

# **Subject-specific regulations for cumulative doctoral theses in the Department of Geography at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin**

## **Foundation and aim of the process overview**

This process overview substantiates § 7 of the regulations for doctoral degrees awarded by the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (Doctoral Degree Regulations), as amended on 18 November 2014, with regard to cumulative doctoral theses. It informs doctoral students and academic supervisors in a transparent manner regarding the formal and contextual minimum requirements for cumulative doctoral theses and provides assessors with a guiding framework for evaluating and assessing doctoral theses. This facilitates and encourages high-quality doctoral theses which have the academic publication format for the publishing of articles. Doctoral students and academic supervisors decide together on a case-by-case basis as to whether a cumulative doctoral thesis would be reasonable.

## **Formal and contextual minimum requirements for cumulative doctoral theses**

(1) A cumulative doctoral thesis is based on at least three articles in German or English, which appear in scientific journals with a peer-review process, or which are due to be published in such a journal. This number can be increased in the event that manuscripts were written with co-authors (see Clause 9).

(2) A cumulative doctoral thesis must constitute a complete work, the individual sections of which are closely, and factually, interconnected. The work must include an introduction and closing chapter, in which the overall concept and methodological approach are outlined, as well as a synthesis of the results obtained, which must be made in the closing chapter. Furthermore, it may be necessary to supplement individual articles with transitional chapters and/or extended annexes (particularly in the case of articles which are highly compressed). The framework and transitional chapters must be written alone by the doctoral student and are important for the assessing of the doctoral thesis. The introduction and closing chapter usually contain around 25-30 pages in total.

(3) Manuscripts must be written and published within a short time frame, which is usually a maximum of five years.

(4) Articles for publication must appear in journals which the Department of Geography considers pertinent and relevant to the subject. All journals listed in the Science Citation Index (ISI) and on SCOPUS, and all journals with a peer-review process recognised by the VDPGH, are considered as such. The Department may compile a list of journals which may be recognised without requiring further resolution. Publication in non-listed journals requires a resolution from the Departmental Board. This may be advisable for example for journals, which will apply to be accepted into the ISI in the future due to the length of time for which they have been published, but whose current articles demonstrate a high level of academic quality.

(5) The doctoral student must state in all articles that the Department of Geography at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin is his/her institutional connection.

(6) At least one article must have been accepted when the doctoral examination procedure is begun. All other articles must have been submitted. Unless articles are published or accepted for publication, the assessors must verify whether this is potentially possible. This assessment may be based on external quality indicators, such as the article being accepted at international symposiums with a peer-review based selection of contributions, or an initially positive decision from an editor, such as "accepted pending revision", "conditional acceptance" etc.

## **Articles with several authors**

(7) Articles may result from joint academic research work by several individuals and feature several authors. Since the doctoral thesis is an individual academic work of the doctoral student, it must be stated, individually and in agreement with the other co-authors, which parts of the academic work were written individually by the doctoral student. This must be separated per step of the work (e.g. conception, data analysis, interpretation, writing of the manuscript). A template for a declaration in this respect can be found in the Doctoral Portal of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (<https://fakultaeten.hu-berlin.de/de/mnf/wisskar/promotionen/formulare>).

(8) Articles, of which the doctoral student is a co-author and has produced a substantial amount of the content, may be used in a doctoral thesis, if the doctoral student's own contribution amounts to at least 30% of the article.

(9) Usually, at least three articles which are used in a doctoral thesis should have been written alone by the doctoral student, or he or she should be the lead author. At least two articles must have been written alone by the doctoral student, or he or she must have been the lead author. A third article, written alone by the doctoral student, or for which he or she was the lead author, may be replaced by at least two articles, to which the doctoral student made a substantial contribution (see Clause 8).

## **Assessment of cumulative doctoral theses**

(1) The assessors must assess and acknowledge the entire work of cumulative doctoral theses when compiling their expert opinions, including both the individual articles and the framework chapters. This must be done, regardless of whether individual articles have already been published or not.

(11) Assessors are not permitted to co-author an article, with the exception of the primary academic supervisor.

(12) The standards which are commonly accepted within the respective academic community, as well as the rules of good academic practice, apply to the assessment of the academic quality of an article. Furthermore, the generally accepted standards of academia, particularly the criteria of originality, academically-based and methodologically valid argumentation, and of the progress of academia, shall apply. The quality of the journal, for example regarding the relative importance of the same, in which articles were published, in comparison to other journals of the subject area, may be considered as an indicator of the assessment for articles which have already been published.