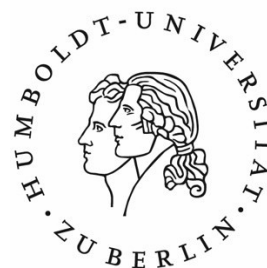


# University Gazette



Faculty of Life Sciences

## Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences

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# Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences

Pursuant to § 17, para. 1, Item 3 in conjunction with § 16, para. 5 of the Statutes of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (University Gazette AMB No. 47/2013), the extended Faculty Board of the Faculty of Life Sciences on 20 July 2022, with resolution no. 06/2022.89, approved the following Doctoral Degree Regulations for the Faculty of Life Sciences.<sup>1</sup>

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## § 1 Principles

(1) The Faculty of Life Sciences of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin awards the academic degrees of

Doctor rerum naturalium (Dr. rer. nat.)  
 Doctor rerum agriculturalarum (Dr. rer. agr.)  
 Doctor rerum horticulturalarum (Dr. rer. hort.)  
 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)

on the basis of a duly completed doctoral degree procedure pursuant to the following Regulations.

(2) The doctoral examination provides evidence of the candidate's ability to complete in-depth independent academic work based on their own research, beyond the level of a degree from an institute of higher education. The

doctoral degree performance consists of an academic work (doctoral thesis) and an examination colloquium (thesis defence).

(3) The following may be selected as doctoral subjects:

- Agricultural Science
- Biology
- Biophysics
- Horticultural Science
- Psychology

The extended Faculty Board decides, at the suggestion of the departmental boards responsible, which specialisations can be chosen as doctoral subjects. The list of agreed specialisations is then published on the Faculty website.

(4) The academic degree "*Doctor of Philosophy* (Ph. D.)" may be used in the abbreviated form "Dr." without any additional reference to the subject. The simultaneous use of the abbreviations "Ph. D." and "Dr." is not permitted.

(5) The academic title of honorary doctor "*honoris causa*" (Dr. rer. nat. h.c./Dr. rer. agr. h.c./Dr. rer. hort. h.c.) can be granted as an award for extraordinary academic achievements (see § 19).

(6) The academic degree pursuant to para. 1 and para. 4 may only be awarded once to an individual for a doctoral subject.

## § 2 Structure of the doctoral degree programme

The doctoral degree programme is structured as follows:

- a) Admission to the programme and enrolment/registration
- b) Initiation of the doctoral degree procedure
- c) Assessment of the doctoral thesis
- d) Thesis defence ("*Disputation*")
- e) Publication of the thesis
- f) Conferral of the doctoral certificate

## § 3 Doctoral Degree Board

(1) The Faculty Board appoints a Doctoral Degree Board for the term of office of the Faculty Board to carry out tasks in the doctoral degree procedure. The office of the Doctoral Degree Board is the Academic Affairs unit of the Faculty.

(2) The Faculty Board appoints the members of the Doctoral Degree Board at the beginning of its term of office. The Doctoral Degree Board includes three full-time university teachers from the Faculty, each representing one Department.

<sup>1</sup> The Executive Board confirmed these Doctoral Degree Regulations on 25 August 2022.

(3) The members elect a chairperson. They may act on one another's behalf. Individual decisions can be delegated to the chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board, provided that the relevant Departmental Board has voted on the matter. The Departmental Boards decide which departmental body will formulate the opinions on all doctoral matters and submit them to the Doctoral Degree Board for a decision.

The Doctoral Degree Board meetings are not public. The Doctoral Degree Board makes decisions based on the simple majority of its members.

(4) The duties of the Doctoral Degree Board include making decisions on the admission requirements (§ 4), admissions to the doctoral degree programme (§ 5), extending the thesis completion period (§ 6), thesis applications (§ 7), the composition of the Doctoral Degree Committee (§ 8), initiating the doctoral degree procedure (§ 9), and extending the publication deadline (§ 15).

#### § 4 Admission requirements

(1) In principle, admission to a doctorate requires the completion of a five-year degree programme in a subject essential to the doctorate at a state-recognised university with an overall grade of at least 2.3 or better. A Magister, diploma or master's degree as well as the first state examination (Erste Wissenschaftliche Staatsprüfung) count as qualifications.

(2) If the applicant has completed a master's degree that has not been preceded by a successfully completed undergraduate degree, or if the applicant has completed a one-year master's degree, admission can be granted subject to conditions as part of an aptitude assessment process.

(3) Bachelor graduates can be provisionally admitted to a doctoral degree programme if they

1. have obtained their degree in a programme lasting at least three years, and their degree verifiably ranks among the top five percent of the programme in the cohort of the respective university and

2. provide evidence of acceptance into a structured doctoral programme or commit to adhering to an individual curriculum in a supervision agreement that makes it possible for the qualification goals of a master's programme (without a master's thesis) to be achieved within a maximum of two years or

3. prove their academic qualifications as part of an aptitude assessment process either in the form of two independent reviews from full-time university teachers / full-time teaching associates (*Privatdozent:in*) or in the form of an interview with two full-time university teachers. The Doctoral Degree Board of the Faculty decides which form the aptitude assessment process takes based on the proposal of the respective departmental board.

(4) In the case of degrees from foreign universities, their equivalence to the degrees mentioned under para. 1 must be guaranteed. This can be proven through

confirmation of the equivalence of the foreign degree and the confirmation of the grades by the Student Service Centre of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin or by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) in the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany. The determination of equivalence is generally based on the framework specifications of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. This must be submitted by applicants.

