

**The English text version is for information purposes only. In case of doubt or legal ambiguity, the wording of the German version shall apply.**

## **Doctoral degree regulations of the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Bielefeld University of 1 April 2025**

Based on § 2 (4) and § 67 (3) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (*Hochschulgesetz*; HG) of 16 September 2014 (GV. NRW. p. 547), last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 29 October 2024 (GV. NRW. p. 704), the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Bielefeld University, in accordance with § 1 sentence 3 of the 'general regulation of doctoral studies of Bielefeld University (*Rahmenpromotionsordnung*; RPO) of 1 June 2023 (Bielefeld University Gazette – Official Announcements – Vol. 52 No. 7 p. 164), issued the following doctoral degree regulations:

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### **§ 1**

#### **Scope of application (§ 1 RPO)**

- (1) These doctoral degree regulations apply to all doctoral procedures performed at the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Bielefeld University, hereinafter referred to as the "Faculty".
- (2) The doctoral degree regulations govern the subject-specific content and requirements of the doctoral degree procedure.
- (3) The general regulation of doctoral studies of Bielefeld University applies in all other respects.

### **§ 2**

#### **Right to award doctorates and doctoral degrees (§ 2 RPO)**

- (1) The Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Bielefeld University awards the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) based on a written thesis (doctoral thesis) and an oral exam (colloquium).

(2) The Faculty may also award the doctoral degree honoris causa (Dr. phil. h.c.) in recognition of outstanding academic achievements and merit (§ 18).

### **§ 3**

#### **Purpose and forms of the doctoral procedure (§ 3 RPO)**

(1) The award of a doctorate is to evidence the ability to perform academic work independently that goes beyond the general study objective in accordance with § 58 (1) HG. The qualification is determined based on an academically significant written thesis (doctoral thesis) and an oral exam (colloquium).

(2) It is possible to complete a doctorate as a doctorate independent of a degree programme or as part of a doctoral programme in which the Faculty is involved at the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies. In this case, the study regulations for the respective doctoral programme will apply as well.

(3) Persons who have been accepted as doctoral students by the Faculty in accordance with § 6 must enrol until the examinations have been completed and may remain enrolled as doctoral students at Bielefeld University until the doctoral procedure has been completed, i.e., until the final documents are handed over.

### **§ 4**

#### **Responsibilities (§ 4 RPO)**

(1) The doctoral committee is in charge of organising the doctoral procedure, in particular of deciding on acceptance of a doctoral student, opening of the doctoral procedure, appointing the reviewers, choosing the members of the examination committee, supervising the expeditious course of the doctoral procedure, including the documentation of the number of doctoral students of the Faculty as well as all tasks assigned by this general regulation.

(2) The doctoral committee comprises:

- four members from the group of university lecturers,
- one member with at least a doctorate from the group of lecturers,
- one member from the group of students, and
- one member from the group of technical and administrative employees.

(3) The members are elected by the Faculty Conference for a term of two years, with the exception of the student member, whose term of office is one year. The members of the doctoral committee elect a chair and a deputy from the group of university lecturers. Only members of the committee with a doctorate have voting rights in any decisions relating to examination results. The doctoral committee decides by a simple majority of the voting members present in an open vote; in the event of a tie, the chair has the casting vote. The doctoral committee has a quorum if at least four members are present, including the chair or deputy chair and a total of two members with at least a doctorate.

(4) The doctoral committee can authorise the chair to conduct its business or individual tasks on its behalf by way of resolution. This does not apply in any cases involving unfavourable decisions relating to legal remedies.

### **§ 5**

#### **Access requirements (§ 5 RPO)**

(1) As a rule, a study programme is considered relevant within the meaning of § 5 (1) RPO if it can be assigned to the range of subjects represented at the Faculty or to the research field of a person authorised to supervise in accordance with § 7. A qualified degree with an overall grade of at least "2.0" is required in the case of § 5 (1) a) and c) RPO. If the degree relates to a study programme in which the subject relevant for a doctorate at the Faculty is only one of several subjects studied that is included in the overall grade, the grade of this individual subject will be decisive as an access requirement.

