

Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University

14 April 2021

Note: This translation is provided for information purposes only. In the event of any discrepancy between the translation and the original German version published in the Official Bulletin (*Dienstblatt der Hochschulen des Saarlandes*), the provisions of the latter shall take precedence.

Pursuant to Section 69 of the Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (SHSG) of 30 November 2016 (Official Gazette of Saarland I, p. 1080), most recently amended by the Act of 8 March 2021 (Official Gazette I, p. 736) and with the consent of the University Senate and the University Board, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University hereby issues the following doctoral degree regulations of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

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Section 1

General information

(1) The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University confers the following doctoral degrees on candidates who have demonstrated a capacity for advanced research and scholarship by successfully completing their doctoral degree studies under the standard regulations:

Doktorin* der Naturwissenschaften (doctrix rerum naturalium – Dr. rer. nat.) [*Doctor of Natural Sciences*]

Doktor† der Naturwissenschaften (doctor rerum naturalium – Dr. rer. nat.) [*Doctor of Natural Sciences*]

Doktorin* der Naturwissenschaftslehre (doctrix philosophiae naturalis – Dr. phil. nat.) [*Doctor of Philosophy – Natural Sciences*]

Doktor† der Naturwissenschaftslehre (doctor philosophiae naturalis – Dr. phil. Nat.) [*Doctor of Philosophy – Natural Sciences*]

Doktorin* der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieurin – Dr.-Ing.) [*Doctor of Engineering*]

Doktor† der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieur – Dr.-Ing.) [*Doctor of Engineering*]

The faculty may also confer the following honours in recognition of an individual's outstanding contributions to an academic field or discipline (honorary doctoral degree):

Ehrendoktorin* der Naturwissenschaften (doctrix rerum naturalium honoris causa – Dr. rer. nat. h. c.) [*Honorary Doctor of Natural Sciences*]

Ehrendoktor† der Naturwissenschaften (doctor rerum naturalium honoris causa – Dr. rer. nat. h. c.) [*Honorary Doctor of Natural Sciences*]

Ehrendoktorin* der Naturwissenschaftslehre (doctrix philosophiae naturalis honoris causa – Dr. phil. nat. h. c.) [*Honorary Doctor of Philosophy – Natural Sciences*]

Ehrendoktor† der Naturwissenschaftslehre (doctor philosophiae naturalis honoris causa – Dr. phil. nat. h. c.) [*Honorary Doctor of Philosophy – Natural Sciences*]

Ehrendoktorin* der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieurin Ehren halber – Dr.-Ing. E.h.) [*Honorary Doctor of Engineering*]

Ehrendoktor† der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Doktor-Ingenieur Ehren halber – Dr.-Ing. E.h.) [*Honorary Doctor of Engineering*]* German grammatical gender: feminine† German grammatical gender: masculine

(2) The candidate shall submit a request specifying the preferred German grammatical form to be used (*Doktorin/Doktor, Ehrendoktorin/Ehrendoktor*).

(3) To demonstrate a capacity for advanced research and scholarship, candidates are required to complete a period of independent scientific study that concludes with a written thesis (dissertation) and an oral examination (oral defence) that show that the candidate has made a significant and original contribution to knowledge in a specific field.

I. Doctoral degree studies (standard regulations)

Section 2

The Doctoral Committee

(1) Matters pertaining to standard doctoral degree studies are administered by the Doctoral Committee on behalf of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

(2) The Doctoral Committee shall comprise:

1. a professor of the faculty as committee Chair
2. five further professors of the faculty
3. two members of mid-level, non-professorial academic staff at the faculty who each hold a doctorate.

The Chair of the Doctoral Committee and the committee members (as detailed in sentence 1, items 1 to 3 above) and each of their deputies are elected for a term of two years by the Faculty Council after being nominated by the relevant groups of faculty members. The Deputy Chair shall be elected by the Faculty Council from the group of members defined in sentence 1, item 2 above. Re-election is permitted.

(3) The Doctoral Committee shall be quorate when more than half its members are present. Decisions are made by a majority vote of the members present. In the event of a tie, the Chair of the Doctoral Committee shall have the casting vote.

(4) Candidates shall be notified in writing of the decisions made by the Doctoral Committee.

(5) The meetings of the Doctoral Committee are not open to the public. Members of the Committee are obliged to maintain confidentiality with regard to committee matters.

(6) Decisions of the Doctoral Committee may be taken by the Chair on the basis of procedural rules. The procedural rules are adopted by resolution of the Doctoral Committee and presented to the Faculty Council.

Section 3 Admission requirements

(1) Applications for admission to undertake doctoral study shall be decided by the Doctoral Committee. Doctoral research work at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology is only carried out in those subject areas in which members of the faculty conduct research themselves.

(2) Candidates seeking admission to pursue doctoral research studies shall meet the following requirements:

1. The candidate fulfils the admission requirements as specified in SHSG Section 69(2).
2. The candidate's suitability to pursue doctoral studies has been demonstrated in accordance with Paragraph 5 below.
3. A written declaration of consent from at least one dissertation supervisor in accordance with Section 4(2), item 3.
4. Inclusion of the candidate in the faculty's register of doctoral candidates after meeting the admission requirements (see Section 4).

(3) The admission requirements defined in SHSG Section 69(2) and referred to in Paragraph 2, item 1 above shall, with respect to the qualification:

a) Dr. rer. nat.

1. be deemed to have been met in full if the candidate has a Master's degree that
 - a) was awarded for a university course of study lasting at least five years, and
 - b) whose content was of a mathematical, scientific or engineering nature, and
 - c) required the completion of a Master's thesis.

