The examiner's assessment of the thesis defence.

<sup>2</sup> The overall mark is rounded up according to paragraph 3 and expressed as an overall grade in accordance with the following terms:

- a* *Excellent (Mark 6.0, summa cum laude),*
- b* *Very good (Mark 5.5, insigni cum laude),*
- c* *Good (Mark 5.0, magna cum laude),*
- d* *Satisfactory (Mark 4.5, cum laude),*
- e* *Sufficient (Mark 4.0, rite),*
- f* *Fail (Marks 1 to 3.5).*

<sup>3</sup> The following rules apply in respect of rounding numbers:

5.75 to 6.00	Mark of 6.0
5.25 to <5.75	Mark of 5.5
4.75 to <5.25	Mark of 5.0
4.25 to <4.75	Mark of 4.5
4.00 to <4.25	Mark of 4.0
3.25 to <4.00	Mark of 3.5
2.75 to <3.25	Mark of 3.0
2.25 to <2.75	Mark of 2.5
1.75 to <2.25	Mark of 2.0
1.25 to <1.75	Mark of 1.5
1.00 to <1.25	Mark of 1.0

**Award of a title**

**Art. 17** The title in accordance with Article 1 is awarded jointly by the GCB faculties involved.

**Doctoral degree and use of the title of doctor**

**Art. 18** <sup>1</sup> The doctoral degree is not issued until the mandatory copies of the dissertation have been submitted. Further details concerning the number and form of the mandatory copies are governed by the study rules.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the title of Doctor is permitted after receipt of the doctoral degree. In the intervening period the candidate is sent proof that he or she has passed the PhD programme.

<sup>3</sup> A *Graduation Record* is issued that records the progression of the PhD programme.

**Exclusion**

**Art. 19** <sup>1</sup> If, when failed examinations are repeated (Article 9 paragraph 2), the dissertation revised (Article 11 paragraph 4 and Article 12 paragraph 2) or the thesis defence repeated (Article 13 paragraph 4), the result is again unsatisfactory or the dissertation is again rejected, the PhD programme cannot be continued.

<sup>2</sup> In the event that there are serious deficiencies in the research work, the thesis supervisor, co-advisor or mentor can apply to the PhD Committee for exclusion.

<sup>3</sup> The PhD Committee decides about the application in consultation with the Thesis Committee and forwards the application to the dean of the faculty at which the doctoral candidate is matriculated. The faculty can enact the

exclusion.

<sup>4</sup> Before the decision about the exclusion is made, the affected person is consulted by the dean of the faculty at which he or she is matriculated.

**Administration of justice**

**Art. 20** <sup>1</sup> The procedure and administration of justice are governed by the University Decree (UniG) and the law dated 23 May 1989 on the practice of administrative law (VRPG<sup>5</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Any instructions are issued by the bodies of the Faculty where the thesis supervisor is a member.

**Revocation of rules**

**Art. 21** The following rules are being revoked:

Rules concerning the Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (PhD programme for cellular and biomedical sciences) dated 6 April 2004.

**Transitional regulations**

**Art. 22** <sup>1</sup> Doctoral candidates studying according to the Rules concerning the Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (PhD programme for cellular and biomedical sciences) dated 6 April 2004 can gain their doctoral title subject to paragraph 2 according to the previous rules.

<sup>2</sup> Doctoral candidates studying according to the Rules concerning the Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (PhD programme for cellular and biomedical sciences) dated 6 April 2004 who are working towards the title "PhD of Science" will convert to these rules, with all previous work credited. They will gain the title "PhD of Science in" (specialist area according to Study rules).

<sup>3</sup> Doctoral candidates according to paragraph 1 who do not come under paragraph 2 can convert to these rules voluntarily.

**Entry into force**

**Art. 23** These rules will enter into force on 1 July 2011.

Bern, 5 May 2011

On behalf of the Faculty of Medicine  
Dean, Prof. Dr. Peter Eggli

Bern, 3 June 2011

On behalf of the Faculty of Science  
Dean, Prof. Dr. Silvio Decurtins

Bern, 10 May 2011

On behalf of the Bern Vetsuisse Faculty  
Dean, Prof. Dr. Andreas Zurbriggen

*Approved by the Director of Education:*

Bern, 27 June 2011

The Director of Education:  
Bernhard Pulver

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<sup>5</sup> BSG 155.21 (Bernese systematic collection of acts)