(2) A qualified degree with an overall grade of usually "1.0" is required in the case of § 5 (1) b) RPO. In addition, two opinions from persons of the Faculty authorised to supervise in accordance with § 7, who comment in detail on the student's special academic achievements, are required. The applicant is also obligated to have a supervision meeting with the doctoral committee. The decision on acceptance will be made by the doctoral committee. Academic studies preparing for the doctorate are generally to be completed as part of relevant Master courses and should generally have a scope of 60 credit points; the graded individual achievements must have an average grade of at least "2.0". The doctoral committee decides on the type and scope of the pre-doctoral studies in accordance with the circumstances of the individual case. Suggestions from the supervisor are generally to be considered. The committee's decision will be included in the notice of acceptance as a doctoral student in accordance with § 6 (6) RPO and must be complied with until the doctoral procedure is opened.

(3) A Bachelor's degree with a grade of "1.0" is required in the case of § 5 (4) RPO. The academic achievements in the Master course must have been completed in accordance with the requirements of the examination and study regulations for the Master course (MPO fw.) or the examination and study regulations for the Master of Education study programme (MPO Ed.) or the Examination Rules for the Master course in Clinical Linguistics at Bielefeld University, as amended, and achieve an average grade of at least "2.0".

(4) The doctoral committee decides on justified exceptions to paragraph 1 sentence 2 upon written application, which must be accompanied by detailed opinions from two persons authorised to supervise in accordance with § 7, in which suitability of the applicant is explained. If necessary, the decision will additionally be made based on an admission interview. The candidate is also obligated to complete studies in preparation for the doctorate in accordance with paragraph 2 in this case; the doctoral committee decides on the type and scope of these studies in accordance with the circumstances of the individual case. Suggestions from the supervisor should generally be considered.

(5) The language proficiency to be documented in the respective doctoral subject and the times at which this is required can be found in the annex to these doctoral degree regulations. The annex is an integral part of these doctoral degree regulations.

(6) Foreign degrees must be recognised by the doctoral committee. The following applies to evaluation of international qualifications apart from the rules of the Higher Education Act:

- the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region of 11 April 1997 (BGBl. 2007 II p. 712, et seq. – Lisbon Convention) and the implementing provisions issued in this regard, each as amended,
- equivalence agreements of the Federal Republic of Germany with any other states, and
- bilateral declarations of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs/university rectors' conference.

The evaluation proposals of the secretary's office of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States – Central Office for Foreign Education – will be used for the evaluation.

## **§ 6**

### **Acceptance as a doctoral student (§ 6 RPO)**

(1) Anyone who intends to complete a doctorate at the Faculty and meets the access requirements in accordance with § 5 must submit an application for acceptance as a doctoral student to the doctoral committee. The application must be accompanied by the following documents in addition to § 6 (3) RPO:

- Topic of the planned doctoral thesis with an exposé of five to ten pages in German or English, including information on the language in which the doctoral thesis is to be written,
- if applicable, a list of previously published academic work must be attached to the CV,
- confirmation of a supervisor, evidenced by the Faculty's supervision agreement,
- if applicable, proof of language proficiency as specified in the annex to these doctoral degree regulations for the respective doctoral subject.

The doctoral committee may request revision of the exposé, stating the reasons in writing. The exposé must reflect the academic quality and feasibility of the doctoral project and give the impression that the applicant will be able to successfully complete their doctorate. The doctoral committee makes the final decision on acceptance as a doctoral student upon resubmission. Possible grounds for rejection are set out in § 6 (4) sentence 2 RPO.

(2) If not all access requirements in accordance with § 5 have been met, acceptance may be granted on condition that the relevant evidence is submitted with the application to open the doctoral procedure.

(3) By accepting a doctoral student, the Faculty expresses its general willingness to evaluate a doctoral thesis about the proposed topic as an academic work and to supervise and support the doctoral student in the writing of their paper.

(4) Acceptance as a doctoral student is limited to five years. The doctoral committee may extend the deadline upon timely application by the doctoral student if their life circumstances or reasons relating to the topic of the doctoral thesis have prevented completion of the doctoral thesis within the deadline. An extension will require the supervisor's approval.

