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# Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine- Westphalia

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The Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia has issued the following framework doctoral degree regulations on the basis of § 67b (3) and § 67 (3) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG NRW) of September 16, 2014, as amended by the Act Amending the Higher Education Act of July 12, 2019 (GV. NRW. p. 377):

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## Preamble

The framework doctoral degree regulations take into account the general legal framework and recognized quality standards and are intended to contribute to the achievement of a uniform

quality standard for doctoral procedures and the corresponding doctoral degrees to be awarded through a high level of procedural transparency and quality assurance measures. The doctorate takes place in structured doctoral programs or doctoral study courses. The Departments can regulate additional aspects when drawing up their doctoral degree regulations in order to take into account departmental and subject-specific particularities.<sup>1</sup>

## **§ 1 Scope of application**

These framework doctoral degree regulations apply to all departments of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia and form the basis for the doctoral degree regulations of the departments. Insofar as the Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations do not provide conclusive specifications, the doctoral degree regulations of the departments may regulate further departmental and subject-specific aspects of the doctoral procedure.

## **§ 2 Right to award doctorates and doctoral degrees**

(1) The right to award doctorates lies with the departments.

(2) The following doctoral degrees are awarded by the departments of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW:

1. Doktor der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieur – Dr.-Ing.)  
Doktorin der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieurin – Dr.-Ing.)  
Doktor\*in der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieur\*in – Dr.-Ing.)
2. Doktor der Naturwissenschaften (Doctor rerum naturalium – Dr. rer. nat.)  
Doktorin der Naturwissenschaften (Doctor rerum naturalium – Dr. rer. nat.)  
Doktor\*in der Naturwissenschaften (Doctor rerum naturalium – Dr. rer. nat.)
3. Doktor der Philosophie (Doctor philosophiae – Dr. phil.)  
Doktorin der Philosophie (Doctor philosophiae – Dr. phil.)  
Doktor\*in der Philosophie (Doctor philosophiae – Dr. phil.)
4. Doktor der Staatswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktorin der Staatswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktor\*in der Staatswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
  
Doktor der Gesellschaftswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktorin der Gesellschaftswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktor\*in der Gesellschaftswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
  
Doktor der Wirtschaftswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)

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<sup>1</sup> The provisions in these regulations do not apply to cooperative doctoral procedures in which the procedure is conducted exclusively via the right to award doctorates of the university or other universities entitled to award doctorates.

Doktorin der Wirtschaftswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktor\*in der Wirtschaftswissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)

Doktor der Politikwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktorin der Politikwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktor\*in der Politikwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)

Doktor der Sozialwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktorin der Sozialwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
Doktor\*in der Sozialwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)

The doctoral degree regulations of the departments regulate which of these doctoral degrees are awarded. Only those degrees can be awarded for which the department has the appropriate subject reference and professors with suitable qualifications are involved in the doctoral process. A maximum of three doctoral degrees can be awarded per department.

(3) The doctoral certificate is issued as a bilingual document in German and English; the award of the corresponding doctoral degree remains unaffected by this.

### **§ 3 Purpose and form of the doctorate**

(1) The doctorate serves as proof of the ability to carry out in-depth academic work in a subject area or research focus specified in the doctoral degree regulations of the departments. It is based on independent academic work (dissertation) and an oral examination (disputation).

(2) Doctorates can be carried out as part of a doctoral degree course for which one or more departments are responsible or in a doctoral program of the relevant department. Further details are regulated by the relevant doctoral degree regulations or the respective doctoral program. The doctoral degree regulations of the departments also regulate the implementation of doctorates that deal with interdepartmental research topics.

(3) Persons who have been accepted for doctoral studies by a department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW are enrolled as doctoral candidates both at the supporting university at which the doctoral project is mainly carried out and at the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW. Further details are regulated by the respective enrolment regulations.

(4) The doctoral degree regulations of the departments regulate the maximum duration of the doctorate and the legal consequences of exceeding the deadline.

### **§ 4 Doctoral examining committee**

(1) The doctoral examining committee is responsible for the organization of the doctoral procedure, in particular for the decision on acceptance as a doctoral candidate, the appointment of supervisors, the opening of the doctoral procedure, the appointment of reviewers, the appointment of members of the examination committee, the monitoring of the

speedy completion of the doctoral procedure including the documentation of the number of doctoral candidates in the department. The responsibilities of the chairperson of the doctoral examining committee and the director otherwise remain unaffected.

(2) Each department entitled to award doctorates forms a doctoral examining committee. The doctoral committee consists of four professorial members of the department, the director of the department and an enrolled doctoral candidate of the department as well as, without voting rights, the coordinator responsible for the department. If there are several coordinators responsible, the department director shall appoint one member and one deputy member in consultation with the coordination team. If fewer than three doctoral candidates from a department are enrolled in the Graduate School, doctoral candidate members of a department who are not enrolled may be elected instead. If possible, one of the professorial members should come from a university. The appointment of a department's university cooperation partner is also possible. To ensure a quorum, two deputies (1st deputy and 2nd deputy) are appointed for the elected professorial members and one deputy for the enrolled doctoral candidate on the doctoral examining committee. The deputy directors of the department represent the deputy for the director. If there are not enough candidates, the deputy or deputies of the respective group remain unoccupied. As a rule, the chair is held by the director. The term of office of the members is three years; reappointment is permitted. Further details are regulated by the doctoral examining regulations of the departments.

(3) With the exception of the director, the voting members of the doctoral examining committee and their deputies are elected by the Department council within their group by a majority of the votes cast. In the event of a tie vote, the decision is made by drawing lots. Abstentions do not count as votes cast. The voting members from the group of doctoral candidates on the Department council each have one vote for the election. The professorial members of the department council who are entitled to vote each have four votes for the election. Each person entitled to vote may cast a maximum of one vote per candidate. Section 4 of the election regulations also applies.

(4) The deputies of the elected members are the candidates of the respective group with the next most votes who have not been elected to the doctoral examining committee.

(5) A secret ballot must be held. The election result must be documented in writing.

(6) If an elected member with voting rights leaves the doctoral examining committee prematurely, the deputy from the respective group with the next most votes takes their place. In the case of professorial members, the 2nd deputy becomes the 1st deputy. The candidate with the next highest number of votes becomes the 2nd deputy. If no candidate is available for the vacant deputy position, the deputy position remains vacant. The same applies to the resignation of a deputy. The term of office shall apply for the remainder of the term of office of the member or deputy who has left.

(7) If no person is available to replace a member, a by-election may be held at the request of a member with voting rights.

(8) The doctoral examining committee usually meets four times a year. The meeting dates are announced at the beginning of each semester for one year in advance.

(9) As a rule, the doctoral examining committee deliberates and passes resolutions in a duly convened and chaired meeting; the meeting may also be held as a video or telephone conference. The doctoral examining committee does not meet in public. The doctoral examining committee has a quorum if all members have been duly invited and the majority of voting members are present.

The doctoral examining committee decides by simple majority. In the event of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.

(10) The members of the doctoral examining committee and their deputies are obliged to maintain confidentiality. The duty of confidentiality includes the confidentiality of the documents and remains after termination of membership in the doctoral examining committee.

(11) The doctoral committee is an authority within the meaning of administrative procedural law.

### **§ 5 Admission requirements**

(1) According to HG § 67 (4), access to the doctoral procedure is granted to those who hold

- a) a degree following a relevant university course of study with a general standard period of study of at least eight semesters, for which a degree other than "Bachelor" is awarded, or
- b) a degree after a relevant university degree with a general standard period of study of at least six semesters and subsequent appropriate studies in the doctoral subjects in preparation for the doctorate or
- c) a degree from a Master's degree program within the meaning of HG § 61 paragraph 2 sentence 2.