2. be deemed to have been met in full if the candidate has a *Diplom* degree in a mathematical, scientific or engineering discipline from a university or an equivalent higher education institution after a programme of study whose standard period of study is ten semesters.
3. be deemed to have been met in full if the candidate has completed the second stage of the state examination in pharmaceutical science pursuant to the regulations governing the licensing of pharmacists in Germany (*Approbationsordnung*).
4. be deemed to have been met in part if the candidate has completed a teacher training degree programme (*Lehramtsstudium*) in two mathematical or scientific subject areas and that involved at least eight semesters of study.
5. be deemed to have been met in part if the candidate has obtained a Bachelor's degree for which the applicant was awarded a very good overall grade (of 1.5 or better on the German academic grading scale) and which
 - a) was awarded for a university course of study lasting at least four years, and
 - b) whose content was of a mathematical or scientific nature corresponding to a programme of study offered at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University, and
 - c) required the completion of a Bachelor's thesis.

b) Dr.-Ing.

1. be deemed to have been met in full if the candidate has a Master's degree that
 - a) was awarded for a university course of study lasting at least five years, and
 - b) whose content was of a mathematical, scientific or engineering nature, and
 - c) required the completion of a Master's thesis.
2. be deemed to have been met in full if the candidate has a *Diplom* or equivalent degree in a mathematical, scientific or engineering discipline from a university or an equivalent higher education institution after a programme of study whose standard period of study is at least ten semesters.
3. be deemed to have been met in part if the candidate has obtained a *Diplom* degree with a very good overall grade (1.5 or better on the German academic grading scale) in a mathematical, scientific or engineering discipline from a German university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) after completing a programme of study that corresponds to a degree programme offered at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University.

c) Dr. phil. nat.

1. be deemed to have been met in part if the candidate has completed a teacher training degree programme (*Lehramtsstudium*) involving at least eight semesters of study and on the condition that the proposed area of doctoral study has a didactic methodological focus and that one of the subjects studied in the teacher training degree corresponds to the subject area of the proposed doctorate.
2. be deemed to have been met in part if the candidate has a Master's degree that
 - a) was awarded for a university course of study lasting at least five years, and
 - b) whose content was of a mathematical, scientific nature, and
 - c) required the completion of a Master's thesis.

In case of doubt, the classification of a particular field or subject shall be decided by the Doctoral Committee.

(4) In the case of candidates who have gained academic qualifications from other higher education institutions in Germany or abroad, the Doctoral Committee shall decide whether the candidate has met the admission requirements after taking into account any course equivalency agreements. If it is uncertain whether a foreign university degree fulfils the admission requirements, the Central Office for Foreign Education Affairs [ZaB – *Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen*] at the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [KMK – *Kultusministerkonferenz*] should be consulted.

(5) The suitability of the candidate to pursue doctoral studies shall be determined by means of a subject-specific procedure.

If proof of suitability has not been demonstrated, additional conditions may be imposed subject to these conditions being accepted by the Doctoral Committee. The candidate must meet these additional conditions before they can be fully admitted for doctoral study; prior to that the candidate may be provisionally entered into the register of doctoral candidates in accordance with Section 5(3).

(6) If the admission requirements referred to in Section 3(2), item 1 have only been fulfilled in part or if the subject-specific procedure to determine the suitability of the candidate to pursue doctoral studies resulted in additional conditions being imposed, the Doctoral Committee shall make admission to doctoral study dependent on the candidate undertaking courses of preparatory study and academic assessments/examinations whose total scope shall not exceed 60 ECTS credits. The scope and type of the conditions to be met and a reasonable time frame for completion shall be specified by the Doctoral Committee.

In accordance with Section 69(5) SHSG, admission to doctoral study shall not be made dependent on a candidate pursuing an additional post-graduate programme of study.

(7) The Doctoral Committee shall decide on the candidate's proposal for their preferred academic title.

Section 4

Inclusion in the register of doctoral candidates

(1) The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology maintains a register of doctoral candidates. Any person wishing to undertake doctoral studies at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology must submit a written request for entry into the register of doctoral candidates. If the work on a doctoral dissertation is to be supervised by more than one advisor and if these advisors belong to different faculties or institutions, the advisors shall at the start of the candidate's doctoral studies decide at which faculty the entry into the register of doctoral candidates is to be made. This determines which faculty will later be responsible for the assessment and examination phase.

(2) The following documents are to be submitted when applying for inclusion in the register of doctoral candidates:

1. Documentary verification as set out in Section 3(2), items 1 to 3
2. A statement of the proposed area of doctoral study, which, based on the questions to be addressed or the methods to be used, shall be associated with a particular field of academic study within the faculty.
3. The supervision agreement pursuant to Section 6(1) and the written declaration of consent from at least one authorized member or authorized affiliate member of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology stating that the member or affiliate member agrees to

act as the dissertation supervisor. If a candidate is to be supervised under a co-supervision arrangement (see Section 23), a declaration of consent is also required from an appropriately qualified professor (who holds a doctorate) at a university of applied sciences in Germany stating that they agree to assist in supervising the candidate's doctoral studies.

4. The members or affiliate members of the faculty who are entitled to act as dissertation supervisors are those who, at the time the request for entry into the register of doctoral candidates is submitted, hold one of the following positions: professor, junior professor, associate professor, senior professor, honorary professor, professor on special contracts or academics qualified to teach at professorial level (*Privatdozent/Privatdozentin*). Professors who have signed a supervision agreement have the right to continue acting as the supervisor even after they have retired. The Doctoral Committee may also assign the right to supervise doctoral candidates to a member or affiliate member of the non-professorial academic staff (who holds a doctorate) at the participating faculty or faculties if such member or affiliate member has been assigned the task of independently carrying out research and teaching duties by the Dean of the faculty and if they have been adjudged by an evaluation procedure to have academic teaching credentials comparable to those of a junior professor.

