

**Rules and Regulations
governing the Doctoral Studies Program Plant Sciences
at Dahlem Research School
of Freie Universität Berlin**

Preamble

By virtue of section 14, paragraph 1 no. 1 and 4 of the Partial Basic Regulations (Teilgrundordnung) dated October 27, 1998 (FU Memoranda No. 24/1998) the Faculty Council Biology, Chemistry and Pharmacy issued the following rules and regulations for the doctoral studies program Plant Sciences at Dahlem Research School of Freie Universität Berlin in its meeting held on October 15, 2008*):

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• *) These rules and regulations were confirmed by the competent senate office in charge of universities on November 00, 2008.

Section 1

Area of Validity, Competent Authorities

(1) These Rules and Regulations admission covers prerequisites, application and selection procedures, as well as the requirements for content, structure, goals, organization and performance for the doctoral studies program Plant Sciences (Doctoral Studies Program) at Dahlem Research School (DRS) of Freie Universität Berlin.

Section 2

Components and Objective of the Doctoral Studies Program

(1) The doctoral studies program consists of academic research, with special emphasis on writing a dissertation, and academic course work with content as defined in section 9, paragraph 1 and sections 10 through 12, and the elements of the supervisory program.

(2) The objective of the doctoral studies program is to promote excellence in academic research by providing excellent doctoral education for outstanding researchers. Both the academic program and the course requirements pursuant to section 9, paragraph 1 and sections 10 through 12 as well as participation in the supervisory program offered are designed to achieve this objective. In addition to conveying academic skills, the doctoral programs shall also aim to impart key general qualifications, especially in the fields of knowledge transfer, research management and foreign language skills. The doctoral studies program is designed to prepare doctoral candidates in particular for academic positions at universities, research institutes and other academic private and public institutions and civil society.

Section 3

Admission Requirements, Application and Selection Procedures

(1) The application deadline is February 1 of each year for the following summer semester and August 1 of each year for the following winter semester. Typically, the date set to begin the studies program is April 1 of each year for the summer semester and October 1 of each year for the winter semester. In justified exceptional cases, applications may be considered at another time if it is deemed possible and reasonable to commence studies at that time and provided that two university professors involved in the doctoral studies program give their approval.

(2) The faculty council of the Department of Biology, Chemistry and Pharmacy (Faculty Council) shall name a selection commission. Its members shall be appointed by the Dean on behalf of the executive board of the University. It shall consist of the following members:

- The Representative of the doctoral studies program as the committee chair

- Three university professors, who are involved in the doctoral studies program;

and

- Two postdoctoral academic employees, who are involved in the doctoral studies program,

as members with voting privileges

as well as

- Two doctoral candidates of the doctoral studies program in an advisory capacity.

The members with voting privileges shall be nominated for two years; the doctoral candidates shall be nominated for one year.

(3) The admission requirements are as follows:

- a) A written declaration by the authorized Doctoral Committee stating that admission for doctoral studies is possible,
- b) Outstanding potential for academic performance and development;
- c) Proficiency in English equal to a B 2 level as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or proof of equivalent proficiency in English. Said proof may be provided during the selection interviews pursuant to section 4. The Selection Commission shall decide on equivalency on a case-by-case basis.
- d) To the extent that the requirements during the course of the doctoral studies program demand that applicants who are neither native German speakers and who have earned a degree at a university abroad or at an educational institution of equal standing must be fulfilled in German, said applicants must provide proof of their ability to study in the language of instruction by passing the German language exam required for university admission (DSH) with a grade of DSH 2 or certify their equivalent proficiency in the language as defined by the rules and regulations governing the German language exam for university admission of foreign applicants at Freie Universität. Said proof may be provided during the selection interviews pursuant to section 4. The Selection Commission shall decide on equivalency on a case-by-case basis.
- e) A short description of the planned dissertation project.
- f) If applicable, attendance at a selection interview according to section 4.

(4) Applicants are to submit a written application for the doctoral studies program including the certificates and documents as defined in paragraph 3, letters a) through e) to the chairperson of the Selection Commission by the application deadline defined in paragraph 1.