## **§ 7**

### **Supervision (§ 7 RPO)**

(1) Supervisors generally can be: members of the group of university lecturers who are entitled to vote and co-opted under the examination regulations and other members of the Faculty who are entitled to vote and who have a habilitation or can demonstrate habilitation-equivalent academic achievements; the doctoral committee decides on exceptions. The doctoral student has the right to make a proposal. At the request of the doctoral student, another suitably qualified supervisor may be appointed. In the case of interdisciplinary and/or cross-faculty theses, authorised examiners of other faculties or universities should also be appointed as supervisors. A second supervisor appointed in the scope of a cooperative doctoral project with a university of applied sciences must be habilitated or have completed academic achievements equivalent to habilitation. This must be formally determined by the Faculty. This determination will be valid for five years in each case. In the case of sentences 3, 4, or 5, one of the supervisors must be a member of the Faculty authorised to vote in accordance with sentence 1.

(2) A supervisor who leaves the Faculty can continue to supervise for up to three years and can also be appointed as a reviewer. For the respective doctoral procedure, they will be considered an authorised examiner of the Faculty with voting rights within the meaning of § 9 (1) sentences 3 and 4. This deadline may be extended by the doctoral committee for cause.

(3) Supervisors of a research project who do not belong to the group of university lecturers can also be appointed as supervisors if they are to supervise doctoral students in the context of the research project, are members of the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies with a doctorate and are already at an advanced stage of their academic career upon application. In such a case, a member of the group of university lecturers with voting rights must be appointed as an additional supervisor (the cut-off date for the status definition is the day of acceptance as a doctoral student). The doctoral committee will decide on a corresponding application by the doctoral student.

(4) A supervision agreement is entered into between the doctoral student and the supervisor, which corresponds to the model drawn up by the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies.

## **§ 8**

### **Opening of the doctoral procedure (§ 8 RPO)**

(1) The doctoral procedure is initiated by a decision of the doctoral committee at the request of the doctoral student. The application must be submitted electronically to the chair of the doctoral committee.

(2) In addition to § 8 RPO, the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure must be accompanied by the following documents:

- a. The doctoral thesis in electronic version in pdf format. In addition, a print copy for the faculty and, in consultation with the reviewers, further print copies as necessary, must be submitted. A declaration must be made that the pdf and print versions are identical in addition to this.
- b. In the case of a monograph, the information and evidence required in accordance with § 10 (1) sentence 5, in the case of a cumulative doctoral thesis the information and evidence required in accordance with § 10 (2).
- c. Proof of the language proficiency required in accordance with the Annex to these doctoral degree regulations, as far as this has not already been proven in accordance with § 5 (5) with the application for acceptance as a doctoral student.
- d. § 8 (1) f) RPO applies to team theses.

(3) The doctoral committee will examine the application and the documents for completeness and decide on the opening of the doctoral procedure. If the requirements are not met, it will reject the application after hearing the doctoral student. Reasons for the rejection must be given in writing, and a notice of rejection must be issued with instruction on the legal right to appeal. The Faculty conference decides on an appeal by the doctoral student against the decision of the doctoral committee.

(4) It is possible to withdraw the application for opening in accordance with paragraph 1 as long as no expert opinion on the doctoral thesis is available.

## **§ 9**

### **Examination committee (§ 9 RPO)**

(1) The doctoral exam is conducted by an examination committee whose members are appointed by the doctoral committee when the decision is made to open the doctoral procedure. The doctoral student may make proposals to the doctoral committee for the members of the examination committee. The doctoral committee may deviate from the proposals in this. The members of the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies who are entitled to vote in accordance with the HG and any co-opted members under the examination regulations must have a majority on the examination committee. Co-opted members of the Faculty under the examination regulations will be considered members of the Faculty with voting rights in doctoral procedures.