5. A proposal putting forward the name of a potential academic observer from among those authorized members or affiliate members of the faculty entitled to supervise doctoral candidates (see item 4 above). The academic observer shall be appointed in accordance with the principles of good scientific practice at Saarland University. The role of the academic observer is to offer advice and act as a mediator with the goal of facilitating the successful conclusion of the doctoral research project within the framework of the supervision agreement as defined in Section 6(1). The person appointed as academic observer may also be a member of the Examination Board.

6. A declaration of whether, and if applicable when and with what success the applicant has previously undertaken doctoral studies.

7. The designation of the candidate's intended doctoral degree qualification (see Section 1).

These requirements also apply to doctoral candidates who plan to pursue their studies externally, i.e. candidates who will conduct a significant portion of the work for their dissertation outside of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

(3) The decision to enter the applicant into the register of doctoral candidates shall be made by the Chair of the Doctoral Committee or by the committee itself if so requested by the Chair. The academic observer shall be appointed at the same time. The applicant will be informed of the decision in writing. If the application is rejected, the letter of notification will contain the reasons for the decision and instructions on the right of appeal. If the candidate has to meet additional conditions (see Section 3(6)) before being fully admitted for doctoral study, the candidate may be provisionally entered into the register of doctoral candidates and therefore provisionally admitted for doctoral study. This provisional admission shall expire automatically if the candidate fails to meet the additional conditions within the specified time frame.

(4) A change of dissertation supervisor is permitted only with the consent of the Chair of the Doctoral Committee or by the Doctoral Committee itself if so requested by the Chair.

(5) Any candidate who wishes to change their intended doctoral degree qualification shall submit to the Doctoral Committee a written request supported by the dissertation supervisor. This candidate shall also need to meet the relevant admissions requirements for the new doctoral degree qualification.

Section 5

Removal from the register of doctoral candidates

(1) If the dissertation supervisor notifies the Doctoral Committee that they wish to withdraw unilaterally from the declaration of consent as defined in Section 4(2), item 3, the academic observer shall attempt to mediate between the candidate and the advisor. Should the attempted mediation be unsuccessful, the declaration of consent may be terminated either unilaterally on reasonable grounds or by mutual agreement of the parties. In this case, the Doctoral Committee shall endeavour to find a new supervisor as far as this is reasonably possible. If it is not possible to find a new advisor, the Doctoral Committee shall consult with the parties in conflict and then decide on the steps to be taken, which in some cases may result in removal from the register of doctoral candidates.

(2) Removal from the register of doctoral candidates also occurs once a doctoral student has successfully completed their doctorate and been awarded their doctoral degree certificate pursuant to Section 16.

(3) If both the supervisor and the candidate agree to declare in writing to the Chair of the Doctoral Committee that the candidate's doctoral research project should not be continued, the candidate will be removed from the register of doctoral candidates.

(4) The provisions governing the removal of a candidate from the register of doctoral candidates due to the excessive length of time that the candidate has spent on their doctoral research project are set out in Section 9.

Section 6

Obligations

(1) A supervision agreement shall be concluded between the doctoral candidate and the dissertation supervisor in accordance with Section 69(6) SHSG. The template document agreed by the Doctoral Committee shall be used for this purpose.

(2) Once a candidate has been entered into the register of doctoral candidates, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology undertakes to ensure that the dissertation will continue to be supervised in the event that the dissertation supervisor leaves the university.

(3) In addition to conducting research work and compiling a dissertation, doctoral candidates who are on the register of doctoral candidates maintained by the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology have the following obligations:

1. Candidates shall remain on the faculty's register of doctoral candidates and shall either be centrally enrolled or centrally registered as a doctoral student at Saarland University for the entire duration of their doctoral studies.

2. They agree to abide by the principles of good scientific practice as set out in the relevant guidelines. A printed copy of these principles as they pertain to Saarland University will be issued to candidates when they are entered into the register of doctoral candidates.

3. When appropriate opportunities arise (e.g. as an author of a scientific paper, or as a speaker at a scientific meeting or conference), doctoral candidates agree to name Saarland University as the university or one of the universities or institutions with which they are associated.

4. In individual cases where there is some doubt about whether the doctoral research project is being conducted in accordance with the relevant rules, the Doctoral Committee may request submission of a progress report. A doctoral candidate who receives such a request is required to submit the progress report within the specified time limits.

5. The supervision agreement may include a requirement that the doctoral candidate undertake some teaching duties.

(4) In the event of gross violations of the obligations set out in Paragraph 3, items 2 and 4 above or gross violations of the supervision agreement, the Doctoral Committee may, after consultation with the Research Integrity Panel (*Ständige Kommission zur Untersuchung von Vorwürfen wissenschaftlichen Fehlverhaltens*), decide to remove a candidate from the register of doctoral candidates maintained by the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. Before any such decision is made, the doctoral candidate shall be granted an opportunity to make a statement in response. The Doctoral Committee shall notify the candidate of its decision and state its reasons.

Section 7 Dissertation

(1) The dissertation is submitted by the doctoral candidate in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a doctoral degree. The dissertation shall represent an original contribution to scientific research and shall be presented in a format appropriate to the relevant academic field. The questions addressed or the methods used in the dissertation shall be associated with a particular field of academic study within the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

(2) The dissertation presented by the doctoral candidate shall contain no material previously submitted for the award of any other degree.

(3) The dissertation shall be written in German or English. All dissertations shall contain abstracts in German and English, each of which shall not exceed a length of 1500 characters including spaces.

(4) The dissertation may take the form of a scientific monograph (doctoral thesis) or a cumulative dissertation. A cumulative dissertation shall meet the requirements set out in Paragraph 5 below.