(5) The Selection Commission shall make a decision based on the written application documents and, as the case may be, based on the selection interview on the applicant's acceptance to the doctoral studies program. The most qualified applicants may be permitted by the Selection Commission to submit missing certificates or documents at a later date. In case of doubt, the Commission may request applicants to supply additional information in written or oral form. The Commission shall submit the names of applicants deemed suitable for admission to doctoral studies to the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin (Applications and Admissions Department).

(6) If, after completion of the selection procedure, there are more suitable applicants than vacant places, the Selection Commission shall draw up a ranking list of applicants. When determining the ranking in said list, as a rule, the following requirements shall be considered:

- a) Grades scored in previous academic degrees and other achievements;
- b) Quality of the proposed dissertation project;
- c) The applicant's previous professional and practical experience relevant to the doctoral studies program;
- d) Experience abroad.

When there are several applicants of equal ranking, the successful applicant shall be selected by lot.

(7) Applicants selected for admission shall receive written notification stipulating deadlines for submitting confirmation of acceptance in writing and for enrollment. The places of candidates who fail to observe these deadlines shall be reallocated according to the ranking described in paragraph 6. Applicants that have been denied admission shall receive written notifications with reasons for the rejection.

(8) In the event that admission to the doctorate program has expired in accordance with the provisions in the Articles of Study Affairs (SfS), the acceptance to the doctoral studies program shall expire.

Section 4 Selection Interviews

(1) After review of the application documents, the Selection Commission may invite applicants to participate in selection interviews and may appoint Representatives, typically such to be appointed as the future Supervisor.

(2) The invitation shall be considered to have been received in a timely fashion if posted no later than 10 working days prior to the date of the selection interview. Applicants residing in a foreign country shall be granted an extended period of notice as appropriate.

(3) The selection interview shall consist of a presentation in English of approximately 20 to 30 minutes in length, followed by a discussion.

(4) The selection interview shall be documented in a report stating the main reasons for the positive or negative evaluation of the applicant.

Section 5 Structure of Doctoral Studies Program, Standard Study Period, Language of Instruction

(1) The doctoral program shall consist of project-related and transdisciplinary academic elements (section 9). It shall also include general courses on knowledge transfer (section 10), research management (section 11) and foreign language courses (section 12).

(2) The standard study period shall consist of six semesters.

(3) The language of instruction in the doctoral studies program shall be English and German. There is the option to fulfill all requirements during the course of the doctoral studies in English only.

Section 6 Organization of Doctoral Studies Program, Competent Authorities

(1) The Faculty Council Biology, Chemistry and Pharmacy shall appoint a Representative, who shall be responsible for conducting the doctoral studies program as well as a Deputy to the Representative, both of whom are to hold the office for a term of two years respectively.

(2) The Representative shall conduct the day-to-day business of the doctoral studies program. In particular, the Representative shall be responsible for academic coordination. The Representative shall report to the Standing Commission of DRS with regard to how the doctoral studies program progressed over the course of the previous year.

(3) The Representative shall ensure that individual doctoral candidates are assigned, with their consent, to a supervisory team, which shall consist of a minimum of two individuals. Included among the members of the supervisory team shall be the Supervisor of the dissertation project and generally at least one other faculty member from the doctoral studies program. External supervisors may also be

consulted. At least one member of the supervisory team, however, must belong to the faculty of the doctoral studies program.

(4) Based on the project related portion of the doctoral studies program and with the consent of the doctoral candidate and the supervisor, the supervisory team shall define the type and scope of the courses of advanced study to be completed by the doctoral candidate, taking into consideration the measures stipulated in sections 7 through 12.

(5) Acceptance into the doctoral studies program requires the persons involved to sign a supervisor agreement as shown in Appendix 2, which shall stipulate the duties and obligations of both the doctoral candidate and the supervisory team. The signed agreement shall be taken on the respective file.