The type and scope of the pre-doctoral studies, which serve as proof of aptitude for the doctoral procedure, must be specified in the doctoral degree regulations of the departments. They can be completed as part of relevant Master's degree courses at the supporting universities. The relevant requirements must be included in the notification of acceptance as a doctoral candidate in accordance with § 6 (5). The requirements must be fulfilled by the time the doctoral procedure is opened, unless another deadline is specified.

(2) Admission requirements may be specified in the doctoral degree regulations of the departments:

- a) proof of a specific subject-specific qualification,
- b) proof of a qualified degree,
- c) proof of further academic achievements and other achievements that demonstrate aptitude for the doctorate.

(3) Foreign degrees must be recognized by the doctoral examining committee. Recognition requires equivalence with domestic degrees. When deciding on the equivalence of foreign degrees, the equivalence agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers

of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder and the German Rectors' Conference or corresponding statutory regulations must be observed. The Central Office for Foreign Education can be consulted if there are doubts about equivalence.

### **§ 6 Acceptance as a doctoral candidate**

(1) Anyone who intends to write a dissertation and fulfills the admission requirements according to § 5 should apply to the relevant department for acceptance as a doctoral candidate at the earliest possible date. The written application, in which the topic of the dissertation is to be specified, must be submitted to the doctoral examining committee in accordance with § 4. If the topic of the dissertation is cross-departmental in accordance with § 3 (2), the application must be submitted to only one of the departments involved. In the case of such an interdepartmental dissertation, the corresponding doctoral degree shall only be awarded by one of the participating departments. The determination must be made by the participating departments before acceptance as a doctoral candidate.

(2) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate expresses the department's fundamental willingness to evaluate a dissertation on the intended topic as academic work. By accepting a doctoral candidate, the department undertakes to supervise and support them in the preparation of their thesis. The doctoral degree regulations of the departments provide for an appropriate time limit for acceptance and regulations to review whether the doctorate can be continued after a certain period of time. A review is carried out annually for the first time after five years, unless acceptance was granted for a shorter period of time or with reservations.

(3) The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate must be enclosed:

- a) proof of the admission requirements in accordance with § 5,
- b) a short synopsis on the topic of the dissertation and details of the prospective supervisor as well as a declaration by the supervisor that he or she is willing to take on the supervision,
- c) if applicable, proposals for the appointment of the two further persons in the support team in accordance with § 7,
- d) a curriculum vitae outlining your personal and professional career,
- e) a declaration on the choice of doctoral program or course of study, if several are offered in the department,
- f) a declaration of current or previous doctoral applications; this must state when, with which subject and to which faculty, department or faculty/department the application to open the doctoral procedure was submitted. If applicable, the reason why the procedure was not completed must be stated,
- g) the doctoral committee may request proof of sufficient knowledge of German or English. Further details are regulated by the doctoral degree regulations of the relevant department.

(4) With the application, the doctoral candidate undertakes to enrol at the relevant supporting university and at the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW if accepted and to submit a supervision agreement within six months that has been discussed with the supervisors in

accordance with § 7 (6) and signed by all parties involved. Within one year, an exposé of the doctoral project must also be submitted to the doctoral examining committee, agreed with and signed by the specialist supervisors, which presents the topic and contains information on the state of research, timetable and literature.

(5) The doctoral committee usually decides on the application within three months, in the case of doctoral degree programs at the start of the respective degree program. Acceptance as a doctoral candidate must be rejected if

1. the admission requirements according to § 5 are not fulfilled,
2. the proposed topic of the dissertation does not fall within the subject area of the department or no member of the department who fulfills the requirements according to § 7 (2) is in a position to assess the dissertation topic professionally, or supervision is not guaranteed for the expected duration of the doctorate,
3. none of the members of the department responsible in accordance with § 7 (2) considers the chosen topic to be worth working on or appropriate to the applicant's previous education,
4. the candidate has seriously violated the rules of good scientific practice or
5. the provision of the necessary resources to carry out the doctoral project is not secured in consultation with the supporting university.

The decision of the doctoral committee is issued in writing and, in the event of rejection, must be substantiated and accompanied by information on legal remedies.

(6) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate does not constitute a legal entitlement to admission to the doctoral procedure.

(7) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate may be revoked in particular if

1. the supervision agreement (§ 7 (6)) is invalid or has been rescinded,
2. there are subsequent reasons for rejecting acceptance as a doctoral candidate,
3. there is no prospect that the doctoral project can be successfully completed within a reasonable period of time; a review is carried out annually for the first time after five years, unless acceptance was granted for a shorter period of time or with reservations,
4. the doctoral candidate has seriously violated the rules of good scientific practice or
5. the doctoral candidate has seriously violated the obligations assumed by him or her in the supervision agreement (§ 7 (7)).

Acceptance as a doctoral candidate may only be revoked in accordance with § 6(7) No. 3, 4 and 5 if an ombudsman procedure has previously been conducted and no new supervision agreement has been concluded.

## **§ 7 Supervision**

(1) Each doctoral candidate is supervised by a supervisory team of three people.

(2) The doctoral examining committee shall appoint two professorial members of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW as supervisors who are qualified in the field of

research in which the doctoral project is being carried out and at least one of whom comes from the supporting university at which the doctoral candidate is enrolled and at least one of whom is assigned to the department. In the case of interdepartmental doctoral projects pursuant to § 3 (2), the second professorial member should come from another department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW. A professor who exercises the right to award doctorates at an institution authorized to award doctorates and who represents a subject relevant to the doctoral project may also be appointed as a second supervisor. One professor must have extensive experience in independent doctoral supervision acquired after completing their own doctorate. The existence of this requirement is determined by the doctoral examining committee.

(3) The third person in the supervisory team can be a professorial member, associate professor of the Graduate School or a professor or associate professor of a university outside the Graduate School for applied research in NRW and exercise the right to award doctorates at their home institution. This person takes on the role of a mentor and accompanies the process. The doctoral examining committee may assign additional supervisory tasks to this person.

(4) When appointing the supervisory team, the doctoral candidate's proposals in accordance with § 6 (3) b) and c) will be taken into account, if possible and professionally justifiable.

(5) The departments shall ensure supervision in accordance with § 7 (1) to (3) for the duration of the doctorate.

(6) The rights and duties of the supervisory team are defined and assigned. Further details are set out in the doctoral degree regulations of the relevant department.

(7) The supervisory team concludes a supervision agreement with the doctoral candidate, which is based on the sample template of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and is subject-specific.

(8) If a professorial member or an associated professor of the supervisory team leaves the Graduate School NRW before the completion of the doctoral procedure, he or she can, as a rule and with the consent of the university at which the doctoral project is being carried out, stay part of the supervisory team for a maximum of three years. The doctoral examining committee shall decide on exceptions, taking into account the importance of the departing professor for the planning and realization of the project.

(9) If a person leaves the supervisory team before completion of the doctoral procedure, a new person is appointed as supervisor by the doctoral examining committee. The doctoral candidate may propose a suitable person. The decision is made by the doctoral examining committee.

