

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

dated 5 May 2011 (as at 1 February 2020)

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, UniG¹), Article 33 of the University Decree of 12 September 2012 (Universitätsverordnung, UniV²) and Article 43 of the Statute of 7 June 2011 of the University of Bern (Universitätsstatut, UniSt³),

have decided:

Scope

Art. 1 These rules govern the PhD study program 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 in ...(specialist area according to Study rules), University of Bern, [version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*
- 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 PhD in Computational Biology, [inserted 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*
- g MD, PhD (Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy), University of Bern,*
- h DVM, PhD (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Philosophy), University of Bern, or*
- i DDS, PhD (Doctor of Dentistry and Philosophy), University of Bern.*

Purpose

Art. 2 The PhD study program 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 and Approval *[version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

Art. 3 ¹ Applicants with a Master's degree or a Diplom/Lizentiat/Staatsexamen in the fields of natural sciences or medicine from a Swiss university can be admitted.

² Equivalent degrees from a Swiss or foreign university can be recognized by the relevant faculty for the subject.

³ Applicants with a Master's degree from a university of applied sciences may be admitted in accordance with the relevant regulations of the University Executive Board. *[Inserted on 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

⁴ Before starting their doctoral studies at the GCB, applicants must be accepted by the University Executive Board as doctoral candidates and enrolled at the faculty to which the thesis supervisor belongs. *[Version dated*

¹ BSG 436.11

² BSG 436.11.1

³ BSG 436.111.2

10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019].

Application procedure

Art. 4 ¹ Applications are submitted to the GCB office in English. Written applications must include:

- a a curriculum vitae,
- b 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 a self-written description of the proposed research project,
- e the completed application form.

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

³ The thesis supervisor and the candidate jointly apply to the GCB for acceptance of the candidate. The application for admission must be submitted to the GCB within the first four months of starting the research project. *[Version dated 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

⁴ The Expert Committee assesses the quality of the application and conducts a personal interview with the candidate in English. It examines the application for quality and technical suitability on behalf of the PhD committee. The Expert Committee assigns a mentor from among its members. *[Version dated 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

⁵ 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. *[Version dated 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

Thesis Committee

Art. 5 ¹ The doctoral candidates are supervised by a Thesis Committee which is made up of at least one thesis supervisor, co-advisor and mentor. From the Thesis Committee, at least the thesis supervisor or co-advisor must have habilitated (or have an equivalent qualification) at the University of Bern or at the Vetsuisse Faculty and be employed.

² Those authorized 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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 ¹ 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.

² The doctoral candidate receives academic support primarily from the thesis supervisor.

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

⁴ 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, the responsible Expert Committee must be consulted. The PhD Committee can summon the persons involved at any time to attend a face-to-face discussion.

Curriculum

Art. 7 ¹ The PhD program generally lasts three years. Applications for part-time studies must be submitted to the Expert Committee. In the case of part-time studies, the duration of study is extended accordingly. *[Version dated 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

² 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.

³ Doctoral candidates keep a study record on the progress of their doctoral studies; this is submitted once a year to the Thesis Committee and must be approved by the mentor.

⁴ 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 (mid-term evaluation). The Thesis Committee evaluates the performance with a grade according to Article 9 paragraph 3. *[Version dated 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

⁵ 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 short talks.

⁶ The doctoral candidates are given the opportunity to present the results on national and international conferences.

Involvement in faculty teaching and research

[Version dated 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

Art. 8 Within the framework of their employment, doctoral candidates may participate in teaching and research at their institute or other organisational unit up to an employment level of no more than ten percent (Art. 89 paragraph 1 UniV). The assignment is made on the proposal of the thesis supervisor with the consent of the respective institutes. The thesis supervisor also takes over the responsibility for the teaching participation. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

Examinations

Art. 9 ¹ The scope and type of the examinations are described in the study rules and defined in the doctoral agreement.

² Unsatisfactory examinations may be repeated once within a maximum of six months.

³ Some examinations are graded, and for others no grade is given. Graded examinations are assessed using a scale of grades between 1 and 6, awarded in increments of half a grade. Grades of 4 and higher indicate passed.

⁴ For examinations where no grade is given, doctoral candidates receive a “pass” for satisfactory work or “fail” for unsatisfactory work.

⁵ Examinations are generally in English.

Dissertation

Art. 10 ¹ 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. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to the Expert Committee. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

² The dissertation must be written in English.

³ The dissertation must be submitted at the latest one year after completion of the research work. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to the PhD Committee. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*.

⁴ Further details regarding the dissertation are specified in the Study rules.

Assessments

Art. 11 ¹ The thesis supervisor assesses the dissertation and awards grades 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.