(5) The Doctoral Committee shall specify the requirements regarding the compilation, submission and publication of a cumulative doctoral dissertation, particularly regarding the number and quality of the scientific papers that it shall contain. If the cumulative dissertation includes joint publications, the individual contributions from each author shall be clearly distinguishable, thus allowing the contributions to be separately assessed on the basis of objective criteria. The cumulative dissertation shall contain an exposition (usually presented in the introductory and summary chapters) that provides a critical examination of the research topic, explains how the papers are linked thematically and contextualizes the knowledge gained from the doctoral research within the current scientific framework.

Section 8 Initiation of the assessment and examination phase

(1) To initiate the assessment and examination phase, the candidate shall submit a written application to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. This assumes that the candidate was previously entered into the register of doctoral candidates maintained by the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. The application shall be submitted together with:

1. printed and bound copies of the paginated dissertation (the number of copies required shall be specified by the Doctoral Committee)
2. the declaration of original authorship [*eidesstattliche Versicherung*] (see Annex 1 to these doctoral degree regulations)

3. a curriculum vitae and a summary of the candidate's academic history including a list of academic publications
4. brief summary (abstract) of the dissertation in electronic form in accordance with Section 7(3), sentence 2
5. an electronic copy of the dissertation in a common file format whose content is identical to that of the printed version referred to in item 1 above
6. a signed declaration stating that the electronic version of the doctoral dissertation is identical in content to the printed version and whether the candidate consents to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology and the thesis examiners conducting a plagiarism check.

The candidate may also enclose with their application suggestions for the thesis examiners who will assess the submitted dissertation.

(2) The decision to begin the assessment and examination phase shall be made by the Chair of the Doctoral Committee or by the Doctoral Committee itself if so requested by the Chair. A decision to reject the application shall always be made by the Doctoral Committee as a whole.

(3) The thesis examiners (cf. Section 10) shall be appointed when the assessment and examination phase is initiated. The doctoral candidate shall receive written notification that the assessment and examination phase has been initiated.

(4) The decision to begin the assessment and examination phase can be revoked without notice if it subsequently transpires that essential requirements (as set out in Paragraph 1 and in Section 3, Paragraphs 3, 4 and 6) were not satisfied, or if circumstances arise such that a doctoral degree, if awarded, could be revoked on the basis of statutory provisions (cf. Section 19).

(5) If the candidate withdraws their application to initiate the assessment and examination phase, the dissertation shall be deemed not to have been submitted. The application may not be withdrawn once the doctoral candidate has received notification that the dissertation has been rejected or if the oral defence has begun.

(6) All documents shall become the property of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology irrespective of the outcome of the assessment and examination phase. The doctoral candidate may demand the return of the submitted documents, with the exception of the formal letter of application, but only if the application was withdrawn in accordance with Paragraph 5.

(7) The assessment and examination phase should be completed within six months of submission of the dissertation.

Section 9

Duration of doctoral study

(1) The period from the date of entry into the register of doctoral candidates to the initiation of the assessment and examination phase (cf. Section 8) should normally be three years and may exceed five years only in exceptional cases where reasonable grounds exist. If this period is exceeded, the Doctoral Committee may set a deadline by which the candidate has to submit a report on the progress being made in the doctoral research project. Before any such decision is made, the doctoral candidate shall be granted an opportunity to make a statement in response.

(2) If the reasons presented for a duration of doctoral study exceeding five years are deemed insufficient, the dissertation supervisor may submit a request to the Doctoral Committee to withdraw from the declaration of consent issued pursuant to Section 4(2), item 3 and to terminate the supervision agreement. The decision to terminate or not to terminate the

supervision agreement shall be made by the Doctoral Committee. Before any such decision is made, the doctoral candidate shall be granted an opportunity to make a statement in response. If the decision is made to terminate the supervision agreement, the relevant entry in the register of doctoral candidates at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology shall be deleted and the doctoral candidate shall no longer be admitted for doctoral study at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

Section 10 **Assessment of the dissertation**

(1) Once the assessment and examination phase has been initiated, the Chair of the Doctoral Committee (or the Doctoral Committee itself, if so requested by the Chair) shall appoint at least two thesis examiners to assess the dissertation, at least one of whom has not supervised the candidate's doctoral research work (see also Paragraph 6, item 4). The following persons may be appointed as examiners: professors, junior professors, emeritus or retired professors, professors on special contracts, honorary professors and senior academics qualified to teach at professorial level (*Privatdozent/Privatdozentin*) at a university or equivalent institution of higher education. The Doctoral Committee can also appoint as thesis examiners members or affiliate members of the non-professorial academic staff at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology who hold a doctorate and who have been assigned the right to supervise doctoral candidates by the Doctoral Committee. Specialists at internationally recognized research institutions who are qualified to doctoral level and are regarded as outstanding in their field, or appropriately qualified professors at German universities of applied sciences who hold a doctorate may also be appointed as thesis examiners if approved by the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee may authorize the Chair in advance to appoint such persons as thesis examiners.

(2) The candidate's dissertation supervisors should be appointed as thesis examiners.

(3) One of the thesis examiners shall be a professor (as defined in Section 40 SHSG) at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology or shall have been a professor at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at the time the applicant was entered into the faculty's register of doctoral candidates and who had already accepted the applicant as a doctoral candidate in accordance with the provisions of Section 3(2), item 3.

(4) The assessment of the dissertation should be completed within two months. If an examiner's report has not been received within this period, the Chair of the Doctoral Committee shall extend the deadline by two weeks. If an examiner's report has still not been received even after the extended deadline has passed, the Chair of the Doctoral Committee may appoint a new thesis examiner.