If equivalence cannot be proven, the Doctoral Degree Board will examine whether admission can be granted subject to conditions as defined in para. 2.

#### § 5 Admission and enrolment

(1) Admission to the doctoral degree programme is a prerequisite for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure. Admission can only be granted in a subject that is taught by professors, honorary professors, assistant professors or teaching associates from the full-time and part-time staff of the Faculty according to § 6 para. 1 or by junior research group leaders according to § 6 para. 2 and para. 3.

(2) As a rule, admission to the programme takes place at the beginning of the experimental/theoretical work pertaining to the doctorate project, but no later than twelve months before the start of the doctoral degree procedure (§ 9). The application must be submitted in writing to the Doctoral Degree Board. To do so, the following documents must be submitted:

- a) the application for admission to the doctoral degree programme using the forms provided on the Faculty website,
- b) certified copies of the certificates in German or English, proof of equivalence in the case of foreign degrees,
- c) a tabular CV,
- d) a description of the doctoral project with a work schedule,
- e) a supervision agreement with the supervisor(s) of the doctoral project (Annex 1),
- f) if applicable, a study programme coordinated with the supervisor(s), which forms part of the supervision agreement.

Applicants successfully admitted to the doctoral degree programme will receive written notification. Rejections must be justified in writing and include information for legal appeals.

(3) The doctoral programme (standard period of study) begins for the doctoral candidate upon notification of admission. Doctoral candidates are required to enrol or register at the the Enrolment Office of Humboldt-Universität pursuant to the General Admission, Study and Examination Regulations of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin currently in force and before the deadline stated therein (§ 59 ZSP-HU).

## § 6 Supervision and standard completion period

(1) As a rule, doctoral candidates should be supervised by at least two people from among the staff of full-time or part-time professors, honorary professors, assistant professors and teaching associates ("Privatdozent:in") of the Faculty. The supervision of a thesis is an ongoing obligation and may not be delegated.

(2) At the suggestion of the departmental boards, the Faculty Board can grant the right to supervise doctoral students in their own respective working groups to junior research group leaders, limited to the duration of their membership at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. As a prerequisite, the junior research group leaders have to demonstrate experience in supervising early career researchers, their own academic achievement and the ability to teach independently.

(3) As part of structured doctoral degree programmes, the thesis can also be supervised and assessed by junior research group leaders who meet the requirements of para. 2 and who are working at non-university research and educational institutions with which Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin has entered into cooperation agreements in agreement with the Faculty of Life Sciences. The appropriate authority is granted, in individual cases, by the Faculty Board at the request of the department, and is limited to the duration of the programme.

In this case, the doctoral students must, in agreement with the supervisors, submit the confirmation of an additional supervisor from among the persons mentioned under para. 1, who agrees to write an assessment report.

(4) The supervisors and the doctoral students agree on the most important cornerstones of the doctoral project in the form of a supervision agreement in accordance with Annex 1.

(5) In addition to the support provided by the persons named under para. 1, academic support can be provided by an additional supervisor with a doctoral title.

(6) The supervisors and doctoral students agree to adhere to the rules of good scientific practice, as set out in the University's "Regulations governing the principles for ensuring good scientific practice and handling allegations of scientific misconduct," as amended. The declaration is part of the supervision agreement.

(7) A resignation or a change of a supervisor is possible and must be communicated to the Doctoral Degree Board. The Doctoral Degree Board shall make its decision following a hearing and with the involvement of an ombudsperson [designated mediator].

(8) If the membership of a supervisor at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin ends, they can request to complete the supervision of an ongoing doctoral project for a period of up to three years. In addition, they can request that their report replace the report of a Faculty member. This does not affect the rights of retired full-time professors at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

(9) The standard completion period for the thesis is limited to three years. It can be extended by the Doctoral Degree Board at the request of the doctoral candidate and following a statement from the supervisor(s).

(10) The doctoral studies can be terminated; either by notification from the doctoral candidate or by application in the form of a statement from the supervisor(s) to the Doctoral Degree Board, if it can be proven that the doctoral candidate did not perform adequately and is unlikely to successfully complete the doctoral degree programme. The decision of the Doctoral Degree Board must be preceded by a hearing of the doctoral candidate and the relevant departmental board. This decision must be justified in writing and be accompanied by information for legal appeals. With the announcement of the decision regarding the termination of doctoral studies, the doctoral project is terminated, and the admission expires. This does not rule out the possibility of future admission to doctoral studies.

(11) If the doctoral candidate is demonstrably unable to meet the criteria for success documented in the supervision agreement, either in whole or in part, in the intended form or within the intended time period, due to long-lasting or permanent health impairments or due to the care of children or relatives in need of care, they are entitled to compensation in accordance with para. 9.

## § 7 Doctoral thesis

(1) The doctoral thesis is a paper in the chosen doctoral subject which represents a gain in scientific knowledge, written by the doctoral candidate in independent academic work. The thesis must be a self-contained representation of the candidate's individual research and its results.

(2) The thesis can be submitted in German or in English. The thesis must contain a summary in German and English. The Doctoral Degree Board can permit other languages upon request, provided the assessment of the thesis is secured. If the thesis is not written in German or English, it must contain a ten-page abstract in German or English.