(6) In the event that during the doctoral studies the doctoral candidate be subject to long-term burdens, such as, in particular, an illness affecting the doctoral candidate's ability to work or the birth and upbringing of a child, as such, the doctoral candidate may effect a revision to the supervisor agreement, especially with regard to the obligations to actively participate in and regularly attend the study courses with the consent of the supervisory team and the Representative of the doctoral studies program.

Section 7 Student Workload

(1) The workload scheduled for the doctoral candidate to successfully fulfill the requirements of the academic study program in compliance with section 1, paragraph 9 and sections 10 through 12 and also to be completed when taking part in the supervisory program of the doctoral studies program can be found in Appendix 1. Should the doctoral candidate take part in a research study trip in accordance with section 8, paragraph 3, the time requirements shall be discussed with the supervisory team and adjusted accordingly.

(2) Of the total number of credit points (CP) to be earned, a total of up to 6 SWH with a maximum of 9 CP may be allotted to the language courses as defined in section 12.

Section 8 Academic Research Project

(1) The academic research project pursuant to section 2, paragraph 1 above shall serve to prove the doctoral candidate's ability to perform independent research.

(2) The curricula of the project-related portion of the doctoral studies program shall in general be based on the object of research of the supervisors and instructors of the doctoral studies program.

(3) To preferably be included within the research project shall be a research study period at another suitable research institution, either in Germany or abroad. The location, frequency and length of time of such study periods shall depend on the amount of progress achieved in each particular case.

Section 9 Subdiscipline Project Related Doctoral Studies, Teaching and Learning Courses

(1) The project related portion of the doctoral studies program shall include in particular the teaching and learning courses listed below:

(a) Interdisciplinary graduate seminars (Graduate Seminars)

Graduate seminars shall be conducted jointly by several university professors. The objective of such shall be to teach the latest research results, with particular focus on interdisciplinary aspects. An application for the formation of graduate seminars must be submitted in due time to

the Management Commission and said application must be approved. The list of graduate seminars will be listed in Freie Universität Berlin's Catalog of Names and Courses (NVV).

(b) Presentation seminars

Participation in seminar forms is aimed at providing doctoral candidates with the ability to acquire the skills necessary to present and professionally discuss their own research projects and findings and those of others in English.

(b) Advanced courses relating to the project

Attendance at such courses is geared towards enabling the doctoral candidates to acquire the special skills that they will need to successfully complete their respective dissertation projects. Attendance requirements are based on the specific needs and are determined as per section 6, paragraph 4.

The range of courses is to be determined by the Representative and shall be listed under a dedicated heading in the NVV.

(2) Doctoral candidates shall be required to regularly attend and actively participate in all seminars scheduled during the academic study program as shown in Appendix 1 with a curriculum as defined pursuant to section 9, paragraph 1 and sections 1 through 12 and to also to take advantage of the supervisory program offered.

(3) Courses offered by other graduate schools, including graduate schools abroad, research training groups of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) as well as such offered in the form of cooperation with the Max Planck Research Schools, Collaborative Research Centers or other collaborative research initiatives and doctoral programs offered by other universities, educational and non-university institutions with the right to confer doctoral degrees may be included in the doctoral studies program in so far as they integrate achievements of equal value regarding internal requirements and teaching methods. The Representative shall decide on equivalency on a case-by-case basis.

(4) At least 50 per cent of the credit points (CP) provided for within these rules and regulations must be completed during the doctoral studies program at Freie Universität Berlin.

Section 10

Acquiring Skills in the Subdiscipline of Knowledge Transfer

At regular intervals, doctoral candidates shall be required to present the results of their research work at academic symposia and publish such in academic publications. In addition, each respective supervisory team shall provide appropriate opportunities to their doctoral candidates to communicate significant findings from their research during lectures and seminars.

Section 11

Acquiring Skills in the Subdiscipline of Research Management

Doctoral candidates shall gain experience in planning research projects and acquiring third-party funding and shall develop general skills in research management and organizing and coordinating academic activities.

Section 12

Acquiring Skills in the Subdiscipline Foreign Languages Relevant to Academia

(1) Doctoral candidates who are not native German speakers are to acquire German language skills during the course of the doctoral studies to the extent that they may be integrated appropriately in a German-speaking environment.