(5) Each thesis examiner shall submit a written assessment of the dissertation (examiner's report) and shall recommend whether the dissertation should be accepted, returned to the candidate for revision, or rejected. If an examiner recommends accepting the dissertation, they shall award a grade using the grading scale set out in Section 13(3).

(6) The Chair of the Doctoral Committee shall arrange for a further examination of the dissertation if:

1. the thesis examiners differ in their opinions as to whether the dissertation should be accepted, returned for revision or rejected, or if the grades awarded differ by more than one full grade
2. the first examiner's report to be received recommends that the dissertation be graded *summa cum laude*; in this case, one of the examiner's reports should be submitted by an external examiner

3. a thesis examiner requests that an additional assessment of the dissertation be carried out
4. several dissertation supervisors were involved in supervising the candidate's doctoral research project.

There may be other cases in which the Doctoral Committee considers it necessary to appoint a further thesis examiner. In such cases, the request for an additional report shall be accompanied by the specific question to be addressed and relevant background information.

(7) If substantial amendments are required to make the dissertation acceptable, the dissertation will be returned to the doctoral candidate for revision prior to the thesis defence. The thesis examiner shall indicate in writing the items to be revised and this information shall be forwarded to the doctoral candidate. If the revised dissertation is not re-submitted within one year, the candidate shall be deemed to have failed their doctoral degree examination. A dissertation may be returned for revision only once.

(8) The dissertation and the thesis examiners' reports shall for a period of two weeks during the semester (main teaching period) or three weeks during the semester break (non-teaching period) be available for inspection by members of the Doctoral Committee and by other members or affiliate members of the faculty who are entitled to supervise doctoral candidates. They may submit a written statement on the thesis and/or the examiners' reports. The Doctoral Committee shall consider and, where appropriate, act upon statements received within the specified time period.

(9) The decision to accept the dissertation, return it to the candidate for revision or reject it shall be made by the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee shall adopt the unanimous decision of the thesis examiners unless dissenting opinion has been registered within the period specified in Paragraph 8.

(10) If the dissertation is rejected, the candidate shall be deemed to have failed the doctoral degree examination. The candidate shall receive written notification of the decision from the Chair of the Doctoral Committee. The letter of notification shall contain the reasons for the decision and instructions on the right of appeal.

Section 11 The Examination Board

(1) After the dissertation has been accepted, an oral defence (cf. Section 12) shall be held before an Examination Board. The Examination Board shall include at least two professors of the faculty. With respect to membership of the Examination Board, a thesis examiner who at the time the applicant was entered into the register of doctoral candidates was a professor (as defined in Section 40 SHSG) at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology shall be treated equivalently to current members of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. The Examination Board shall be composed of at least the following members:

1. a professor of the faculty who is not a thesis examiner and who acts as Chair of the Board
2. the thesis examiners
3. a member of the mid-level, non-professorial academic staff at the faculty who holds a doctorate.

Instead of the member of non-professorial academic staff at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology, the Doctoral Committee may, on request, appoint to the Examination Board

a member of the academic staff at a publicly funded research institution or at another faculty at Saarland University who is qualified to doctoral degree level.

The Doctoral Committee may, on request, appoint other subject specialists qualified to doctoral level as advisory members of the Examination Board.

At least half of the members of the Examination Board shall be members of Saarland University.

(2) The Chair of the Examination Board and the non-professorial member of the Board (see Paragraph 1, sentence 4, item 3) shall be appointed by the Chair of the Doctoral Committee or by the Doctoral Committee itself if so requested by its Chair.

(3) Should one of the two thesis examiners be unable to participate in the thesis defence, a professor or a senior academic qualified to teach at professorial level (*Privatdozent/Privatdozentin*) at the faculty shall be appointed as a replacement member of the Examination Board (see Paragraph 1, sentence 2). If more than two thesis examiners were appointed, at least two of them shall continue to participate in the assessment and examination phase.

(4) On request, the Doctoral Committee may with respect to Section 11(1), item 1 or Section 11(3) decide to treat members or affiliate members of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology who are not professors but who are entitled to supervise doctoral candidates pursuant to Section 4(2), item 3 as equivalent to professors at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

(5) With the exception of the thesis examiner who is also the candidate's supervisor, members of the Examination Board should not be a member of the research group to which the doctoral candidate belongs. Any exceptions to this rule shall be made by the Chair of the Doctoral Committee

(6) For doctoral research work conducted under a joint supervision arrangement with a university abroad, the provisions of Section 24 shall apply.

Section 12

Oral thesis defence

(1) In addition to the written dissertation, the oral examination in the form of a defence serves to establish the candidate's expertise in their academic field.

(2) The Chair of the Doctoral Committee and the Chair of the Examination Board shall jointly agree on the date of the defence and the former shall publicly announce the set date one week in advance. The oral defence is open to the public. If requested by the candidate on reasonable grounds, the Chair of the Doctoral Committee may exclude the public from the whole or parts of the defence. The request shall be granted if important legal or commercial interests would otherwise be at risk. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the oral defence may be attended by all members of the Doctoral Committee and all members and affiliate members of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology who are entitled to supervise doctoral candidates. The defence should be held no later than two months after the dissertation has been accepted.

(3) The defence shall be chaired by the Chair of the Examination Board.

(4) The oral defence begins with a report on the dissertation by the doctoral candidate that should last approximately 30 minutes.

(5) The oral defence covers the scientific ideas, principles and assumptions underlying the dissertation as well as questions that concern or relate to the content, methods and subject area of the dissertation. After questions from the Examination Board have been taken, questions from the audience may be permitted at the discretion of the Chair of the Examination Board, though these should not influence the assessment of the candidate's overall performance.

(6) The defence should normally last at least 60 minutes and no longer than 90 minutes.