(3) The thesis can consist of a monograph or be structured cumulatively on the basis of publications in specialist scientific journals.

(4) Cumulative theses require at least two original publications in peer-reviewed journals with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin as the address of correspondence. The doctoral candidate must be the sole primary author of at least two publications. The Doctoral Degree Board decides on the recognition of publications, in particular those with shared primary authorship, at the proposal of the respective departmental board. The doctoral candidate and the supervisor(s) are to be invited to the meeting of the departmental board or Doctoral Degree Board of the respective department.

In cumulative theses, the doctoral candidates must clearly specify their independent work in the thesis.

This must be confirmed in writing by the co-authors. In addition to the publications contained in cumulative theses, the research questions must be presented uniformly within a larger context, and the publications must be organised accordingly. At the suggestion of the departmental boards, the Extended Faculty Board can approve subject-specific regulations for the cumulative thesis, including its structure, the type and scope of the publications it contains, their publication status and co-authorships.

All publications that are part of the cumulative thesis must be included in full in the submitted thesis copies. Merely referring to individual publications is not permitted.

(5) The thesis must include a title page in accordance with Annex 2, and a signed statement of independent authorship. It is to be submitted in bound form along with an electronic version. The doctoral candidate must state all of their resources and aids and assure that they developed and wrote the thesis independently on the basis of these aids. The doctoral candidates are required to independently clarify all legal questions associated with the publication in accordance with § 15 before applying for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure.

(6) Plagiarism checks and, following approval by the Doctoral Degree Board, spot checks can be carried out using the underlying data (§ 9 para. 1f).

## **§ 8 Doctoral Degree Committee**

(1) With the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure (§ 9), the Doctoral Degree Board appoints the Doctoral Degree Commission responsible for carrying out the procedure, based on a proposal from the departmental board responsible. The Doctoral Degree Committee consists of at least five members, one of whom is the chair. Among the five members, there shall be at least three persons who meet the requirements for supervising a doctorate pursuant to § 6 para. 1 or para. 2, one other person who has at least a habilitation qualification or can demonstrate achievements equivalent to a habilitation, and another person with at least a doctoral degree.

Faculty members should form the majority of the Doctoral Degree Committee. In structured doctoral degree programmes, it is possible to deviate from the majority rule.

At the start of the doctoral degree procedure, the Doctoral Degree Committee should not include more than one person from the group of university lecturers who have been relieved of their duties or who have been retired.

The two or three reviewers are to be members of the Doctoral Degree Committee. They must have a habilitation qualification or provide proof of equivalent qualifications or meet the requirements defined in § 6 para. 2, and they must be academically independent of one another. At least one reviewer must be a university lecturer [professor] in the Faculty of Life Sciences. At least one reviewer must not belong to the working group or the Department where the doctoral candidate worked on the thesis.

For the overall grade "Passed with distinction", the Doctoral Degree Committee must have three reviewers.

(2) The Doctoral Degree Committee must be chaired by a person from the group of university lecturers (professors) at the Faculty of Life Sciences. The supervisor and the reviewers are not permitted to chair the Committee.

(3) If the thesis deals with a topic that covers several subjects, representatives of these subjects should be given appropriate consideration in the composition of the Committee.

(4) The duties of the Doctoral Degree Committee are:  
a) making decisions regarding acceptance of the doctoral thesis based on the reviewer reports,  
b) scheduling, executing, and assessing the thesis defence,  
c) evaluating the overall grade of the doctoral examination and the publication of this evaluation.

Criteria for the overall grade "passed with distinction" are to be determined by the Faculty Board. The Doctoral Degree Committee must justify the extent to which the doctoral candidate's performance meets these criteria.

(5) The duties of the chairperson of the Commission are:

(a) Ensuring the quality of the reports: The reports are verified regarding the observance of criteria such as scientific content, originality, novelty of the results, interpretation of the results, presentation in words and illustrations. In addition, the consistency of the assessment of the work is checked. This also includes a qualitatively or quantitatively insufficient justification of the "extraordinary" performance when awarding the grade "passed with distinction" or deficiencies in the case of the grade "failed";  
(b) Approval of the reports;  
(c) Chairing the thesis defence.

(6) The Doctoral Degree Committee does not meet publicly. Its members are obliged to maintain confidentiality.

(7) The Doctoral Degree Committee passes decisions by the majority of its members. The Committee only has a quorum if the Faculty members are the majority of those present. All votes on performance evaluations are open, abstentions are not permitted. In the event of a tie, the vote of the chairperson shall be the deciding vote.

(8) Decisions regarding requests to change the composition of the appointed Doctoral Degree Board shall be made by the Doctoral Degree Board.

