

# Doctoral Candidate's Guidelines

## Provisions and recommendations for Dr. med. or Dr. med. dent. doctoral degrees

### Preliminary remarks

The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine shall decide on admissions to doctoral degree programmes. Admission is based on certain conditions being met (see Para. I). If these conditions are met, the oral examination is held (see Section III). After the oral examination, printed copies of the dissertation are to be submitted (see Section IV). Once these have been submitted, the doctoral degree can be assigned. The thesis which the doctoral candidate intends to submit as a dissertation may be completed by him/her as a student or candidate or qualified doctor of medicine or dentistry. In principle, the faculty can accept any scientific thesis as a dissertation, if the thesis and the doctoral candidate meet the conditions set out in the Doctoral Degree Regulations. Generally, Kiel University students are assigned a member of the faculty who is qualified to teach at professorial level as their supervisor and later rapporteur (referee). As supervisor he/she agrees the subject of the thesis with the doctoral candidate and, if required, provides him/her with a workspace. The professors and lecturers of Kiel University's Faculty of Medicine are **not** obliged to accept every medical student, doctor or dentist as a doctoral candidate. Likewise, medical students or qualified doctors have no legal entitlement to being accepted as doctoral candidates. Rather, the relationship between supervisor and doctoral candidate is based on mutual agreement.

### The doctoral degree procedure

#### 0. Application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate for the doctoral degree procedure

The doctoral degree project must be registered with the relevant Doctoral Degree Office at the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine at the start of work on the scientific thesis (see document "[Doctoral Degree Agreement](#)").

#### I. Admission to the doctoral degree examination

The application may be submitted to the faculty's Doctoral Degree Office in person or in writing and must contain the following information (please note: only complete applications will be accepted):

- **Application for admission to the doctoral degree examination** (please find document [here](#)), stating your desired final qualification, supervisor and the institution in which the dissertation was produced.
- Proof of having completed a degree programme at Kiel University lasting at least two semesters
- A copy of the **Doctoral Degree Agreement** (if this has not already been submitted)
- A signed academic **curriculum vitae**
- A copy of your **licence to practise medicine** (if available)
- A certified copy of your **state medical/dental examination certificate** (for provisional admission: admission to a practical year / evidence you are in your last academic year for dentistry students / or according to the new AO (licence to practise medicine): evidence of passing the second part of the state medical examination)
- A **certificate of good conduct / police record**, no older than six months (authorised version "0")

- A copy of your **national ID card** (front and back) or passport
- **Two bound copies of the dissertation**, a **copy of the conclusion** of the dissertation and a **CD-ROM/USB-stick**. Attach a **photograph** (passport photo) of yourself (the doctoral candidate) to the inside of the front cover of each of these two copies. **Sign the front cover, beneath the photograph.**
- A copy of a quotable **extract** from your dissertation or an accepted **publication** by the applicant. The applicant must be clearly recognisable as the author or co-author.
- A letter of the supervisor with three recommendations for **second referees** who are not employed at the same institution as the supervisor.
- **A declaration of consent** of the head of the institution that the work can be submitted as a dissertation to Kiel University's Faculty of Medicine and that the doctoral candidate was allowed to use the facilities of the institution (see [template](#)).

## II. Provisional admission to doctoral degree programmes

The doctoral degree procedure can be accelerated by way of provisional admission to a doctoral degree programme. Any medical student who has gained admission to a practical year or passed the second part of the state medical examination in accordance with the new AO (licence to practise medicine) can apply for provisional admission, if he/she fulfils all other admission requirements (see Doctoral Candidate's Guidelines). This rule also applies to dentistry students, who must provide evidence that they are currently in their last year of study when applying. The dissertation assessment procedure is initiated on provisional admission, but the oral examination (see Doctoral Candidate's Guidelines) can only be taken after passing the final examination (or state examination for dentists). Provisional admission expires if replaced by permanent admission or if the applicant does not pass the second part of the state medical (or dental) examination; on the day that it is ascertained that he/she irrevocably failed the second part of the state medical (or dental) examination, or at the latest 2 years after provisional admission is awarded. In accordance with the new AO (licence to practise medicine), the following rule applies: Provisional admission expires if replaced by permanent admission or if the applicant does not pass the third part of the state medical (or dental) examination; on the day that it is ascertained that he/she irrevocably failed the third part of the state medical (or dental) examination, or at the latest 2 years after provisional admission is awarded.

## III. The doctoral examination

After the faculty has accepted the dissertation as your doctoral thesis, the thesis has been reviewed by the Doctoral Degree Committee, released for viewing for 14 days by the faculty's habilitation graduates, and no objection has been raised against it, the doctoral candidate will be informed in writing of the oral doctoral examination.