(7) Both German and English are permitted for the candidate's presentation and for the questions raised during the oral examination provided this has been mutually agreed between the candidate and the members of the Examination Board.

(8) Minutes of the proceedings of the defence shall be recorded on an assessment form available from the Doctoral Studies Office and shall be signed by the members of the Examination Board.

(9) If the candidate fails to attend the defence on the date set without good cause, the candidate will be deemed to have failed the doctoral degree examination. The Doctoral Committee shall decide whether to accept the reason given for the candidate's absence.

Section 13 Overall assessment

(1) At the end of the defence, the members of the Examination Board shall deliberate in private and decide whether the candidate has passed the doctoral degree examination, or is required to repeat the defence, or has failed the doctoral degree examination. If the candidate has passed the doctoral degree examination, the Examination Board may impose the condition that minor errors of form or content in the dissertation are to be corrected before the doctoral degree is conferred. The oral defence may be repeated only once.

(2) The decision referred to in Paragraph 1 shall be a majority decision of the Examination Board. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

(3) Candidates who have passed their doctoral degree examination shall be awarded one of the following overall grades:

- excellent (summa cum laude)
- very good (magna cum laude)
- good (cum laude)
- satisfactory (rite)

The overall grade to be awarded shall be determined by the Examination Board by majority vote based on the assessment of the dissertation and the candidate's performance in the oral defence colloquium. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote. A candidate may only be awarded the grade 'excellent' (summa cum laude) if all of the thesis examiners awarded this grade for the dissertation and all members of the Examination Board vote in favour. The decision regarding the overall grade shall be recorded and explained in the minutes.

(4) The decision of the Examination Board pursuant to Paragraph 1 above shall be publicly announced by the Chair.

Section 14 Academic misconduct

(1) If it is established before the doctoral degree certificate is presented that the candidate made false or misleading statements as part of the admissions procedure or included false or misleading information in the doctoral work presented for assessment and examination, or that essential requirements for admission to the doctoral studies programme were erroneously assumed to have been satisfied, the Doctoral Committee may decide to nullify the results of the assessment and examination phase.

(2) Before any such decision is made, the candidate shall be granted the opportunity to submit a statement in response. The letter of notification sent to the candidate shall contain the reasons for the decision and instructions on the right of appeal.

Section 15

Reproduction of the dissertation

(1) Candidates who have passed the doctoral degree examination shall deliver two presentation copies of the dissertation to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. The presentation copies are to be produced using a method of reproduction approved by the Doctoral Committee. If the dissertation has not been published in print, the university shall, on delivery of the presentation copies, be granted the right to produce a maximum of one hundred copies of the dissertation. The candidate shall also supply an electronic version of the dissertation in a common file format approved by the Doctoral Committee and shall grant to the university, insofar as there is no conflict with existing legal commitments, the right to reproduce the dissertation (possibly through conversion into another common file format) and to make it publicly accessible in data networks. The candidate shall give written assurance that the electronic version is identical in content to the printed version.

(2) Any differences between the reproduced version of the dissertation and the accepted version shall require the consent of the Chair of the Doctoral Committee. The Chair shall, in particular, decide whether the requirement referred to in Section 13(1) to correct minor errors in the dissertation has been satisfied. If any amendments affect the content of the dissertation, the Chair shall obtain the consent of the thesis examiners.

(3) The title page of the dissertation shall include the place and year of submission and the following text:

‘Dissertation zur Erlangung des Grades der Doktorin/des Doktors der Naturwissenschaften der Naturwissenschaftlich-Technischen Fakultäten der Universität des Saarlandes’ [*A dissertation submitted towards the degree Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat.) of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University*]

or

‘Dissertation zur Erlangung des Grades der Doktorin/des Doktors der Ingenieurwissenschaften der Naturwissenschaftlich-Technischen Fakultäten der Universität des Saarlandes’ [*A dissertation submitted towards the degree Doctor of Engineering (Dr.-Ing.) of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University*]

or

‘Dissertation zur Erlangung des Grades der Doktorin/des Doktors der Naturwissenschaftslehre der Naturwissenschaftlich-Technischen Fakultäten der Universität des Saarlandes’ [*A dissertation submitted towards the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Sciences (Dr. phil. nat.) of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University*].

The following information shall be placed on the reverse of the title page: the date of the defence, the name of the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology and the names of the members of the Examination Board.

(4) The Doctoral Committee may waive the requirements in Paragraph 1 if the dissertation is to be published in a journal or as a monograph. Minor deviations from the format described in Paragraph 3 may be permitted by the Chair of the Doctoral Committee.

(5) A doctoral degree may be awarded only after the presentation copies of the dissertation have been delivered.

(6) If the presentation copies are not delivered within one year of the date of the defence, the candidate shall lose all rights acquired from the assessment and examination phase of their doctoral studies. If so requested by the candidate, the Doctoral Committee may extend the deadline by a reasonable amount.

(7) The candidate may apply to the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology to request that public access to the content of the dissertation should be delayed by a reasonable period of no longer than two years from the date of the defence. The request shall be granted if important legal or commercial interests would otherwise be at risk. The decision on the request shall be made by the Chair of the Doctoral Committee.

(8) If the candidate submitted a cumulative dissertation, the candidate shall be responsible for ensuring that copyright restrictions are observed.

Section 16

Doctoral degree certificate

(1) The doctoral degree shall be conferred by the Dean of the faculty by presenting the doctoral degree certificate to the candidate as soon as the requirements in Section 15 have been satisfied. The official date of conferral shall be the date of the defence. The doctoral degree certificate shall bear the date on which the defence was held and the date on which it was signed.