## **§ 9 Initiation of the doctoral degree procedure**

(1) The initiation of the doctoral degree procedure must be requested in a written application submitted by the doctoral candidate to the Doctoral Degree Board via the Academic Affairs unit and can take place no earlier than twelve months after admission to the doctoral degree procedure. The following documents must be submitted:

- a) application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure,
- b) tabular academic curriculum vitae,
- c) evidence of achievements based on conditions in the context of the admission or the supervision agreement pursuant to § 5 para. 2,
- d) two printed copies of the thesis in bound form and one version in a common file format. If more than two reviewer reports are planned, the corresponding number of copies must be submitted;
- e) a list of the doctoral candidate's published academic writings,
- f) separate declarations by the doctoral candidate stating

- that there was no cooperation with commercial doctoral advisors,
- that they have taken note of the Doctoral Degree Regulations on which the desired procedure is based,
- that the thesis or parts of it have not already been submitted, accepted or rejected by another academic institution,
- that they have not applied elsewhere for a doctoral degree in the same subject or have a corresponding doctoral degree in this subject,
- that the thesis was written independently using the specified resources and aids pursuant to § 7 para. 5,
- that the principles of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for ensuring good scientific practice ("Regulations governing the principles for ensuring good scientific practice and handling allegations of scientific misconduct," have been observed and
- that the copyright usage rights are transferred to Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for assessment and, if necessary, for a software-based plagiarism check of the thesis. The transfer of the usage rights is limited in terms of time and subject matter to the assessment and any subsequent review procedure.

g) a list signed by the supervisor(s) with nominations for the chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee, the reviewers and the other members of the Doctoral Degree Committee. All Committee members requested must have given their consent to participate in the Committee.

(2) If all documents pursuant to para. 1 have been submitted and then been checked by the respective departmental board, the Doctoral Degree Committee decides to initiate the doctoral degree procedure, appoint the person who will act as chair, and appoint the reviewers and further members of the Doctoral Degree Committee. The doctoral candidate will be informed of the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure in writing.

(3) A rejection of the application to initiate the doctoral degree procedure must be justified in writing and accompanied by information for legal appeals.

## § 10 Assessment of the doctoral thesis

(1) As a rule, the assessment shall not be carried out by the supervisors of the doctoral candidate.

(2) In addition to the printed version, the reviewers also receive an electronic version of the thesis for the preparation of their reports. These reports must be written independently of one another.

(3) The reviewers are required to prepare a report within two months. The reports are made available to the members of the Doctoral Degree Committee for inspection in a secure, preferably electronic form. The reviewer reports must assess the significance of the thesis and its findings in a wider context and present any shortcomings. In the overall assessment, each reviewer has to recommend either the acceptance or rejection of the thesis. The reviewers can set the elimination of specified shortcomings as a condition. However, the elimination of these shortcomings must not represent a significant change to the scientific content. If a reviewer report does not yield the required assessments, the chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee will return the report for revision.

Pursuant to § 13, the thesis is graded as follows:

"Passed with distinction" (summa cum laude)

"Passed"

or

"Failed"

(4) The professors of the Faculty, the members of the Faculty Board and the members of the Doctoral Degree Committee can inspect all reports after they have been received; the reports are to be treated confidentially.

(5) If at least one review report is negative ("failed") or at least one reviewer demands changes to the thesis, the Doctoral Degree Committee will discuss this and inform the doctoral candidate of the necessary changes to be implemented. The revised doctoral thesis must be submitted within a year and reassessed by the reviewers. If at least one reviewer assesses the thesis as "failed" even after it has been revised, the Doctoral Degree Committee shall decide on the continuation of the procedure after the expiry of the display period pursuant to § 11.

(6) After the review has been completed, the thesis and the reports are made available for inspection for at least two weeks for persons pursuant to § 10 para. 4. Once the display period has started, it is no longer possible to change the reviewer reports. Objections can be raised within the two-week display period, the reasons for which must be submitted to the Doctoral Degree Committee in writing within one week after the end of the display period. The Doctoral Degree Committee decides whether these objections are to be considered after hearing the doctoral candidate. If the objections prove to be well-founded, the Doctoral Degree Committee will propose to the Doctoral Degree Board in a closed meeting that either a new reviewer be appointed or the procedure be terminated. The final decision shall be made by the Doctoral Degree Board. The decision regarding

termination of the doctoral degree procedure must be justified in writing and be accompanied by information on legal appeals.

The doctoral degree procedure can be suspended until the objections have been clarified. If the objections prove to be well-founded, the Doctoral Degree Committee will propose to the Doctoral Degree Board in a closed meeting that either a new reviewer be appointed or the procedure be terminated. The final decision shall be made by the Doctoral Degree Board. The decision regarding the termination of the doctoral degree procedure must be justified in writing and be accompanied by information on legal appeals.

Objections can also relate to scientific misconduct. In such a case, the Doctoral Degree Board, at the suggestion of the Doctoral Degree Committee, in principle initiates a procedure in accordance with the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin "Regulations governing the principles for ensuring good scientific practice and handling allegations of scientific misconduct".

### § 11 Acceptance of the doctoral thesis

(1) After the display and objection period has passed, the Doctoral Degree Committee shall decide on the acceptance of the thesis. The decision is made on the basis of the reports and is a prerequisite for the admission of the doctoral candidate to the thesis defence. The decision of the Doctoral Degree Committee can be made by way of circulation; it will then be communicated to the doctoral candidate.

(2) If the thesis is rejected, the Doctoral Degree Committee declares the doctoral degree programme as failed. A rejected thesis shall remain with the Faculty Administration along with all reviewer reports. The Doctoral Degree Board will inform the doctoral candidate of the termination of the doctoral degree procedure within two weeks. The decision must be justified in writing and be accompanied by information on legal appeals.

### § 12 Thesis defence

(1) The thesis defence is open to members of the university and is intended to demonstrate academic ability through presentation and academic discussion. The discussion shall relate to the thesis, the presentation and the specialist scientific environment of the topic covered. It is carried out in German or in English. In justified cases, such as in the case of ongoing patent proceedings, the Doctoral Degree Board can be requested to permit a non-public thesis defence.