In this examination, the doctoral candidate is to demonstrate whether and how he/she can cope with an in-depth interview about the subject and findings of his/her dissertation and with the examiners' questions.

## IV. Publication of the doctoral dissertation

Following the doctoral degree procedure, the dissertation is to be published. For this purpose, the candidate is to hand over copies of his/her dissertation as requested by the Dean's Office to the faculty (i.e. submitting them to the University Library). Publication can be:

- a) book or photo printing or
- b) in a journal or as an independent publication in the book trade, if proof is provided of an edition of at least 150 copies or

- c) an electronic version (online procedure) in a format and medium that has been agreed with the University Library  
<https://macau.uni-kiel.de/content/index.xml>
- d) additional copies for referees and departmental libraries are to be agreed accordingly with these users.
- e) The Dean shall decide on exceptions to these rules.

The title of doctor may only be used after the doctoral degree certificate is awarded.

## **V. Dissertation format**

Please ensure the following when producing a dissertation:

1. Bound copies of the dissertation: glue binding, no hard cover, no foil cover, no ring binding; please print the title page also on the cover page
2. White DIN A4 paper
3. Printed on one side
4. 2.5 cm margins
5. 1.5 line spacing; comments may be single-spaced
6. The last page contains the academic curriculum vitae and publications

All parts of the dissertation (pages of text, tables, diagrams, figures, appendices, etc.) are to be collectively organised in a logical manner. To design the title page please have a look at our [template](#).

## Annex 1

### **Recommendations for grading dissertations**

In principle, the referee (supervisor) and, where possible, also the second referee must consider the following criteria when grading a dissertation:

1. The doctoral candidate's ability to perform scientific work and critical thinking, including the ability to work independently in developing solutions to given problems using knowledge gained from studying literature and basic methods provided by the supervisor.
2. The suitability of the applied methods in obtaining and performing a critical examination of data and information as well as interpreting them.
3. The personal commitment and activity used to complete the given task, practical work planning and practical structuring of tasks as well as completion of the work on time.
4. Editorial aspects of the dissertation: Length and structure of the thesis, presentation of the basics, the material being examined, the examination methods, the results (including tables and figures) and the literature, style and expression. The following recommendations for grading are given in addition to general criteria (\*):

#### **3 = *Rite*:**

- a) Observation studies (e.g. "retrospective studies" without important new aspects, simple case studies, casuistics of rare cases).
- b) Experimental works that are essentially reproduced under guidance following established methods.
- c) Simple theoretical works, predominantly using cross-referencing.
- d) Co-authorship of a quotable abstract from a national specialist conference

#### **2 = *Cum laude*:**

- a) Observation studies carried out independently with clear questioning to gain new scientific findings.
- b) Experimental works incorporating various established difficult methods with independent execution of experiments, work planning and structuring of tasks by the doctoral candidate.
- c) Theoretical works demonstrating a significant degree of the doctoral candidate's own initiative in developing scientific solutions to given scientific problems.
- d) Co-authorship of a quotable abstract from a national specialist conference

#### **1 = *Magna cum laude*:**

- a) Challenging observation studies that have led to new scientific findings (acceptance of a publication in a "peer reviewed" scientific journal) and have been planned and carried out by the doctoral candidate essentially independently.
- b) Experimental works involving difficult methods that have led to new scientific findings (acceptance of a publication in a "peer reviewed" scientific journal), including new methods or methods modified by the doctoral candidate, and have been planned and carried out by the doctoral candidate essentially independently.
- c) Theoretical works that are based on a comprehensive review of literature and a critical analysis of existing data and opinions and have led to a convincingly substantiated new scientific finding or opinion developed independently by the doctoral candidate (acceptance of a publication in a "peer reviewed" scientific journal).

***Summa cum laude:***

- a) Works that have led to important scientific findings (publication in major "peer reviewed" scientific journals with the doctoral candidate as first or second author) with new original examination/observation methods going beyond those of 1a) and have been developed and carried out by the doctoral candidate independently.
- b) Experimental works that have led to new important scientific findings (publication in major "peer reviewed" scientific journals with the doctoral candidate as first or second author) that have been acquired through an independently drafted experimental plan and with independently developed examination methods and demonstrate a high degree of originality.
- c) Theoretical works that have led to new important scientific findings (publication in major "peer reviewed" scientific journals or book series with the doctoral candidate as first or second author). These works would have been made possible based on a new original approach and a complex theoretical model independently developed and convincingly presented by the doctoral candidate.