(2) The doctoral degree certificate shall contain the title of the dissertation, the names of the examiners and the overall grade awarded. The certificate shall be signed by the President of Saarland University and the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. If requested, an English translation of the doctoral degree certificate shall be provided.

(3) Once candidates have taken receipt of their doctoral degree certificate, they have the right to use the relevant German academic title (Dr. rer. nat., Dr. phil. nat, or Dr.-Ing.).

Section 17

Records management and retention requirements

All documents relating to the candidate's doctoral degree assessment and examination phase should be retained for the life of the candidate but for no more than 50 years from the date of the oral thesis defence. This applies irrespective of whether the candidate passed or failed the doctoral degree examination or whether the doctoral degree was revoked.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology shall archive the printed and electronic deposit copies of dissertation theses and cumulative dissertations for a period of five years.

Section 18

Ceremonial re-issuing of the doctoral degree certificate

If so requested by the degree holder, or in order to mark a special occasion, the Dean may, on the basis of a resolution passed by the Faculty Council, re-issue the degree certificate in a ceremony to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the conferral of the doctorate.

Section 19

Revocation of the doctoral degree

(1) The doctoral degree may be revoked by resolution of the Faculty Council if it is established that the degree was acquired by deception or that essential requirements for the conferral of the degree were erroneously assumed to have been satisfied.

(2) A doctoral degree may also be revoked after it has been conferred if academic misconduct is established.

(3) A resolution of the Faculty Council to revoke a doctoral degree requires a majority of three quarters of the voting members and the subsequent consent of the University Senate.

(4) Before any such resolution is made in the Faculty Council, the holder shall be given the opportunity to make representations on this matter. The letter of notification sent to the holder shall contain the reasons for the decision and instructions on the right of appeal.

(5) The person concerned shall return the doctoral degree certificate issued by the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology no later than two weeks after receiving notification of revocation.

Section 20

Right to object

Objections raised with respect to decisions made on the basis of these regulations shall be filed in writing with the Dean within one month and shall explain the reasons for the appeal. The filing period shall commence on the date the person objecting received notification of the decision. Appeal decisions will be made by the Faculty Council after consultation with the Doctoral Committee. Decisions shall be by a simple majority vote of the voting members present.

Section 21

Inspection of examination records

If the assessment and examination phase has been completed, the doctoral candidate shall be granted a one-year period in which to inspect the thesis examiners' reports (see Section 10) and the minutes of the thesis defence (see Section 12(8)) in anonymized form.

Section 22

Deadlines

Periods of maternal leave, periods of parental leave and family obligations (caring for a child or supporting family members with care needs) shall be taken into account when applying any deadline specified in these regulations.

II. Co-supervision arrangements with universities of applied sciences and joint supervision arrangements with universities abroad

Section 23

Co-supervision arrangements with universities of applied sciences

(1) In accordance with Section 70 SHSG, doctoral students can also be supervised under a co-supervision scheme with an appropriately qualified professor at a German university of

applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) who holds a doctoral degree. Co-supervision agreements for doctoral research projects shall be concluded by the parties involved before the applicant is entered into the register of doctoral candidates. To demonstrate that a co-supervisor from a German university of applied sciences is qualified in accordance with sentence 1 above, the co-supervisor will typically submit an academic CV and a relevant list of publications to the Doctoral Committee.

The co-supervision agreement referred to in sentence 2 above shall be submitted when the application for entry into the register of doctoral candidates at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology is made shall contain the following information:

- The names of the dissertation supervisors at Saarland University and at the university of applied sciences
- Working title of the doctoral research project
- Periods to be spent at Saarland University and at the cooperating university of applied sciences
- Registration and/or enrolment at the participating universities
- The expected duration of the doctoral research project and the period for which the co-supervision agreement is in force, including the terms under which the agreement may be extended.

(2) The dissertation supervisors specified in the co-supervision agreement referred to in Paragraph 1 above shall be appointed as thesis examiners in accordance with Section 10(2).

Section 24

Special provisions concerning doctoral degrees awarded jointly with a university in another country (cotutelle agreements)

(1) Doctoral research studies that are conducted under a joint supervision agreement with a university in another country are subject to the general provisions of these regulations. Any divergent or supplementary provisions are set out in this Section 24.

(2) Doctoral degree studies under standard regulations may be jointly supervised with a faculty of natural sciences, technology or engineering at a foreign university. This requires a declaration of consent from a professor at each of the participating universities or faculties stating their willingness to accept the applicant as a doctoral candidate.

(3) In order for a doctoral research project to be conducted jointly with a university in another country, a joint supervision agreement shall have been signed with the foreign university and approved by the Doctoral Committee. This agreement shall be submitted to the Doctoral Committee within one year of the candidate being entered into the register of doctoral candidates. Exceptions regarding doctoral research projects that are already underway shall be decided by the Doctoral Committee on a case-by-case basis if requested on reasonable grounds.

The joint supervision agreement should typically contain the following information:

- The names of the dissertation supervisors at each of the participating universities
- Working title of the doctoral research project
- Periods to be spent at each of the participating universities
- Registration and/or enrolment at the participating universities and faculties
- Proof that the candidate has health insurance and accident insurance cover or is covered by a statutory social insurance scheme.
- Conflict resolution procedures
- Language to be used in the dissertation and in the summary sections/abstracts
- Location at which the oral thesis defence is to be held
- Composition and activity of the examination board(s)

- Language to be used in the thesis defence
- Travel costs for members of the Examination Board
- Recording the results of the assessment and examination phase
- Specifications regarding the issuing of the doctoral certificates and the information to be included on them
- The expected duration of the doctoral research project and the period for which the co-supervision agreement is in force, including the terms under which the agreement may be extended

(4) For a candidate to be admitted to undertake doctoral research jointly supervised by a foreign faculty, the candidate shall have completed a course of study leading to a higher education qualification that entitles the candidate to be admitted for doctoral studies at the foreign faculty. Once the joint supervision agreement of Paragraph 3 above has expired, continued admission as a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University shall be of sole relevance for a candidate intending to gain their doctorate from Saarland University.