(2) The doctoral committee will appoint the members of the examination committee. The examination committee generally comprises two, or in accordance with § 10 (10) sentence 1, three appointed reviewers, as well as at least two other persons with at least a doctorate, who are usually members of the Faculty with voting rights, under consideration of paragraph 1 sentence 3. Members of the group of university lecturers and habilitated researchers generally can be reviewers. At least one reviewer must be a member of the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies with voting rights. One of the supervisors can be appointed as the reviewer. One reviewer must not be the supervisor or co-author of a thesis in accordance with § 10 (1) and (2). A person with a doctorate from the lecturers of the Faculty's non-professorial academic staff may be appointed as a reviewer upon written request in justified exceptional cases. The examination committee is chaired by a member of the examination committee with voting rights who is appointed by the doctoral committee who is a member of the group of university lecturers in the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies; supervisors, reviewers and co-authors may not be chairs of the examination committee. For interdisciplinary or cross-faculty doctoral projects, it also is to be ensured that the composition of the examination committee is interdisciplinary or cross-faculty and that the reviewers are appointed accordingly. If a person appointed within the scope of a cooperative doctoral project with a university of applied sciences is to be appointed as a reviewer, § 7 (1) sentences 4 to 7 apply accordingly.

(3) The examination committee meets in closed session. Its decisions are to be documented in a record. The examination committee will decide in an open vote by a simple majority; if the vote ends in a tie, the chair has the casting vote. Abstentions are not permitted.

(4) If the supervisor has left the Faculty or has retired in the course of the doctorate and is completing the supervision of the doctorate in accordance with § 7 (2), they may also be appointed as a reviewer in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 and will be deemed to continue to be in the status in which the supervision was assumed for this doctoral procedure.

## **§ 10**

### **Doctoral thesis (§ 10 RPO)**

(1) This doctoral exam result comprises an independent and methodologically flawless academic paper written in an appropriate presentation, through which the doctoral student makes their own contribution to research, which expands the boundaries of knowledge and stands up to peer review (doctoral thesis). It must be written in a language that is used in one of the Faculty's degree programmes and agreed with the supervisors. The doctoral thesis is either a monograph, usually unpublished, or a cumulative academic achievement; paragraph 2 applies to the latter. As a monograph, it may include academic papers of the doctoral student as first author that were previously published or accepted for publication, provided that there is a thematic connection and a uniform research question. If the doctoral thesis was not written as a single author throughout, the doctoral student's contribution to the doctoral thesis must be clearly marked and a declaration in lieu of an oath must be submitted; in addition, the doctoral student must submit written confirmations from the co-authors regarding the doctoral student's own contribution and their consent to its use in the doctoral thesis. The doctoral student must also ensure that no copyrights are infringed by the publication of the doctoral thesis. § 9 (2) sentence 6 applies to compatibility of co-authorship and reviewership. All in all, the doctoral student's work must have the academic rank of an individual thesis in accordance with sentence 1.

(2) In the case of a cumulative doctoral thesis, the articles on which it is based are usually written after acceptance as a doctoral student and deal with a common academic question. There must be at least three articles written as first author, at least one of which must be an article written as the sole first author. The articles must be ready for publication and submitted for publication to high-ranking, relevant academic publication media with a review process. At least one of the submitted articles must already have been published or demonstrably accepted for publication in writing at the time the doctoral procedure is opened; in the case of articles not yet accepted for publication, the main supervisor must certify that the articles are ready for publication. The doctoral committee will decide whether the publication medium fulfils the requirements of sentence 3 based on the supervisor's proposal. In the case of articles produced in co-authorships, the doctoral student's share must be clearly identified, and a statement in lieu of oath must be made regarding their personal contribution. The doctoral student also must submit written confirmations from the co-authors regarding the doctoral student's own contribution and their consent to the use of the articles in the cumulative doctoral thesis. The doctoral student must also ensure that no copyrights are infringed by the publication of the doctoral thesis. § 9 (2) sentence 6 applies to the compatibility of co-authorship and reviewership. In addition to the articles, a detailed presentation written as a single author must be submitted as a jacket text at a scope of 30-50 pages plus bibliography. The text should describe (a) the theoretical and methodological relationship between the specialist contributions, (b) the added value of the compilation compared to the individual publications, (c) the academic contribution they make to the subject, and (d) the individual contribution of the doctoral student to the publications and the contribution of other authors. The parts of the doctoral student in the cumulative thesis must have the overall academic rank of an individual thesis in accordance with paragraph 1 sentence 1.

(3) A substantial contribution to a team thesis may be recognised as a doctoral thesis in suitable cases. Proof of the methodological and factual appropriateness of the team thesis must be provided upon submission. For the evaluation, the individual academic achievements must be clearly capable of being defined and evaluated and must meet the requirements for an independent examination result in terms of scope and quality within the meaning of paragraph 1.