\*A study is experimental as defined in these recommendations if the influencing factors to be studied are controlled by the examiner him/herself or follow a procedure determined by him/her, e.g. in-vitro experiments, animal testing and randomised clinical studies. Studies that only ascertain (observe) the influencing factors, e.g. case-control studies or cohort studies are included under observation studies here. Works are called theoretical here if they do not involve any independent data capture.

The Doctoral Degree Committee shall decide on exceptions to these rules.

## Annex 2

### **Principles for ensuring good scientific practice**

This text takes into account the recommendations of the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) on this subject.

#### **1. Principles of good scientific practice**

Individuals employed in scientific activities (this also includes doctoral candidates) are required to observe the principles of good scientific practice and set a good example for others. These principles are to be taught to students and young researchers. The responsibility for this lies especially with university lecturers. According to the recommendations of DFG (Commission on "Professional Self Regulation in Science", January 1998), the following general principles apply to good scientific practice:

- Observation of the rules of scientific work;
- Documentation of the work results, including secure storage of primary data;
- Logical self-criticism regarding work results and conclusions drawn from these;
- Honesty regarding the importance of contributions from third parties to own work;
- Responsible supervision of young researchers;
- Unrestricted coordination of contributions from all members of a working group by the leader;
- Publication of work results and disclosure of all conditions required for their reproduction.

#### **2. Violating the rules of good scientific practice:**

The following are considered violations of the rules of good scientific practice and, under certain circumstances, considered scientific fraud or incitement to scientific fraud:

- Fabricating, falsifying and eliminating data;
- Plagiarism;
- Fraudulent authorship in publications;
- Omitting eligible authorships;
- Lacking or inadequate scientific discussion in the working group ;
- Inadequate supervision of doctoral candidates;
- Loss of or insufficient documentation of original data;
- No instruction for those involved in the research regarding the rules of good scientific practice;
- Slandering regarding the rules of good scientific practice;
- Breaching confidence as an assessor or superior.

### **3. Responsibility for implementing the rules of good scientific practice**

Every scientist is responsible for his/her own behaviour when conducting scientific work. Anyone who leads a working group is responsible for ensuring that the conditions for good scientific practice exist and that the rules are adhered to within the group that he/she is leading. This requires vital communication within the working group, but especially the disclosure of scientific data within the ongoing internal group discussions.

It is therefore the heads of scientific working groups' task to ensure that all members of the group are aware of their rights and duties in relation to good scientific practice. They must create framework conditions for this so that these rules are followed. Particular importance must be placed on the open discussion and critical examination of hypotheses, theories and (especially) scientific data from the individual members of the group. The leadership of a scientific working group commands attendance and an overview. Leadership tasks must be delegated where this is not sufficiently the case.

### **4. Supervising doctoral candidates**

The supervisor works with the relevant doctoral candidate before the start of the actual dissertation to produce a written draft of the planned project's objectives and methodology. This draft must contain a written note stating that the supervisor has informed the doctoral candidate of the rules of good scientific practice. Should conflict between the parties involved arise while the project is being carried out, the Dean or the Chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Committee can be called in to act as a mediator.

### **5. Duty of documentation**

Primary data which is the basis for publications remains accessible for ten years, on sustainable and secure carriers, in the working group in which it was produced. The relevant scientist is responsible for this. He/she is obliged to provide evidence of correct recording. Every experiment, as well as every numerical calculation is to be recorded in each detailed step in such a way as to enable an expert to repeat the experiment or understand the calculation basis, should this be required. The reproducibility of a scientific experiment is its primary test. Records or workbooks must have a hard cover and contain numbered pages - no pages may be removed. They must be stored safely. Losing originals from a lab violates the basic principles of careful scientific practice and justifies a primary assumption of dishonest or grossly negligent behaviour. If a scientist changes to a different institute, the original data always remains where it was collected. The storage of original data can be regulated differently in special, individual arrangements between the 'old institute' and the 'new institute' at which the scientist works. The arrangement regarding where the records remain must be documented on the original carrier and signed by all those involved.

### **6. Publications, authorship**

Authors of scientific publications carry joint responsibility for their content. Any so-called 'honorary authorship' is excluded.

Results are to be described in full and in a transparent manner in publications, particularly those in which new scientific findings are being presented. Individual and third-party preliminary work must be fully and correctly accounted for (citations). Any previously published results must be repeated in a clearly identifiable format to the extent that it is necessary for understanding the connection. The listed authors of a scientific publication should only be those individuals who have themselves significantly contributed towards designing the studies or experiments, developing, analysing and interpreting the data, and formulating the manuscript, and who have agreed to the joint publication, i.e. they assume responsibility for it. The extent of the contribution of doctoral candidates for a publication must be taken into account - possibly also by them being named as main author.