(2) The date of the thesis defence is to be set in agreement with the doctoral candidate. There should be no more than two months between the receipt of the last reviewer report and the thesis defence. The Doctoral Degree Committee shall make the reviewer reports available to the doctoral candidate for inspection two weeks before the defence. The date and place of the thesis defence, along with the thesis topic, must be announced by the Faculty to the university public two weeks in advance.

(3) The majority of the members of the Doctoral Degree Committee and at least two reviewers must be present for the thesis defence. The majority

of the Committee members present should be Faculty members.

(4) In justified exceptional cases, the chairperson can decide, with the consent of the doctoral candidate, that a maximum of one member of the Doctoral Degree Committee is deemed to be present in accordance with para. 3 if he/she is connected via technical audio-visual equipment (video conference). When tuning in virtually, the member in question must be able to fully perceive the examination process. Only in the case of binational doctoral degree procedures (Cotutelle) is it permitted for multiple members of the Doctoral Degree Committee to attend the thesis defence via an external video conference system. As a rule, the doctoral candidate should not attend virtually. The Doctoral Degree Board makes decisions regarding any exceptions. If the doctoral candidate attends virtually, an invigilator appointed by the Doctoral Degree Board must ensure that the thesis defence is conducted properly. There is no entitlement to conduct the thesis defence as a video conference.

It must be ensured on a technical level that secure transmission of the audio and video data in both directions is permanently guaranteed during the entire thesis defence video conference. The technical conditions of the transmission and the progression of the thesis defence are to be logged. Saving the video conference is prohibited; any data that is also stored in a cache must be deleted immediately. Logging data must be stored for at least four weeks so that the transmission process can be checked and must be deleted after one year at the latest. In addition, the written consent of all those involved in this procedure must be recorded.

(5) The chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee shall lead the thesis defence. A member of the Committee keeps the attendance list and the minutes of the thesis defence. The minutes are to be signed by the person taking the minutes and the other members of the Doctoral Degree Committee. The list of attendees and the minutes are to be kept in the doctoral records.

(6) The thesis defence begins with a presentation of no more than 30 minutes, in which the doctoral candidate presents and explains the results of the thesis and their significance within a larger scientific context. The presentation will be followed by the discussion. During the discussion, the doctoral candidate defends the thesis against criticism, in particular from the reviewers, and answers questions from members of the Doctoral Degree Committee. Questions from other invitees regarding the doctoral topic may be allowed by the chairperson. If necessary for the thesis defence to be carried out properly, the chairperson can exclude the public, i.e. other members of the university. The discussion should not exceed 60 minutes.

(7) If the doctoral candidate misses the thesis defence without an excuse, it shall be deemed as failed. The doctoral candidate must be informed of this in writing. This letter must be accompanied by information on legal appeals.

(8) After the thesis defence, the members of the Doctoral Degree Committee who are present assess the doctoral candidate's performance pursuant to § 13 in a closed session.

The doctoral candidate will be informed of the evaluation of the individual performances as well as the overall grade by the chairperson.

(9) A failed thesis defence can be repeated once after three months and no later than six months. The Doctoral Degree Board shall decide on any exceptions.

(10) If the thesis defence is failed a second time, the doctorate is definitively failed. The Doctoral Degree Board will notify the doctoral candidate in writing of the decision of the Doctoral Degree Committee. This notification must be accompanied by an explanatory statement and information on legal appeals.

### **§ 13 Assessment of the doctoral degree performance**

(1) The doctoral thesis and the thesis defence shall be deemed accepted/passed if they are graded as follows:

- "Passed with distinction"  
(summa cum laude)
- "Passed"

The grade "failed" is conferred upon a thesis that was not accepted or a thesis defence that was not passed.

(2) The overall grade for the doctorate is a result of the grades given by the Doctoral Degree Committee for the thesis and for the thesis defence. The possible overall grade for the doctorate is either "Passed" or "Failed". Only in justified cases and if the thesis and the thesis defence are consistently assessed as "passed with distinction" ("summa cum laude") can this grade be awarded for the overall performance.

(3) After a successful thesis defence and following confirmation of the overall grade, the doctoral candidate receives a certificate (interim certificate) in accordance with Annex 3, which contains the title of the thesis, the date of the defence, the assessment of the doctoral performance and the signature of the Faculty Dean. The interim certificate does not entitle the holder to bear the doctoral title.

(4) On the basis of the reports, the Doctoral Degree Committee can request corrections and changes to the thesis before it is published by the University Library of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Permission to publish is granted by the chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee.

(5) An appeals process can be initiated against assessment decisions. Corresponding objections must be raised with the Doctoral Degree Board within three months of notification of the assessment.

### **§ 14 Withdrawal, repetition, termination of the doctoral degree procedure**

(1) The doctoral degree procedure can be terminated prematurely at the request of the doctoral candidate, provided that no reviewer reports have been submitted yet. In this case, the submission of the doctoral thesis and the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure shall be deemed not to have taken place, and all submitted documents shall be returned. The application to terminate the procedure is submitted to the Doctoral Degree Board, who in turn informs the chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee.