(4) The doctoral thesis must include a title page, a table of contents, an abstract in German (1-3 pages), and a bibliography.

(5) Every reviewer must submit an opinion, including reasons, to the competent body in accordance with § 4, usually two months after appointment as a reviewer. If they exceed the two-month period for assessment by more than one month, the doctoral committee may appoint a new reviewer.

(6) The reviewers examine in detail and independently from each other whether the submitted doctoral thesis can be accepted toward the doctoral exam results, or whether it has to be rejected or returned for revision. They will assess the academic achievements of a paper to be accepted in their written opinions and award the following distinctions:

magna cum laude (very good; mathematical = 1),

cum laude (good; mathematical = 2),

rite (sufficient; mathematical = 3).

The distinction "summa cum laude (outstanding; mathematical = 0)" may be awarded for exceptional academic achievements. This distinction can only be awarded to the doctoral thesis if all opinions are in agreement. The assessment criteria to be observed for awarding of distinctions will be passed by the doctoral committee.

(7) If the doctoral thesis is returned for revision, the doctoral student will receive an opportunity to resubmit the revised doctoral thesis once within an adequate period of up to six months to be determined by the examination committee. The set deadline may be extended by an adequate period of time for cause upon the doctoral student's request and with the consent of the supervisor.

(8) Once all opinions have been received, the doctoral committee will inform the doctoral student of these opinions prior to the presentation procedure in accordance with paragraph 9. The doctoral student may write a statement on the opinions within one week, which will then also be displayed.

(9) The doctoral thesis, together with the opinions and any statement by the doctoral student, is then displayed in an appropriate manner; it may be displayed electronically. The office responsible in accordance with § 4 notifies the doctoral student, the university lecturers, the habilitated and doctoral members of the Faculty that the doctoral thesis with the opinions will be available for a period of two weeks. The authorised examiners of the faculties providing the reviewers and the members of the examination committee have the right to inspect the doctoral thesis during this period; they may lodge a written objection to the acceptance, rejection, or the evaluation of the doctoral thesis within three weeks of the start of the display period. Objections must include a statement of reasons. The opinions and, if applicable, the statement of the doctoral student must be treated confidentially by all persons receiving information.

(10) If the opinions differ with regard to their recommendation for acceptance or rejection or revision of the doctoral thesis, if they differ by more than two grade levels in the case of acceptance or if an objection against the acceptance, evaluation, or rejection is lodged within the display period in accordance with paragraph 9, the doctoral committee appoints another reviewer without undue delay after hearing the doctoral student. This reviewer must be a university lecturer and submit an opinion by the deadline specified in paragraph 5; they become a voting member of the examination committee. The additional opinion will be displayed with the doctoral thesis for a period of one week within the meaning of paragraph 9; further statements and objections are not permitted. The examination committee will decide whether to accept or reject the doctoral thesis in accordance with § 9 (3) under consideration of the recommendations of all opinions and any objections submitted in accordance with paragraph 9 and, if accepted, will also determine the distinction for the doctoral thesis.

(11) If the doctoral thesis is rejected, the doctorate is failed. The candidate will be notified of rejection of the doctoral thesis in writing after their hearing, together with instruction on the legal right to appeal.

## **§ 11**

### **Oral exam results (§ 11 RPO)**

(1) The oral exam takes the form of a colloquium, usually no earlier than one week and no later than eight weeks after the end of the submission period for the doctoral thesis. The colloquium serves to demonstrate the doctoral student's ability to competently and independently discuss central academic problems of the subject and knowledge of the current state of research. In justified cases and in agreement with the chair of the examination committee, individual members may participate as hybrid members in accordance with § 11 (2) RPO; as a rule, this does not apply to the doctoral student and the chair of the examination committee.

(2) The doctoral student must be consulted when the dates are set.

(3) The doctoral student must submit three theses to the examination committee no later than three weeks before the date of the colloquium. The scope of the theses can be agreed with the supervisor(s). One of the theses must relate to the subject area of the doctoral thesis; two further theses must relate to areas outside the subject area of the doctoral thesis. The theses and the presentation in accordance with paragraph 4 are generally written in the language of the doctoral thesis in accordance with § 10 (1).