## **§ 8 Opening of the doctoral procedure**

(1) The opening of the doctoral procedure requires that the doctoral candidate continues to fulfill the admission requirements specified in § 5. The application for the opening of the doctoral procedure (assessment of the thesis and oral examination) must be submitted in

writing to the doctoral committee of the relevant department. The application must be accompanied by the following documents:

1. the notification of acceptance as a doctoral candidate in accordance with § 6 (5);
2. the supervision agreement pursuant to § 7 (7) in the current version;
3. a current curriculum vitae outlining your personal and professional career;
4. five copies of the dissertation; additional copies must be submitted at the request of the doctoral committee; the dissertation must also be submitted in electronic form;
5. a declaration of previous or current doctoral applications, stating the place, date, university and subject of the dissertation;
6. an affidavit in accordance with the Annex to these Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations;
7. Proof of the work completed as part of the doctoral program or the doctoral degree program; this work must have been completed primarily at the NRW Graduate School;
8. if applicable, a complete list of scientific publications and scientific lectures;
9. if applicable, proof of studies in preparation for the doctorate or fulfilment of further requirements;
10. an indication of the gender-specific form in which the doctoral degree is to be awarded.

(2) The application can only be withdrawn once by written declaration. Withdrawal is excluded if a review has already been submitted to the doctoral examining committee or if more than four weeks have elapsed since the reviewers or the examination committee were appointed.

(3) An application that meets the requirements of (1) may only be rejected if one of the statutory grounds exists for which the doctoral degree could be withdrawn. The decision on this shall be made by the doctoral examining committee.

(4) The doctoral examining committee decides on admission to the doctoral procedure. The doctoral committee may delegate the decision on applications that do not present any particular difficulties to the chairperson. The doctoral candidate receives written notification of admission. If admission is refused, the decision must be justified in writing and sent to the doctoral candidate with information on legal remedies.

## **§ 9 Reviewers**

(1) In principle, the following persons can be appointed as reviewers of a dissertation:

1. Professorial members who belong to the relevant department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW;
2. Professorial members of another department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia who are qualified in their field;
3. Professors from universities or other higher education institutions entitled to award doctorates, who are qualified in their subject and have the right to award doctorates at their home institution.

In the case of interdepartmental doctorates in accordance with § 3 (2), a professorial member of the other department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW should also be appointed as an assessor.

(2) The doctoral examining committee appoints at least two reviewers, one of whom must have experience in reviewing doctoral theses. For each reviewer who has published jointly with the doctoral candidate or is part of the supervisory team, an additional reviewer must be appointed who is not in a collaborative academic relationship with the doctoral candidate. The doctoral degree regulations of the departments may provide for further regulations.

(3) If a reviewer leaves during the doctoral procedure or is unable to submit the review for other reasons, the doctoral examining committee shall immediately appoint another reviewer.

(4) The doctoral candidate may request the exclusion of a reviewer. The application must be submitted to the doctoral examining committee in writing, stating the reasons, no later than four weeks after the appointment of the reviewers. The decision is made by the doctoral examining committee.

#### **§ 10 Examination board**

(1) The doctoral examination is conducted by an examination committee, which is usually appointed by the doctoral examining committee of the relevant department when the decision is made to initiate the doctoral procedure. The members of the department awarding the doctoral degree must have a majority on the examination committee. The doctoral committee shall ensure that the examination procedure can be carried out properly and on time or with the least possible delay if reviewers or examiners are unavailable.

(2) The examination committee consists of the reviewers and at least one other person. The examination committee is chaired by a member appointed by the doctoral committee who is not a member of the doctoral candidate's supervisory team.

(3) In principle, the following persons can be appointed as examiners for the oral examination:

1. Professorial members who belong to the relevant department;
2. Professorial members of another department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW;
3. Professors from universities or other higher education institutions entitled to award doctorates, who are qualified in their subject and have the right to award doctorates at their home institution.

In the case of interdepartmental doctorates in accordance with § 3 (2), a professorial member of the other department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW should also be appointed as an examiner.

(4) The doctoral candidate may request the exclusion of an examiner. The application must be submitted to the doctoral examining committee in writing, stating the reasons, no later than

four weeks after the examiners have been appointed. The decision is made by the doctoral examining committee.

(5) The examination board deliberates and makes decisions in a closed session. Its decisions are to be recorded in minutes.

(6) The members of the examination board are obliged to maintain confidentiality about facts that have become known to them in a closed session, unless a fact is already obvious or does not require confidentiality due to its significance. Confidentiality obligations arising from the service or employment relationship remain unaffected.

(7) If a supervisor, assessor or examiner leaves the Graduate School NRW before the doctoral examination has been completed, this person may continue to supervise doctoral procedures that have already begun for a maximum of three years in accordance with § 7 (8). This applies accordingly to assessments and examinations. The doctoral committee shall decide on exceptions, taking into account the importance of the departing member for the planning and realization of the project. The responsible doctoral examining committee may also enable persons who have paused their membership to carry out supervision, assessments or examinations during this time in the Graduate School NRW.

## **§ 11 Dissertation**

(1) The dissertation must demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to carry out independent, in-depth scientific work and make a significant contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the relevant subject area.

(2) As a rule, the dissertation must be written in German or English. Deviations and exceptions can be regulated in the doctoral degree regulations of the departments. If the dissertation is written in another foreign language, a summary in German or English must always be included.

(3) The dissertation can be written as a closed scientific work (monograph) or submitted as a cumulative dissertation of peer-reviewed publications in which the doctoral candidate was significantly involved.

(4) The doctoral candidate's work combined into a cumulative dissertation must be based on a common scientific question. They must be preceded by a detailed presentation that critically classifies the research topics and most important findings from the publications in the context of the scientific literature on the topic and, if applicable, acknowledges the doctoral candidate's own individual contribution as well as the contribution of the other authors of the individual publications and clearly shows the connection between the individual publications. In the case of joint research work and publication, the individual contribution of the doctoral candidate must be clearly distinguishable and assessable. In the case of a cumulative dissertation, at least three publications must be submitted, of which at least one must have been published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed, internationally recognized publication organ and of which the doctoral candidate must be listed as the first author of at least one article; none of the submitted works may be the subject of another dissertation of an ongoing or completed doctoral procedure of the doctoral candidate. The doctoral degree

regulations of the departments must provide for further regulations that take into account the specifics of their subjects.

(5) The dissertation must contain a title page, a table of contents, an abstract and a detailed list of sources and literature used.

(6) The dissertation must be submitted to the responsible doctoral examining committee in the number of copies and bound in accordance with the number of copies specified in these Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations. The submission must also be in electronic form.

(7) As a rule, each reviewer must submit a written, reasoned review to the doctoral committee no later than three months after being appointed as a reviewer. The doctoral degree regulations of the departments may provide for more detailed regulations.

(8) The reviewers examine in detail and independently of each other whether the submitted dissertation can be accepted as a doctoral thesis, must be rejected or must be returned for revision. They assess the academic performance of a thesis to be accepted in their written reports and award the following grades:

- a) Excellent (Grade 0)
- b) Very good (grade 1)
- c) Good (Grade 2)
- d) Satisfactory (grade 3)
- e) Sufficient (grade 4)
- f) Unsatisfactory/Failed (grade 5)

(9) Once all reviews have been received, the dissertation together with the reviews shall be made available for inspection in the department for a minimum of three weeks and a maximum of four weeks; it may also be made available in electronic form. The doctoral degree regulations of the departments may provide for a shortened deadline in certain cases. The chair of the doctoral examining committee shall notify the members of the department who are authorized to examine doctoral theses in writing or electronically of the location and period of the display. These members entitled to inspect the dissertation have the right to submit a written objection to the acceptance, rejection or assessment of the dissertation by the end of the display period. The objection must be justified in writing within one week of submission. The doctoral degree regulations of the departments may provide for the doctoral candidate to be informed of the reviews before and during the display period with the opportunity to comment. The statement must also be displayed.