(2) In addition, the Doctoral Degree Board can terminate the doctoral degree procedure after a prior written statement from the supervisor(s) and after hearing the doctoral candidate, if

- the doctoral candidate culpably fails to comply with a written request from the Doctoral Degree Board regarding the doctoral procedure within the stipulated period,
- the doctoral candidate announces they are choosing not to continue the doctoral degree procedure.

The notice of termination must be justified in writing and be accompanied by information on legal appeals. This does not preclude a subsequent renewed application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure.

(3) If the thesis was not accepted according to § 10 para. 5 and 6, rejected according to § 11 para. 2, or the thesis defence according to § 12 para. 10 was definitively failed, a renewed application for the initiation of the doctoral degree procedure and a new thesis can be submitted after six months at the earliest .

### **§ 15 Publication of the thesis and delivery obligations**

(1) The thesis is to be made available to the academic public in an appropriate manner through duplication and distribution (obligation to publish). This obligation to publish must be met within one year, calculated from the date of the thesis defence, at the University Library of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The Doctoral Degree Board decides on justified applications submitted by the doctoral candidate for an extension of the deadline.

(2) The conditions specified in § 13 para. 4 must be met for publication. The chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee determines this after consulting with the supervisor for the doctoral records.

(3) The obligation to publish is met if the doctoral graduate submits the doctoral thesis to the University Library. The current specifications of the University Library published on the information pages online with regard to number of copies, quality and distribution modalities must be observed. A distinction is made between printed copies, publisher's copies and hybrid publication.

(4) Doctoral graduates must grant the University Library the necessary rights for distribution and duplication. If this is precluded (for a limited period of time) due to contractual arrangements with publishers in the case of parts of cumulative theses, the relevant part of the thesis can be replaced in the version being published by a preliminary version of the work in question for which the doctoral graduate owns the publication and distribution rights. In both cases, however, the doctoral graduate must obtain approval to publish the text version from the Doctoral Degree Committee before the thesis is published.

(5) Confirmation from the University Library regarding the publication is a prerequisite for the conferral of the doctoral certificate.

### **§ 16 Doctoral certificate**

(1) The doctoral degree procedure is completed with the conferral of the doctoral certificate (Annex 4).

(2) The doctoral certificate is issued in German and, on request, also in English (Annex 5).

(3) The doctoral certificate must contain:

- a) the name of the University and the Faculty,
- b) in the case of international doctoral degree procedures (Cotutelle), a reference to the doctoral assessment at the other university,
- c) the doctoral degree awarded,
- d) the name, date of birth and place of birth of the doctoral graduate,
- e) the title of the thesis,
- f) the grades awarded for the individual doctoral achievements and for the overall grade,
- g) the name and signature of the Faculty Dean,
- h) the name and signature of the University President,
- i) the embossed seal of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,
- j) the date of the thesis defence, which is deemed the date of doctoral graduation,

(4) The doctoral title may be used once the doctoral certificate is conferred.

### **§ 17 International doctoral degree procedures**

(1) The Faculty of Life Sciences can, in cooperation with a foreign university, facilitate an international doctoral degree procedure (Cotutelle) at the request of the doctoral candidate.

(2) Prerequisite for an international doctoral degree procedure is an agreement concluded by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin with the foreign university regarding the specific doctoral procedure, which may differ in individual points from the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences. To this end, the provisions of the applicable doctoral regulations of the participating universities must be considered.

### **§ 18 Other doctorates**

For cooperative, cross-faculty or interdisciplinary doctoral studies within the framework of structured doctoral degree programmes, a separate written agreement can be concluded between Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the partner institution, which may differ in individual points from the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences. The prerequisite for this is the acceptance of the applicant pursuant to § 4 and § 5.

### **§ 19 Honorary doctorate**

(1) The academic title of honorary doctor (Dr. rer. nat. h. c./Dr. rer. agr. h. c./Dr. rer. hort. h. c.) can be granted as an award for exceptional academic achievements in a subject offered at the Faculty.

(2) The person being honoured must not be a member of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

(3) For the purposes of assessing the exceptional achievements, a Doctoral Degree Committee is to be appointed by the Doctoral Degree Board pursuant to § 8, which then submits a thoroughly justified recommendation for the honorary doctorate to the Faculty Board, taking into account two external reports.

(4) The extended Faculty Board, which includes the full-time university lecturers [professors], decides on the honorary doctorate in a secret ballot with a two-thirds majority. The decision to award an honorary doctorate must be forwarded to the University Senate of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for approval.

(5) The honorary doctorate is awarded by conferring a certificate bearing the seal of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, which is signed by the person who heads the University, the President, and the person who heads the Faculty, the Dean. The achievements of the recipient of the honorary doctorate are to be highlighted in the certificate

### **§ 20 Objections and right of legal appeal**

Within three months of notification of a decision, the doctoral candidates or doctoral graduates can initiate an appeals process with the Doctoral Degree Board. The right to bring an action before the Berlin Administrative Court remains unaffected. Decisions that adversely affect the doctoral candidate or graduate must be accompanied by information on legal appeals.

### **§ 21 Revocation of the doctoral degree**

(1) The doctoral degree may be revoked

- a) if it subsequently comes to light that deceptive means were used in its acquisition, or that essential documents for its conferral have not been submitted,
- b) if it has been used improperly in an intentional criminal offence.