(5) If the official language at the foreign faculty is not German, the dissertation shall be submitted in English. The joint supervision agreement of Paragraph 3 above may also stipulate whether and in which other languages summaries/abstracts are required.

(6) The composition of the Examination Board for the oral thesis defence shall conform to the provisions of Section 11 of these regulations. The joint supervision agreement of Paragraph 3 may include a provision permitting a reasonable expansion of the Examination Board to include members of the other university or appropriately qualified external members.

If the thesis defence colloquium is held at the partner university, the composition of the Examination Board may deviate from the rules set out in Section 11, provided that the thesis examiners appointed by the Examination Board at Saarland University are assigned to the joint examination board. To ensure that the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University is adequately represented on the joint examination board, the joint examination board shall include at least two voting members of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology.

If there are legal constraints that preclude the partner university from establishing a joint examination board, the provisions set out in Section 11 shall continue to apply. The partner university is free to establish its own examination board.

(7) The oral defence should be conducted in the official language of the country in which the defence takes place or in English; the minutes of the thesis defence should be recorded in English.

(8) Unless otherwise provided for in the joint supervision agreement of Paragraph 3, separate certificates shall be issued. Both certificates shall clearly indicate that the holder is not permitted to use the associated doctoral degree titles simultaneously. Furthermore, each certificate shall indicate in the relevant official language that the doctoral degree was awarded on the basis of doctoral research studies supervised jointly by the two participating faculties and shall include a reference to the other certificate.

(9) Once they have taken receipt of their doctoral degree certificates, candidates have the right to use the respective German academic title (Dr. rer. nat., Dr. phil. nat, or Dr.-Ing.) in Germany (see Section 16(3)) and the corresponding academic title in the country of the participating foreign faculty.

III. Honorary doctorate

Section 25 Procedure for awarding an honorary doctorate

(1) Nominations for recipients of honorary doctoral degrees shall be submitted by at least three professors from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology; the proposal shall be accompanied by a comprehensive statement in support of the nominee. Honorary doctoral degrees are awarded solely in recognition of the nominee's scientific achievements.

(2) The Dean shall inform the Faculty Council at a council meeting that a nomination has been received, stating the name of the nominee and notifying the faculty's Doctoral Committee.

(3) The Faculty Council shall establish a Nomination Committee no earlier than at the council meeting following that in which the nomination was announced. The Nomination Committee shall be chaired by the Dean and shall make the necessary preparations for awarding an honorary doctorate. The Nomination Committee shall comprise all professors in the academic field in which the doctorate is to be awarded, at least two professors from the other academic areas represented in the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology and at least one member of the mid-level academic staff at the faculty qualified to doctoral level. Members of the Doctoral Committee shall have the opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Nomination Committee. The Faculty Council shall also appoint at least two external professors as thesis examiners.

(4) The Nomination Committee shall discuss the proposal and the documents submitted and shall prepare a draft resolution for the Faculty Council.

(5) The Faculty Council shall decide by secret ballot on whether to accept the draft resolution prepared by the Nomination Committee. A majority of two thirds of the votes cast are required for the resolution to be adopted.

(6) In order to protect the general interests of the University, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology shall give the University Senate the opportunity to express its opinion.

(7) The honorary doctorate shall be ceremoniously conferred by the Dean who shall present the recipient with a certificate that highlights their outstanding academic achievements and distinguished service and that is signed by the University President and the Dean and bears the seal of the faculty. Invitations to the award ceremony shall be issued by the Dean.

(8) The provisions of Section 16(3) and Sections 19 and 20 apply analogously.

IV. Interim provisions

Section 26 Commencement

(1) These regulations shall come into force on the day after they are announced in the Official Bulletin of the Institutions of Higher Education in Saarland (*Dienstblatt der Hochschulen des Saarlandes*). On that same date, the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculties of Natural Science and Technology at Saarland University of 13 November 2013 (Official Bulletin, p. 544) shall cease to be in force at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology. (2) For doctoral candidates whose assessment and examination phase commenced before these regulations entered into force, the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculties of Natural Science and Technology at Saarland University of 13 November 2013 (Official Bulletin, p. 544) shall continue to apply.

If requested by the doctoral candidate, the doctoral degree assessment and examination phase may be conducted in accordance with the provisions of these regulations. (3) An applicant who is eligible for admission based on the provisions of the Doctoral Degree Regulations of the Faculties of Natural Science and Technology at Saarland University of 13 November 2013 (Official Bulletin, p. 544) shall remain eligible and shall complete their doctoral studies under the provisions of these regulations.

(4) The declaration of original authorship (see Annex 1) shall be submitted in all cases.

Saarbrücken, DD Month 2021

President of Saarland University
(Univ--Prof. Dr. Manfred Schmitt)

Appendix 1

Eidesstattliche Versicherung **[Declaration (in lieu of oath)]**

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Die aus anderen Quellen oder indirekt übernommenen Daten und Konzepte sind unter Angabe der Quelle gekennzeichnet. Die Arbeit wurde bisher weder im In- noch im Ausland in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form in einem Verfahren zur Erlangung eines akademischen Grades vorgelegt.

[I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work except where otherwise indicated. All data or concepts drawn directly or indirectly from other sources have been correctly acknowledged. This dissertation has not been submitted in its present or similar form to any other academic institution either in Germany or abroad for the award of any other degree.]

Ort, Datum
[Place, Date]

(Unterschrift)
[(Signature)]