(10) If all reviewers have recommended acceptance of the dissertation, it is accepted, provided no objection has been lodged. If the majority of the reviewers have proposed the rejection of the dissertation, it is thereby rejected. If the majority of the reviewers have recommended acceptance of the dissertation and at least one reviewer has recommended rejection, a further review is requested in accordance with § 9 (2) Sentence 2. The doctoral examining committee then decides on the acceptance or rejection on the basis of all reviews. The arithmetic mean of the individual grades must be 4.0 or better, rounded up to one decimal place.

(11) If the assessments differ by more than one grade, a further assessment is requested in accordance with § 9 (2) sentence 2. The further assessment should be submitted within three months of the appointment of the further assessor. Grades are determined in accordance with § 11 (10).

(12) If an objection to the acceptance, rejection or assessment is raised during the display period in accordance with § 11 (9), the doctoral examining committee shall decide, after hearing the doctoral candidate, whether to obtain a further expert opinion in accordance with § 9 (2) sentence 2. The further expert opinion should be submitted within three months of the appointment of the further reviewer. The doctoral examining committee shall decide whether to accept or reject the dissertation, taking into account the recommendation of the further expert opinion.

(13) The doctoral candidate may be required to revise the submitted dissertation with a view to publication and the doctoral procedure may not be completed until these conditions have been met. The member of the supervisory team represented on the examination board checks that the conditions imposed by the examination board have been fulfilled before issuing the printing permit.

(14) If the acceptance of the thesis as a dissertation is rejected, the doctoral procedure is terminated without success. The doctoral candidate will receive a written notification of rejection from the doctoral examining committee, which must be justified and include information on legal remedies. In this case, the doctoral candidate may only apply to reopen the doctoral procedure once with a thesis on a different topic and not before one year has elapsed. If this thesis is also rejected, the doctoral examination is definitively failed.

## **§ 12 Disputation**

(1) If the dissertation has been finally accepted, the oral examination takes the form of a disputation. The disputation should take place no later than eight weeks after acceptance of the dissertation and should be announced in good time. A longer period is only permissible in agreement with the doctoral candidate.

(2) The disputation serves in particular to present the most important results of the dissertation and consists of a presentation by the doctoral candidate followed by a scientific discussion with the members of the examination board. The doctoral candidate is given the opportunity to defend the dissertation. The defense lasts a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 120 minutes. The chairperson of the examination board chairs the defense; he or she may also allow questions from the public about the doctoral candidate's presentation.

(3) The disputation is open to all members and affiliates of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and the participating supporting universities. The public may be excluded for good cause. The decision shall be made by the doctoral examining committee, and the decision must be justified. Public access does not extend to the deliberation and announcement of the examination result. At the request of the doctoral candidate, the chairperson of the examination board may also admit external guests as listeners to the presentation to be given as part of the disputation.

(4) As a rule, the oral examination must be held in German or English. Deviations and exceptions can be regulated in the doctoral degree regulations of the departments.

(5) Minutes must be kept in German or English of the main topics and results of the oral defense, which must be signed by the examiners.

(6) The examination board meets in a closed session immediately after the defense to determine the grade for the performance in the defense and the overall grade for the doctorate. The examination committee decides by vote whether the defense has been passed or failed. In the event of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote. The members of the examination committee assess the defense with a grade according to the predicates in § 11 (8). The overall grade of the defense is calculated by the arithmetic mean and rounded up to one decimal place. The oral examination is only passed if the grade is at least 4.0.

(7) If the oral examination has not been passed or is deemed not to have been passed, the doctoral examining committee shall issue a written notification of this, which must be substantiated and include information on legal remedies. The oral examination may be retaken once within one year of the examination decision taking effect. A request for a repeat examination must be submitted to the doctoral examining committee at the earliest two months after notification of the examination decision.

(8) The doctoral procedure is terminated unsuccessfully and the doctoral examination is definitively failed if an application to retake the oral examination is not submitted within one year of the examination decision taking effect or if the oral examination is also not passed on the retake date. The doctoral candidate will receive a written notification from the doctoral committee, which must be justified and include information on legal remedies.

### **§ 13 Overall grade of the doctorate**

(1) After a successful defense, the examination committee determines the overall grade. The following grading scale applies to the overall grade:

- a) Excellent (grade 0.0)
- b) Very good (grades 0.1 to 1.3)
- c) Good (grades 1.4 to 2.3)
- d) Satisfactory (grades 2.4 to 3.3)
- e) Sufficient (grades 3.4 to 4.0)
- f) Unsatisfactory/Failed (from grade 4.1)

(2) The overall grade for the doctorate is made up of the grade for the dissertation and the grade for the disputation and is rounded up to one decimal place. The grade for the dissertation is weighted twice.

(3) The departments ensure the transparency and quality of grading. Every five years, each department prepares a report on its transparency and quality assurance measures, which must be submitted to the Executive Board and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW.

## **§ 14 Completion of the doctorate and certificate**

(1) Following the decision of the examination committee, the director of the department responsible for the doctoral procedure issues the candidate with a provisional certificate in German confirming that they have passed the examination. This contains the title and assessment of the dissertation, the assessment of the oral examination performance and the overall assessment.

(2) The doctorate is completed by the awarding of the certificate. The doctoral certificate shall bear the seal of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and the seal of the supporting university at which the doctoral candidate is enrolled in accordance with the template and shall be signed by the chair of the Board of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW, the president or rector of the university at which the doctoral candidate is enrolled and the director of the relevant department. In addition to the degree obtained, it contains the overall grade of the doctorate and the title of the dissertation as well as the name, date and place of birth of the doctoral candidate. The date of the oral examination is taken as the date of the doctorate. Before the doctoral certificate is issued, the doctoral candidate is not entitled to use the doctoral degree, not even with a supplement.

(3) The doctoral certificate will only be issued once the dissertation has been published in accordance with § 15 and the mandatory copies of the dissertation have been submitted to the department.

## **§ 15 Publication of the dissertation**

(1) If the examination board has assessed the doctoral work as passed, the dissertation in the version accepted by the doctoral committee must be made available to the scientific public in an appropriate manner. The member of the supervisory team represented on the examination committee shall check that the conditions imposed by the examination committee have been met before granting permission to print and shall inform the chairperson of the doctoral committee, who shall confirm that any conditions for editorial revision of the dissertation have been met prior to publication. Proof of publication must be provided to the Graduate School by the doctoral candidate and shall be submitted free of charge to the library of the supporting university at which the doctoral candidate is enrolled by

- a) two bound copies and an upload as an electronic publication via the university publication server or an electronic version of the dissertation, the data format and data carrier of which must be agreed with the university library, or
- b) three copies in the case of publication in a scientific journal, if a minimum circulation of 100 copies can be proven, or
- c) three copies if a commercial publisher is responsible for the distribution of the dissertation via the book trade and a minimum print run of 100 copies is proven or the publisher contractually guarantees that the book will be available in bookshops for a period of at least four years.

In the case of letter a), the doctoral candidate simultaneously transfers to the University Library the right to produce and distribute further copies of his or her dissertation or to make

them available in data networks. Any patent or other intellectual property issues should be resolved by mutual agreement between the parties concerned and the University Library. The publication must contain a note stating that it is a dissertation submitted by the doctoral candidate to the Graduate School NRW for the acquisition of the doctoral degree, as well as the date of the oral examination and the names of the supervisors and reviewers. The doctoral candidate must submit two additional copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School NRW. The university library confirms to the doctoral candidate that the deposit copies have been duly delivered and forwards them to the German National Library and the responsible state library in accordance with § 56 (6) KulturGB NRW.