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

³ External co-referees are internationally recognized 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 and confirmed by the Expert Committee. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

⁴ The Expert Committee is responsible for determining the grade of the dissertation. As the rule, the grade is calculated according to the arithmetic mean of the grade proposals. In justified cases, a deviation from the arithmetic mean of the proposed grades is possible. However, the dissertation is only sufficient if it has been graded sufficiently by both the thesis supervisor and the co-referees. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

⁵ If the dissertation is given an unsatisfactory grade it can be revised once and submitted again within 6 months. *[Inserted on 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

Admission to thesis defense

Art. 12 *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

The prerequisites for admission to the thesis defense are:

- a a sufficient grade of the dissertation,
- b submission of the fully completed application form,
- c proof of fulfilment of the doctoral agreement,
- d proof of payment of the promotion fee.

Thesis defense

Art. 13 ¹ The doctoral examination takes place in the form of a thesis defense, which consists of a public part with a 40 to 45-minute lecture and a 60-minute discussion without public access. Examiners are the thesis supervisor, the co-supervisor, at least one external examiner and the mentor. The mentor holds the chair. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

² External examiners are independent research group leaders who have expertise in the research area of the doctoral candidate and have not published any research paper together with the doctoral candidate or the thesis supervisor during the last five years. An external examiner may be the same as the external co-referee of the written dissertation and is either present in person or connected via videoconference. *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]*

³ *[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]* The doctoral examination is assessed by all examiners for the attention of the expert committee with one grade each in accordance with Article 9 paragraph 3. The grade of the dissertation examination is determined by the arithmetic mean of :

- a grade of the thesis supervisor,
- b grade of the mentor

- c grade of the co-advisor
- d grade of the external examiner(s)

⁴ An unsuccessful doctoral examination can be repeated once within six months. [Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

Fees

Art. 14 ¹ The fees per semester are set out in Article 44 of the University Decree (UniV). [Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

² The fee for the doctorate is based on the Directorate Ordinance on Fees for Doctoral Studies and Habilitation at the University of Bern (GebDV PHab)⁴.

Criteria for a pass

Art. 15 Doctoral studies are passed if:

- a the doctoral agreement has been satisfied,
- b the written dissertation was given a sufficient grade,
- c the thesis defense has been passed with a sufficient grade,
- d further requirements as defined in the study rules have been met.

Overall grade

Art. 16 ¹ The overall grade is calculated from the grades of the written dissertation (double weighted) and the thesis defense (single weighted). [Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

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

- a excellent (grade 6.0, *summa cum laude*),
- b very good (grade 5.5, *insigni cum laude*),
- c good (grade 5.0, *magna cum laude*),
- d satisfactory (grade 4.5, *cum laude*),
- e pass (grade 4.0, *rite*),
- f fail (grade 1 to 3.5).

³ The following rules apply in respect of rounding numbers:

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

Award of a title

Art. 17 The titles referred to in Article 1 are awarded jointly by the participating faculties of the GCB. The doctoral diploma is signed by the rector and by the deans of the three participating faculties. [Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

Doctoral degree and use of the title of doctor

Art. 18 ¹ The doctoral diploma 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.

² The use of the title of Doctor is permitted after receipt of the doctoral diploma. In the intervening period, the candidate is sent proof that he or she has passed the doctoral studies.

³ A *Diploma Supplement* is issued for the completion of the doctoral studies,

⁴ BSG 436.111.3

[Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

⁴ The doctoral diploma is supplemented by a translation into German with the title of doctor scientiae naturalis (Dr. sc. nat.) without a special field. [Inserted on 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

Exclusion

Art. 19 ¹ If the performance does not suffice a second time when passing an examination (Art. 9 paragraph 2), revising the written dissertation (Art. 11 paragraph 5) or repeating the doctoral examination (Art. 13 paragraph 4), the doctoral candidate will be excluded from doctoral studies at the GCB. [Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

² 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.

³ 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 enrolled. The faculty can enact the exclusion.

⁴ 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 enrolled.

Administration of justice

Art. 20 ¹ 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 (VRPG⁵).

² The orders are issued by the organs of the faculty to which the thesis supervisor belongs. [Version of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019]

Revocation of rules

Art. 21 The following rules are being revoked:

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

Transitional regulations

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

² Doctoral candidates studying according to the Rules concerning the Graduate School for Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (PhD program 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).

³ 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 enter into force on 1 July 2011.

Bern,

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

Bern,

On behalf of the Faculty of Science
Dean,

⁵ BSG 155.21 (Bernese systematic collection of acts)

Bern,

On behalf of the Bern Vetsuisse Faculty
Dean,

Approved by the Director of Education:
Bern,

The Director of Education:

Amendments of 10.10.2019/12.12.2018/24.6.2019, effective 1 February 2020