(2) The Executive Board of the University decides on the revocation of a previously awarded academic degree based on the proposal of a committee set up by the Doctoral Degree Board pursuant to § 8. The supervisors and the reviewers of the doctoral degree procedure in question should not be members of the committee. Before a resolution is passed, the person concerned and, if possible, the chair of the Doctoral Degree Committee that awarded the degree must be heard. The decision to revoke the awarded academic degree must be justified in writing and accompanied by information on legal appeals.

## **§ 22 Commencement**

(1) These Doctoral Degree Regulations become effective on the day after publication in the *University Gazette of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*.

(2) With the commencement of these Doctoral Degree Regulations, the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences I dated

27 June 2012 (AMB 17/2012), 6 July 2009 (AMB 21/2009) and 8 September 2005 (AMB 33/2005), the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences II dated 3 August 2006 (AMB 34/2006) and 14 July 2005 (AMB 22/2005),

the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture dated 16 August 1994 (AMB 41/1994), 7 August 2002 (AMB 34/2002), 14 July

2005 (AMB 24/2005) and 31 March 2014 (AMB 12/2014), and the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences dated 5 March 2015 (AMB 12/2015) shall cease to be effective. The Doctoral Degree Regulations mentioned in sentence 1 shall remain in force in the cases described in paras. 3 and 4.

(3) Doctoral candidates who were admitted to the doctoral degree programme prior to the commencement of these Doctoral Degree Regulations but have not yet request initiation of the doctoral degree procedure must inform the Doctoral Degree Board within one year if they wish to graduate according to the provisions of the Doctoral Degree Regulations in force at the time of their admission.

(4) Doctoral degree procedures that have already been initiated are completed in accordance with the respective Doctoral Degree Regulations in force at the time of initiation. The Doctoral Degree Committees appointed for these doctoral degree procedures shall continue with their activities.

### **Annexes:**

Annex 1 Template of a supervision agreement

Annex 2 Template of the thesis title page

Annex 3 Template of the doctoral degree interim certificate

Annex 4 Template of the doctoral certificate

Annex 5 Template of the doctoral certificate in English language

**Annex 1: Template of a supervision agreement****Supervision agreement**

Faculty of Life Sciences

between

\_\_\_\_\_ (Doctoral candidate)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Supervisor)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Other supervisor(s), if applicable)

In the interest of a constructive and productive cooperation within the framework of the thesis project, [doctoral candidate] and [supervisor(s)] conclude the following supervision agreement.

**Doctoral project**

1. [Doctoral candidate] shall prepare a thesis with the working title "[working title]". The thesis shall be written in [English/German]. The project is outlined in an exposé of approximately three pages.
2. The following time period has been agreed upon for the completion of the doctoral thesis project: [semester] to [semester]. If valid reasons are provided (e.g. taking on family obligations), the completion period of the thesis can be extended upon request.
3. For the doctoral thesis project, the work schedule / time frame (dated [date]) agreed upon by [doctoral candidate] and [supervisor(s)] and listed in the annex shall apply.
4. The agreement and its annexes are reviewed and, if necessary, modified [frequency, e.g. annually] by all parties.

**Supervision of the doctoral thesis project**

5. [Doctoral candidate] and [supervisor(s)] shall discuss the progress of the thesis based on the exposé, interim reports and individual chapters [frequency, at least once per semester]. [Doctoral candidate] shall keep short minutes of the meeting, which are signed by [supervisor(s)].
6. [Supervisor(s)] agree to regularly check on the completion of these interim results and the scheduled progress of the thesis, and to provide comprehensive oral and/or written comments on the contributions submitted at the scheduled meetings. The minutes of the meeting serve as evidence (see 5.).
7. In addition to the supervisory meetings, once a year [doctoral candidate] shall report on the status of the thesis in a colloquium and receive feedback on the status and potential improvements of the project .
8. In all publications resulting from the doctoral project, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin must be given as the correspondence address. For cumulative theses, the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences dated [date] shall apply.  
With regard to the publication of the results obtained, [supervisor(s)] and [doctoral candidate] agree on the following procedure:  
[e.g.: mention of affiliation, number of copies, quality and utilisation after thesis defence, ...]
9. The thesis must be accompanied by a declaration in which the doctoral candidate transfers the usage rights to Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for the purpose of assessment and, if necessary, a software-based plagiarism check of the thesis. The transfer of the usage rights is limited in terms of time and subject matter to the assessment and a potential subsequent review procedure.

**Accompanying training programme**

10. Both parties agree that [doctoral candidate] will attend academic events and interdisciplinary qualification events. Their scope and content are recorded under point 14.

**Procedure in the event of a conflict**

11. In cases of conflict, [doctoral candidate] and [supervisor(s)] shall contact the Doctoral Degree Board of the Faculty. The termination of the supervisory relationship must be justified in writing to the Doctoral Degree Board. If necessary, the Doctoral Degree Board will endeavour to find an alternative, academically appropriate supervisory relationship.

12. [Doctoral candidate] and [supervisor(s)] agree to comply with the rules of good scientific practice as set out in the "Regulations governing the principles for ensuring good scientific practice and handling allegations of scientific misconduct" of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in the version valid at the time of signing. For [doctoral candidate], this includes consulting with [supervisors] or other trusted individuals in case of any doubt. For [supervisors], this explicitly means that they are required to comply with and specify the copyright provisions for texts or findings of [doctoral candidate].
13. The supervision agreement can be terminated by either party. The Doctoral Degree Board is to be informed in writing of the termination of the supervision agreement and the reasons for its termination.