(2) Publication must take place within a maximum period of two years after passing the oral examination. If the doctoral candidate fails to meet this deadline or fails to comply with the conditions for revision specified in § 11 (12), all rights acquired through the doctoral examination shall expire; if the doctoral certificate has already been issued, it must be withdrawn. In justified cases, the deadline may be extended by the doctoral examining committee upon request prior to expiry.

(3) The deposit copies must be provided with a title page. On the title page, the dissertation must be expressly designated by the relevant department of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW for the award of the doctoral degree. The names of the supervisors, reviewers and the date of the oral examination must be stated on the reverse of the title page.

### **§ 16 Withdrawal from the defense**

(1) If the doctoral candidate does not take part in the disputation in whole or in part, this shall be deemed a withdrawal.

(2) If the doctoral candidate is prevented from participating in the defense due to illness or for another important reason, withdrawal will be approved upon written application. The application must be submitted by the doctoral candidate to the doctoral examining committee without delay, stating the reason for withdrawal and enclosing suitable evidence. In the event of illness, the application must be accompanied by a medical certificate containing the medical findings necessary for the assessment of the inability to take part in the examination.

(3) If the doctoral committee approves the withdrawal, a new examination date will be set. The new examination date should take place no later than eight weeks after approval of the withdrawal and be announced in good time. A longer period is only permissible in agreement with the doctoral candidate.

(4) If the withdrawal is not approved by the doctoral examining committee, the disputation shall be deemed to have been failed and a notification shall be issued in accordance with § 12 (7) or § 12 (8).

### **§ 17 Deception and revocation of the doctorate**

(1) The doctoral examining committee of the relevant department may, after hearing the doctoral candidate, declare the doctoral work invalid if it becomes apparent before the doctorate is awarded that the doctoral candidate has been guilty of cheating in the doctoral work or that essential requirements of the doctoral procedure have been faked.

(2) The doctoral degree can be withdrawn if

- a) it subsequently transpires that it was obtained by cheating in the doctoral work or by cheating on essential requirements of the doctoral procedure;
- b) the doctoral candidate has been convicted of an intentional criminal offense in the preparation or commission of which he or she misused the doctoral degree.

(3) If the requirements for admission to the doctorate were not fulfilled without the doctoral candidate intending to deceive about this, and if this fact only becomes known after the certificate has been issued, this deficiency shall be remedied by passing the doctoral examination.

(4) The Departmental Council decides on the withdrawal in agreement with the doctoral examining committee after the director has heard the person concerned.

(5) If the doctoral degree is revoked, the doctoral certificate already issued must be withdrawn.

(6) The withdrawal of the doctoral degree may be communicated by the chairperson of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW, with the necessary details, to all German universities that have the right to award doctorates.

### **§ 18 Inspection**

The doctoral candidate has the right to inspect the examination documents within one year of completing the doctoral procedure.

### **§ 19 Appeal against decisions in the doctoral procedure**

(1) Defects in the doctoral procedure must be reported immediately to the doctoral examining committee.

(2) The person concerned may lodge an objection in writing with the doctoral examining committee within one month of notification against onerous decisions made on the basis of these regulations and the doctoral degree regulations of the departments. The doctoral examining committee shall decide on the appeal, if necessary after hearing the examination board.

(3) The provisions of the Administrative Court Regulations apply to the objection.

## **§ 20 Protection periods**

(1) At the request of a doctoral candidate, the periods of protection in accordance with § 3 (1) and § 6 (1) of the German Maternity Protection Act (Mutterschutzgesetz – MuSchG) in the version published on June 20, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 2318), as amended, must be taken into account. The application must be accompanied by the necessary supporting documents. The maternity protection periods interrupt any time limit according to these doctoral degree regulations.

(2) Likewise, the periods of parental leave in accordance with § 15 (1) to (3) of the Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave (Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz – BEEG) in the version published on January 27, 2015 (BGBl. I p. 33), as amended, must be taken into account upon application. The doctoral candidate must inform the doctoral examining committee in writing of the period of parental leave he or she wishes to take at least four weeks before the date from which he or she wishes to take parental leave, enclosing the necessary evidence. The doctoral committee must check whether the legal requirements are met that would trigger an entitlement to parental leave for employees and inform the doctoral candidate of the result and, if applicable, the newly set examination deadlines or other deadlines.

(3) The use of the protective provisions for the care of a close relative within the meaning of § 7 (3) of the Caregiver Leave Act (Pflegezeitgesetz – PflegeZG) of May 28, 2008 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 874, 896), as amended, who is in need of care within the meaning of the §§ 14 and 15 of the Eleventh Book of the German Social Security Code (SGB XI) of May 26, 1994 (BGBl. I p. 1014, 1015), as amended, is enabled.

## **§ 21 Compensation for disadvantages**

(1) Doctoral candidates with disabilities or chronic illnesses that make it difficult to complete the doctoral work shall be granted appropriate compensation for disadvantages upon application by the doctoral examining committee. The doctoral examining committee shall determine the form and scope of the compensation measure according to the severity of the proven disability or illness that makes it difficult to complete the doctoral work. In particular, the examination deadlines provided for in these doctoral degree regulations may be appropriately extended as a compensatory measure; in addition or instead, appropriate compensation may also be granted in another form.

(2) The application for compensation for disadvantages must be submitted at the latest with the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure. Proof of the disability or illness within the meaning of § 1 sentence 1 must be provided in the form of a medical certificate containing the medical findings necessary for the assessment. The doctoral examining committee may request the submission of a medical certificate from a doctor appointed by it, either generally or in individual cases.

(3) In disputed cases, the doctoral candidate shall be given the opportunity to comment before the doctoral examining committee makes a decision in accordance with paragraph 1 sentence 2.

## **§ 22 Retention of examination documents**

- (1) After successful completion of the doctoral procedure, the examination documents including the dissertation are kept on file with the department.
- (2) If the dissertation is rejected or the doctoral examination is definitively failed, the dissertation remains in the department's files together with all reviews and, if applicable, the examination documents.
- (3) The examination documents must be kept by the relevant department for five years. After the retention period has expired, the documents must be handed over to the office of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW for archiving.

## **§ 23 Doctorate in joint supervision with universities entitled to award doctorates and joint awarding of degrees**

(1) The implementation of joint doctoral procedures with one or more other German or foreign universities with the right to award doctorates and the awarding of a joint doctoral degree is based on an agreement between the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and the university or universities concerned. This cooperation agreement must be signed by the doctoral candidate and, on the part of the Graduate School for applied research in NRW, by the member or members of the supervisory team, the chairperson of the relevant doctoral examining committee and the chairperson of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW. The cooperation agreement must regulate the following content in particular:

1. the academic supervision of the doctoral candidate,
2. the minimum scope of the research stays at the partner universities,
3. the fulfilment of minimum requirements in order to offer doctoral candidates an adequate academic environment and sufficient support,
4. the examination modalities including the language to be used, the composition of the examination board and the grading system to be applied,
5. the modalities of awarding the doctoral certificate,
6. the obligation to publish the dissertation,
7. the assumption of travel expenses.

(2) For doctorates carried out by the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW in joint supervision with other universities entitled to award doctorates, the general provisions of these Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations apply, unless special provisions are made below.

(3) The doctoral candidate is supervised by a professorial member of the responsible department and a person from the cooperating university who exercises the right to award doctorates at their home institution and who is qualified in the field of research in which the doctoral project is being carried out, as well as another person in accordance with § 7 (3). In the case of collaborations with more than one partner university, the third person on the supervisory team shall come from the partner university that is not yet represented on the supervisory team.

(4) The doctoral candidate decides in agreement with the supervisors of the dissertation at which of the participating institutions with the right to award doctorates the doctoral procedure will be carried out.

(5) The departments, faculties and universities involved must be indicated on the back of the title page of the dissertation.