(2) Doctoral candidates who are not native English speakers are to provide certification of their proficiency in English pursuant to section 3, paragraph 3, letter c) and moreover are to acquire additional proficiency in English during the course of the doctoral studies to the extent that they have the skills needed to communicate on an academic level both orally and in writing (Academic English).

Section 13

Reporting Obligations, Withdrawal and Completion of the Doctoral Studies Program

(1) Doctoral candidates shall be required to give a report at regular intervals on the progress and status of their dissertation projects in presentation seminars.

(2) After commencing their dissertation project, each year doctoral candidates shall be required to prepare and submit a written report annually, three to five pages in length, on the progress of their dissertation project and on the courses, symposia and workshops they attended.

(3) Based on said annual report, the supervisory team shall evaluate the doctoral candidate's progress. The supervisory team shall assess whether the doctoral candidate is making adequate progress both with respect to participation in the doctoral program and in his or her dissertation project. In particular, they must certify that the doctoral candidate is successfully meeting the requirements stipulated in the rules and regulations at hand. Said requirements involve fulfilling the research tasks in a timely manner, especially completing the dissertation on time and fulfilling the requirements of the academic study program within the timeframe including the curricula as defined in section 9, paragraph 1 and sections 10 through 12 as well as taking advantage of the supervisory program. If the results of the evaluation are negative, the Representative of the doctoral studies program shall be notified accordingly in writing.

(4) Based on the overall opinion of the supervisory team, the Representative of the doctoral studies program shall make a decision on whether the doctoral candidate may remain in the doctoral studies program.

(5) Any written documents relating to the doctoral candidates shall be filed in their respective doctoral file.

(6) Graduation certificates and transcripts of records in accordance with Appendices 3 and 4 shall be issued to doctoral candidates who successfully complete the doctoral studies program in accordance with the academic rules and regulations stipulated within this document. A degree in the doctoral studies program shall be conferred in accordance with the doctorate rules and regulations applicable for the Department Biology, Chemistry and Pharmacy of Freie Universität Berlin.

Section 14

Commencement

These rules and regulations shall take effect one day after being published in the Memoranda (official register of Freie Universität Berlin).

Appendix 1: Sample Curriculum and Overview of the Credit Requirements Listed by Subdiscipline and Study Unit

Semester	SWH	CP	1	2	3	4	5	6
Interdisciplinary graduate seminar subdiscipline project related doctoral studies e.g. 23960S Microbial and Molecular Plant Science; 23702S Current Topics of Plant Insect Interactions Requirements: Regular attendance, active contribution in the seminar discussion	2	3	c	c	c	c	c	a
Presentation seminar subdiscipline project related doctoral studies e.g. 23961 PhD Seminar: Plant Biochemistry; 23966S Research Seminar Plant and Soil Ecology Requirements: Regular attendance, oral presentation on a seminar topic relating to the respective dissertation subject	2	3	c	c	c	c	c	a
Advanced project related courses subdiscipline project related doctoral studies Requirements: Regular active contribution, in some cases additional requirements as announced each individual course	Max. 4	Max. 6	a	a	a	a	a	a
Acquiring skills in the subdiscipline knowledge transfer Requirements: Attendance at a DRS workshop Knowledge Transfer	Max. 4	Max. 6	e	e	e	e	e	e
Acquiring skills in the subdiscipline research management Requirements: Participation in fund raising efforts	Max. 4	Max. 6	e	e	e	e	e	e
Acquiring skills in the subdiscipline foreign languages (German) Requirements: Regular and active attendance by doctoral candidates who are not native speaker German	6	9	a	a	e	e	e	e
Acquiring skills in the subdiscipline foreign languages (Academic English) Requirements: Regular attendance, especially by doctoral candidates who are not native speaker English	2	3	e	e	a	a	e	e

Explanations: c = attendance required; a = attendance required as agreed upon with each individual doctoral candidate; e = attendance voluntary