**Acquisition of academic and interdisciplinary qualifications**

14. [Doctoral candidate] will be able to participate in the following events for academic and interdisciplinary qualification. [e.g.: Modules and courses from master's or doctoral programmes at the Faculty of Life Sciences and other faculties/universities, interdisciplinary events at the HGS, departmental seminars]

**List of planned events:**

The doctoral candidate is responsible for providing proof of participation.

| Name of the institution | Name of the module or other achievement | Module or course number according to Examination Regulations | Lecturer | Credit Points |
|-------------------------|---|--|----------|---------------|
|                         |   |  |          |               |
|                         |   |  |          |               |
|                         |   |  |          |               |

15. The Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences dated [date] shall form the basis of the supervision agreement. We have acknowledged these regulations.

Date and signature

\_\_\_\_\_ (Doctoral candidate)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Supervisor)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Additional supervisor(s), if applicable)

**Annex 2: Template of the thesis title page**

Title of thesis: [***Title***]

**T H E S I S**

submitted for the academic degree of

Doctor rerum naturalium

(Dr. rer. nat.) or

Doctor rerum agriculturarum

(Dr. rer. agr.) or

Doctor rerum horticulturarum

(Dr. rer. hort.) or

Doctor of Philosophy

(Ph. D.)

submitted to the Faculty of Life Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in the subject of [*subject*]

by

[*academic degree, forename, surname, birth name*

[*unmarried name*]] [*date of birth, place of birth*]

President

of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

[*name*]

Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

[*Name*]

Reviewers

1. [*Name*]

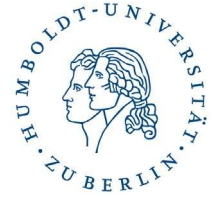
2. [*Name*]

3. [*Name*]

Date of oral examination: [*Date*]

**Annex 3: Template of the interim doctoral certificate**

HUMBOLDT-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
ZU BERLIN



## INTERIM CERTIFICATE

[ *Forename(s), surname* ]

born on [ *date* ] in [ *place of birth* ]

completed a standard doctoral degree procedure in the subject of [ *subject* ]

at the Faculty of Life Sciences in accordance with the Doctoral Degree Regulation dated [ *date* ]. Date of

oral examination: [ *Date* ]

Topic of thesis: [ *topic* ]

Only the doctoral certificate entitles the holder to bear the academic title “Doctor rerum naturalium (Dr. rer. nat.)” or “Doctor rerum agriculturarum (Dr. rer. agr.)” or “Doctor rerum horticulturarum (Dr. rer. hort.)” or “Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)”.

Grade awarded for the thesis: [ *grade* ]

Grade awarded for the thesis defence:

[ *grade* ] Overall grade: [ *overall grade* ]

Berlin, [ *date* ]

Prof. Dr. [ *Forename(s), Surname* ]

Dean

**Annex 4: Template of the doctoral certificate**



# UR K U N D E

Die Lebenswissenschaftliche Fakultät verleiht

[ *V o r n a m e N a c h n a m e* ]

geboren am [ *Datum* ] in [ *Ort* ] den

akademischen Grad

**DOCTOR RERUM NATURALIUM (Dr. rer. nat.)** bzw.

**DOCTOR RERUM AGRICULTURARUM (Dr. rer. agr.)** bzw.

**DOCTOR RERUM HORTICULTURARUM (Dr. rer. hort.)** bzw.

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph. D.)**

nachdem die wissenschaftliche Befähigung im Fach

[ *Fach / ggf. Spezialisierung* ]

in einem ordnungsgemäßen Promotionsverfahren nach der Promotionsordnung vom [ *Datum* ]  
nachgewiesen wurde.

Thema der Dissertation: [ *Thema* ]

Die mündliche Prüfung fand am [ *Datum* ] statt.

Bewertung der Dissertation: [ *Bewertung* ]

Bewertung der Disputation: [ *Bewertung* ]

Gesamtleistung: [ *Gesamtleistung* ]

Berlin, [ *date* ]

[Siegel]

Prof. Dr. [ *Vorname Nachname* ]  
Präsident:in

Prof. Dr. [ *Vorname Nachname* ]  
Dekan:in

**Annex 5: Template of the doctoral certificate in English language**

HUMBOLDT-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
ZU BERLIN



# CERTIFICATE

The Faculty of Life Sciences awards the academic degree

**DOCTOR RERUM NATURALIUM (Dr. rer. nat.)** or

**DOCTOR RERUM AGRICULTURARUM (Dr. rer. agr.)** or

**DOCTOR RERUM HORTICULTURARUM (Dr. rer. hort.)** or

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph. D.)**

to [*forename surname*] born on [*date*] in [*place of birth*]

after academic qualification in the subject of [*Subject/if applicable specialisation*]  
has been proven through standard doctoral degree procedure in accordance with the doctoral degree regulations of [*date*].

Topic of the dissertation: [*Topic*]

The oral examination took place on [*date*].

Assessment of the dissertation: [*Assessment of the dissertation*]

Assessment of the disputation: [*Assessment of the disputation*]

Overall assessment: [*Overall assessment*]

Berlin, [*date*]

[*seal*]

Prof. Dr. [*forename surname*]  
President

Prof. Dr. [*forename surname*]  
Dean