(6) For the assessment of the dissertation, the oral examination, the determination of the overall result of the doctorate and the possibilities for repeating the doctorate, the regulations of the institution at which the doctoral procedure is carried out apply, whereby the following conditions must be met:

1. If the doctoral procedure is not carried out at the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW, it must be ensured that at least one representative of the department involved, who fulfills the requirements in accordance with § 9 (1) No. 1, is involved in the doctoral procedure at the other university.
2. If the doctoral procedure is carried out at the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW, at least one representative of the other university or one of the other universities shall be appointed as a reviewer or examiner who fulfills the requirements in accordance with § 9 (1) No. 3.

(7) The doctoral certificate shall contain the names and signatures of the persons designated in accordance with the doctoral degree regulations of the participating universities and shall bear the seal of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and the seal of the other participating university or universities or faculty/department or faculties/departments. It shall contain the name of the corresponding academic degree awarded by the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and, if applicable, the corresponding foreign academic degree. The doctoral certificate shall contain a reference to the fact that the doctorate is jointly supervised. If two doctoral certificates are issued, the certificates refer to each other and are only valid together.

(8) Upon receipt of the doctoral certificate, the doctoral candidate is entitled to use the corresponding doctoral degree in the Federal Republic of Germany and, in the case of a joint doctorate with a foreign university, the corresponding academic degree in the country to which the participating foreign university belongs. The right to use only one doctoral degree is acquired.

(9) For the publication of the dissertation and the number of deposit copies, reference may be made in the cooperation agreement to the law of another participating university. It must be ensured that the doctoral committee of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW receives four deposit copies.

(10) Agreements concluded by the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW with other universities entitled to award doctorates on joint doctoral procedures may deviate from the provisions in §§ 1 to 17, insofar as this does not conflict with statutory regulations.

(11) Joint doctoral procedures may also be carried out with other institutions authorized to award doctorates. The provisions in (1) to (10) apply accordingly.

## **§ 24 Cooperative doctorates with universities not authorized to award doctorates**

(1) The Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW can conduct joint doctoral procedures in cooperation with universities that do not belong to the supporting universities and do not have the right to award doctorates, provided that they are located in North Rhine-Westphalia or have a location there.

(2) The implementation of cooperative doctoral procedures with a university in accordance with § 24 (1) shall be based on an agreement between the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and the university concerned. This cooperation agreement must be signed by the doctoral candidate and, on the part of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW, by the member or members of the supervisory team, the chairperson of the responsible doctoral examining committee and the chairperson of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW. The cooperation agreement must regulate the following content in particular:

1. the academic supervision of the doctoral candidate,
2. use of resources at the partner university,
3. the fulfilment of minimum requirements in order to offer doctoral candidates an adequate academic environment and sufficient support,
4. the assumption of travel expenses.

(3) The general provisions of these Framework Doctoral degree regulations apply to cooperative doctorates carried out by the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW in joint supervision with universities that are not authorized to award doctorates, unless special provisions are made below.

(4) The doctoral candidate is supervised by a professorial member of the responsible department and a person from the cooperating university who fulfills the requirements for professorial membership in the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW and who is qualified in the research field in which the doctoral project is being carried out, as well as another person in accordance with § 7 (3).

(5) The representative of the participating university in accordance with § 24 (4) subsections 1 and 2 should be appointed as a member of the examination board.

(6) The departments, faculties or faculties and universities involved must be stated on the back of the title page of the dissertation.

## **§ 25 Entry into force**

Issued on the basis of the decision of the Graduate School Senate of 05.05.2025. The regulations enter into force on the day after their announcement in the Official Notices of the Graduate School for Applied Sciences. Transitional regulations may be established for a period of two years by the executive board at the suggestion of the departments.

Bochum, 05.05.2025

The Chairman of the Executive Board  
signed *Sternberg*

(Prof. Dr. Martin Sternberg)

Hagen, 05.05.2025

The Chairman of the Graduate School Senate  
signed *Coners*

(Prof. Dr. André Coners)

### **Attachments**

- 1) Framework doctoral program
- 2) Supervision agreement template
- 3) Sample title page
- 4) Affidavit template
- 5) Sample certificate after graduation
- 6) Sample doctoral certificate

## Annex 1: Framework doctoral program

Each department's doctoral program is based on a scientific, interdisciplinary overarching topic, which is worked on by Doctoral candidates from several disciplines and disciplines. The main topic reflects the context of the doctoral topics and is incorporated into the lecture series and the further development of the doctoral program. Participation in a doctoral program is mandatory for doctoral candidates who complete their doctorate at the Graduate School NRW. For cooperative doctoral candidates, participation in a doctoral program of the Graduate School NRW is possible and desirable.

The success of a doctoral project depends crucially on the achievement of independent research. Accordingly, the doctoral programs are not about continuing a course of study, but about supporting Doctoral candidates and also broadening their horizons and helping to introduce them to the scientific community. The doctoral programs are a formative and structuring element of the doctorate at the Graduate School NRW. They are designed to last three years, take up the profile of the universities of applied sciences (HAW) and the department, enable intensive networking through cohort formation and prepare students for activities within and outside academia. The diversity of research topics, interests, careers and goals of the various doctoral candidates means that they require very different qualifications and should therefore be given the opportunity to individually select suitable qualification elements from a wide range of options.

The doctoral programmes consist of compulsory courses and a minimum number of courses and activities that can be selected from the courses offered by the PK NRW or that are recognized by the responsible doctoral examining committee. Compulsory courses are

- Seminar "Good Scientific Practice" (should be completed at the beginning of the doctoral procedure if possible)
- Seminar "Ethics and responsibility in science and society"
- Lecture series or doctoral seminar (also with external input), which is assigned to the doctoral program
- Two presentations in the colloquium of the doctoral program in different semesters
- Presentation of your own research at an external scientific conference

The doctoral programs may provide for further mandatory elements. Two specialist/methodological qualification events per year are recommended.

The preparation of annual written progress reports, progress meetings and the planning of scientific publications are a mandatory part of the supervision agreement and are specified there.

If special professional training needs are identified in relevant areas, the support team can specify specific training measures. This is set out in the supervision agreement.

Doctoral candidates without adequate knowledge of German are recommended to attend a German language course and an introduction to the German academic system.

In addition, doctoral candidates should put together their doctoral program according to their own interests and needs, whereby the connection to the doctoral topic should be recognizable

and they are not limited to the offerings of the Graduate School NRW. This may include, for example

- Qualification courses and advanced courses from the Graduate School NRW and other providers
- Lecture series of other departments
- Training visits to other working groups, also internationally
- Involvement in academic teaching, but the extent of this must not unduly impair the progress of their own research work
- Participation in other national and international research conferences with presentation of own research results
- Participation in summer schools, winter schools or comparable events
- Special achievements in the transfer of own research into practice

The doctoral candidates must document the work completed outside the compulsory program. The doctoral programs may contain further regulations on electives. The decision on the recognition of achievements in the elective area is made by the responsible doctoral examining committee.

## Annex 2: Supervision agreement<sup>2</sup>

### Preamble

The doctoral candidate and his or her supervisor conclude this supervision agreement in order to promote a trusting cooperation at a high academic level and to make the supervisory relationship transparent in terms of content and time. The agreement ensures a working process that serves the successful completion of the doctorate and clarifies the mutual rights, obligations and expectations of doctoral candidates and supervisors. It is based on the currently possible planning horizon and can be amended and updated by mutual agreement with regard to the scientific research question of the dissertation project and the individual qualification elements.

The doctoral examining committee of the respective department of the Graduate School NRW decides on acceptance as a doctoral candidate. It also appoints the supervisors. The framework doctoral degree regulations and the applicable doctoral degree regulations of the respective department regulate the doctoral procedure. Employment contracts remain unaffected by the supervision agreement.

### 1 Persons involved

Supervision agreement between

Name of the doctoral candidate Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of the HAW Click or tap here to enter text.

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Title, name of the supervisor 1 Click or tap here to enter text.

Department of the PK NRW, Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of the HAW Click or tap here to enter text.

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Title, name of supervisor 2 Click or tap here to enter text.

Department of the PK NRW, Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of the university Click or tap here to enter text.

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Title, name of supervisor 3 or mentor Click or tap here to enter text.

Department of the PK NRW Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of the university Click or tap here to enter text.

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<sup>2</sup> The present supervision agreement follows the requirements formulated in § 67 (2) of the NRW Higher Education Act and is based on the recommendations of the German Research Foundation for the preparation of supervision agreements ([www.dfg.de/formulare/1\\_90/1\\_90.pdf](http://www.dfg.de/formulare/1_90/1_90.pdf)) and the requirements for quality assurance of doctorates in the position paper of the German Council of Science and Humanities (<http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/1704-11.pdf>).

The supervisors form the doctoral candidate's individual supervisory team in accordance with § 7 of the Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Topic, period and type of dissertation

Working title of the dissertation

Click or tap here to enter text.

An exposé (Annex 1) describing the planned research project must be submitted within one year of acceptance and forms part of this agreement (cf. Framework Doctoral degree regulations § 6).

☐ The topic of the dissertation was described in the exposé dated Click or tap here to enter text. which is attached to this agreement.

☐ The topic of the dissertation will be described in an exposé until Click or tap here to enter text (date) and will then be attached to this agreement.

The dissertation is expected to be published as

☐ Monograph

☐ Cumulative work

(cf. Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations § 11).

The dissertation is expected to be submitted in Click or tap here to enter text. language (see Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations § 11).

Start of the doctoral project (month/year) Click or tap here to enter text.

Planned end of the doctoral project (month/year) Click or tap here to enter text.

Doctoral degree sought:

Department: Click or tap here to enter text. Doctoral program: Click or tap here to enter text.

## 3 Tasks and duties of doctoral candidates and supervisors

For the purpose of constructive and productive cooperation, the doctoral candidate agrees a structured work plan and schedule with the supervisors, which is attached to this agreement (Annex 2). The work plan may also include mandatory or recommended qualification elements. The doctoral project should be designed and structured in such a way that the doctorate can normally be completed within a period of three to five years, depending on the discipline. Professional and personal circumstances (e.g. employment, family obligations,

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise stipulated by the applicable doctoral degree regulations or the regulations of the applicable departmental doctoral program, the duties of supervision may be performed equally by the supervisors.

health restrictions) must be taken into account in individual cases and individual arrangements must be made in consultation with the supervisors.

Regularly, usually at intervals of [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) (specify rotation or individual dates), but at least once per semester, the doctoral candidate and the supervisors (but at least one supervisor) meet for a progress meeting to discuss the progress of the doctoral project, to agree on the next steps and any courses to be completed, to discuss the above-mentioned work and study schedule and to update the timetable.<sup>4</sup> The doctoral candidate should report in the agreed manner on the status of the doctoral project and the results of his or her research (e.g. in the form of a presentation, a written report, minutes of discussions or a combination of the aforementioned points). Opportunities for stays abroad, the presentation of the topic in workshops, at national and international conferences and meetings as well as participation in other events for further qualification should also be discussed in this context. At least once a year, the doctoral candidate prepares a written report, which must be submitted to all supervisors at least two weeks before the agreed meeting date. During the meeting, the supervisors keep minutes in which progress, further planning steps and changes to the work plan and schedule are recorded. The form and type of minutes are to be determined jointly by the parties involved. The minutes must be made available to all parties involved and will be attached to this supervision agreement. The progress meetings supplement the regular supervision meetings and do not replace them.

With the support of the supervisors, the doctoral candidate strives for an international exchange during the doctoral phase. This can also be completed at the home university in exchange with international fellow students/guests. The doctoral candidate agrees this with the supervisors: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

The supervisors usually comment on the exposé, (progress) reports, work plans, manuscripts etc. within [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) (e.g. 14 days) and provide constructive suggestions for further work.

#### **4 Integration into the scientific environment**

The supervisors support the early academic independence of the doctoral candidate. They undertake to introduce the doctoral candidate to the (relevant) academic environment (scientific community) and to support participation in specialist conferences and the like. Initiatives and measures are also supported that serve to facilitate the transition to employment outside academia, provided the doctoral candidate is aiming for this and these are compatible with their academic work.

#### **5 Arrangements for financing the doctorate**

Funding agreements should create transparency, security and trust. The doctoral candidate and the supervisor agree on funding options for the doctoral phase (e.g.

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<sup>4</sup> The meetings should take place at least until the start of the doctoral procedure. Subsequently, different arrangements adapted to the respective needs of the doctoral candidate can be agreed upon.

position, scholarship, etc.) and support the doctoral candidate in this (e.g. by preparing an expert report).

The doctoral candidate is currently funded by:

- ☐ a scholarship from (with duration): Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ a position (HAW or university, with duration): Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ from third-party funds (with duration): Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ other: Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ not yet known

If necessary, the doctoral candidate and the supervisor will clarify the extent to which further resources for the doctoral project (e.g. final funding, costs for research trips, conference contributions, publications) can be applied for from the university, the PK NRW or third-party funding providers.

The assumption of supervision until completion of the doctorate is independent of the duration of funding for the doctorate.

## 6 Working environment

The following equipment is available to the doctoral candidate for the work on his or her doctorate (indicate any time restrictions):

- ☐ Workstation: Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Computer Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Internet access Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Phone Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Laboratory equipment and devices: Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Access to the following infrastructure: Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Other: Click or tap here to enter text.

## 7 Commitment to compliance with the rules of good scientific practice

The doctoral candidate and the supervisors undertake to observe the principles of good scientific practice as set out in the recommendations of the German Research Foundation (DFG)<sup>5</sup> and comply with them. In addition, the provisions of good scientific practice as laid down at the Graduate School NRW in Click or tap here to enter text. and at the Click or tap

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. [http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/dfg\\_im\\_profil/reden\\_stellungnahmen/download/empfehlung\\_wiss\\_praxis\\_1310.pdf](http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/dfg_im_profil/reden_stellungnahmen/download/empfehlung_wiss_praxis_1310.pdf).

here to enter text. (HAW) in Click or tap here to enter text. are defined in the respective valid version. The doctoral candidate and the supervisors also undertake to comply with the rules of export control law and other relevant rules in connection with the doctorate.

## **8 Review times**

The supervisor or supervisors involved in the assessment in accordance with § 9 of the Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations undertake to adhere to the maximum deadlines for the submission of the review specified in the Doctoral Degree Regulations.

## **9 Measures to reconcile family and academic work**

The compatibility of academic work and family is taken into account in the time planning. The doctoral candidate and the supervisors agree on the following (support) measures to reconcile family and academic work:

Click or tap here to enter text.

## **10 Exploitation rights of the research results**

The doctoral candidate and the supervisor reach the following agreement regarding the exploitation of the research results (e.g. authorization to exploit and use the research data or results in publications, exploitation of inventions):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Permission to publish the results promptly under the name of the doctoral candidate is guaranteed. The results may only be published elsewhere after the doctoral procedure has been completed.

## **11 Conflicts, breach of obligations under this agreement**

In cases of conflict, the principles for safeguarding good scientific practice and for dealing with scientific misconduct mentioned under point 7 apply.

In the event of differences of opinion or conflicts between one or more supervisors and the doctoral candidate - for example in the event of a breach of the obligations arising from this agreement - discussions will be held between the parties in which all parties involved will endeavor to find an amicable, practical solution.

## **12 Termination of the supervision agreement**

The supervision agreement can be terminated by mutual agreement between the parties.

Unilateral termination of the supervision agreement must be made in writing. The doctoral candidate may terminate his or her doctoral project at any time without giving reasons. A supervisor or several supervisors may terminate the supervision agreement for good cause if no amicable solution can be found after the involvement of an ombudsperson. The termination must be justified in writing and reported to the relevant doctoral examining committee. A new supervision agreement can be concluded between the doctoral candidate and the other supervisor(s).

In the event of termination of the supervision relationship for reasons beyond the doctoral candidate's control (e.g. due to illness, retirement, dismissal of one or more supervisors), the relevant doctoral committee shall ensure alternative and professionally appropriate supervision. In doing so, the doctoral candidate's proposals will be taken into account in accordance with the Framework Doctoral degree regulations § 6, (3) b) and c), if possible and technically justifiable.

The supervision agreement ends with the completion of the doctoral procedure.

### **13 Severability clause**

Should any provision of this support agreement be or become invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, this shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this agreement. In place of the invalid or unenforceable provision, a provision shall be deemed to have been agreed which comes closest to the meaning and purpose of the doctoral agreement. The same applies if it becomes apparent that the doctoral agreement contains a loophole.

### **14 Completion and acceptance as a doctoral candidate**

The supervision agreement must be signed in at least four copies. Each signatory, the doctoral examining committee and the office of the PK NRW shall receive a copy. If the second supervisor and/or the third supervisor join at a later date, he or she can be added to these copies with the date.

[Click or type here to enter text.](#)

Date, signature of doctoral candidate

[Click or type here to enter text.](#)

Date, signature of first supervisor

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Date, signature of second supervisor

Click or tap here to enter text.

Date, signature of third supervisor

#### **Attachments**

- 1) Exposé
- 2) Dissertation work and time schedule
- 3) Any agreed qualification measures

**Annex 2 to the supervision agreement:**

***Work and time schedule for dissertation (optional template)***

*1st year*

| <b>1st half-year</b> | <b>Milestones</b>            | <b>Date</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      | Report on the status of work |             |
| <b>2nd half-year</b> |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      | Report on the status of work |             |

*2nd year*

| <b>1st half-year</b> | <b>Milestones</b>            | <b>Date</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      | Report on the status of work |             |
| <b>2nd half-year</b> |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      | Report on the status of work |             |

*3rd year*

| <b>1st half-year</b> | <b>Milestones</b>            | <b>Date</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      | Report on the status of work |             |
| <b>2nd half-year</b> |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      |                              |             |
|                      | Report on the status of work |             |

4th year

| 1st half-year | Milestones                   | Date |
|---------------|------------------------------|------|
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               | Report on the status of work |      |
| 2nd half-year |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               | Report on the status of work |      |

5th year

| 1st half-year | Milestones                   | Date |
|---------------|------------------------------|------|
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               | Report on the status of work |      |
| 2nd half-year |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               |                              |      |
|               | Report on the status of work |      |

## Annex 3: Template for the title page of the dissertation – submission of deposit copies

*Title of the dissertation*

Dissertation  
to obtain the degree XY  
of a doctor (Dr. xy) in the department xy

submitted by

[name of author]

born on xx.yy.zzzz in xy

on

Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia

Bochum and calendar month and year of submission of the dissertation

→ back or 2nd page

The thesis was written at [name of university].

Supervisor 1: [title, first name, surname, if applicable Graduate School NRW and name of university]

Supervisor 2: [Title, first name, surname, if applicable Graduate School NRW and name of university]

Supervisor 3: [Title, first name, surname, if applicable Graduate School NRW and name of university]

Reviewers (in alphabetical order and according to the scheme as above)

Date of the oral examination:

## Annex 4: Affidavits

**Name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**First name:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Date of birth:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Address:** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Title of the submitted dissertation:** Click or type here to enter text.

**Department in which the dissertation is submitted:** Click or tap here to enter text.

### *Declaration of independence*

I declare in lieu of an oath that I have prepared the submitted dissertation myself, that I have not taken any text passages from third parties or from my own examination papers without marking them and that I have indicated all the aids and sources I have used in my work.

---

**Place, date**

---

**Signature**

I hereby declare on oath that

- ☐ I am familiar with the doctoral degree regulations of the department in which I have submitted my dissertation.
- ☐ I have not commissioned a commercial promotion agency.
- ☐ I have not yet submitted the dissertation as an examination paper for a state or other scientific examination.
- ☐ I have not yet submitted the same, a substantially similar or a different dissertation to another body as a dissertation.

---

**Place, date**

---

**Signature**

## Annex 5: (Provisional) Certificate

Graduate School NRW

The Chairperson of the Doctoral Committee

Department of XY

### Certificate

**First name Last name**

**born on:**      **xx.xx.xxxx**      **in**      **xxx**

**on**              **xx.xx.xxxx,**

has successfully passed the oral examination with the grade xy, after her/his scientific work submitted as a dissertation with the topic

**“xxx (title of the work)”**

was accepted by the Department of xxx on xx.yy.zzzz and was awarded the grade XY. The overall grade is

**“xxxxxx”**

Pursuant to § 14 of the Framework Doctoral Degree Regulations, the doctorate may only be awarded after publication of the dissertation. It is not permitted to use the doctoral degree before the doctoral certificate has been awarded.

Bochum, **xx.xx.xxxx**

The chairperson of the doctoral examining committee

(Prof. Dr. xy)

## Annex 6: Doctoral Certificate

### **Doktorurkunde Doctoral Certificate**

Unter dem Vorstandsvorsitzenden/Under the chairmanship of the Board

**Prof. Dr.XX**

und unter der/dem Direktor\*in/ and under the directorship

**Prof. Dr. XY**

verleiht die/awards the

ABTEILUNG XY DES PROMOTIONSKOLLEGS FÜR ANGWANDTE FORSCHUNG IN NORDRHEIN-  
WESTFALEN IN KOOPERATION MIT DER HOCHSCHULE XY

DEPARTMENT OF XY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN NORTH RHINE-  
WESTPHALIA IN COOPERATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES XY

Frau/Herrn / Ms./Mr.

**Vorname Name**

geboren am yy Monat Jahreszahl in Ortsname, Land

born on xy.xx.zz in

den Grad/the degree of

**eines Doktors/einer Doktorin/eine\*r Doktor\*in der XY**

**(Dr. xy)**

nachdem sie/er in ordnungsgemäßen Promotionsverfahren durch ihre/seine Dissertation

after she/he has proven her/his scientific ability in the regular doctoral procedure through  
his dissertation

**Titel der Dissertation**

mit der Note ... sowie durch die mündliche Prüfung mit der Note ... ihre/seine  
wissenschaftliche Befähigung erwiesen und das Gesamturteil

with the grade ... and the oral examination with the grade ... and was given the final grade

## Note (Zahl)

erhalten hat.

Bochum, den xx Monat zzzz

Die/Der Vorstandsvorsitzende/The Chairwoman/Chairman of the Board

[Unterschrift, Siegel/Signature, Seal]

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Prof. Dr. XX

Die/Der Präsident\*in der Hochschule xy/The Rector of XY

[Unterschrift, Siegel/Signature, Seal]

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Prof. Dr. YY

Die/Der Direktor\*in der Abteilung xy/The Director of the Department xy

[Unterschrift/Signature]

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Prof. Dr. ZZ