(4) The colloquium usually lasts 90 minutes, during which the doctoral student presents the results of the doctoral thesis in a presentation of up to 20 minutes. The colloquium will generally be held in the language of the doctoral thesis in accordance with § 10 (1). Each doctoral student is examined individually; doctoral students who have written a team thesis can be examined together. The duration of the examination is then extended accordingly.

(5) The oral exam is open to the public unless the doctoral student has objected at least three weeks before the date of the oral exam. External guests may be admitted upon informal application by the doctoral students. The public is to be excluded from the assessment discussions and announcement of the exam result.

(6) The examination committee decides in a closed session following the colloquium whether the oral exam was successful and evaluates it in accordance with § 10 (6). In the event of inconsistent evaluation proposals, a decision will be made by voting in accordance with § 9 (3). The colloquium is deemed to have been failed if the doctoral student does not attend the colloquium without sufficient excuse.

(7) If the colloquium has not been passed or is deemed to have been failed in accordance with paragraph 6 sentence 3, it can be repeated once as part of the examination procedure. It can be repeated no earlier than three months and no later than twelve months after the failed colloquium. If this deadline is exceeded or if the doctoral student fails to attend the repeat examination, the colloquium will be deemed to have been definitively failed, unless the failure to meet the deadline is due to circumstances for which the doctoral student is not responsible; paragraph 8 sentence 2 will apply accordingly.

(8) The oral exam is definitively failed if the result of the colloquium is less than "rite (3.0)" even in the case of repetition. The doctoral student will receive a corresponding notice from the doctoral committee with instruction on the legal right to appeal.

## **§ 12**

### **Overall grade of the doctorate (§ 12 RPO)**

The examination committee calculates an overall grade from the overall grade of the doctoral thesis and the grade for the oral exam after the oral exam has been passed. The grade for the doctoral thesis is weighted twice in this. The following distinctions and values apply to the overall result:

magna cum laude	(very good; 0.1 to 1.5),
cum laude	(good; 1.51 to 2.5),
rite	(sufficient; 2.51 to 3.0).

The distinction "summa cum laude" (outstanding; mathematical = 0) may be awarded for exceptional academic achievements. "Summa cum laude" as an overall distinction requires that both the doctoral thesis and the oral exam have been evaluated as "summa cum laude".

The chair of the examination committee will inform the doctoral student of the overall evaluation and the reasons for it immediately after the decision is made.

## **§ 13**

### **Completion of the doctorate and certificate (§ 13 RPO)**

(1) The dean will issue the doctoral student with a provisional certificate of passing the examination within one week of the examination committee's decision. This contains the title and assessment of the doctoral thesis, the evaluation of the colloquium, and the overall evaluation of the doctorate. The doctoral student is informed in an accompanying letter that they are not permitted to use the academic degree of a doctor or a similar designation until the doctoral degree certificate with doctoral examination certificate has been issued.

(2) The dean awards the doctorate by issuing the doctoral degree certificate with doctoral examination certificate. This doctoral degree certificate contains the doctoral degree received. The attached doctoral examination certificate contains the title of the doctoral thesis, the evaluation of the doctoral thesis and the colloquium as well as the overall evaluation of the doctorate. The day of the colloquium is given as the date of the doctorate. The doctoral degree certificate and doctoral examination certificate will be issued as soon as the doctoral thesis has been published in accordance with § 14 or is deemed to have been published based on submitted print documents. Both graduation documents are issued in English upon request.

## **§ 14**

### **Publication of the doctoral thesis (§ 14 RPO)**

(1) The doctoral student is obligated to make the doctoral thesis accessible to the academic public in an appropriate manner through reproduction and distribution. This obligation represents a unit within the meaning of an academic achievement. If a reviewer imposes any requirements to the version for publication, this must be approved by the Chair of the Examination Committee before publication after endorsement by the reviewer.

(2) The doctoral thesis is made available to the academic public in an appropriate manner if the doctoral student, in addition to the copy (copies) required for the examination procedure, delivers a copy of the version of the doctoral thesis disseminated by a) to d), which must be printed on age-resistant wood and acid-free paper and bound in a permanently durable manner, to the Faculty free of charge and also ensures its dissemination by:

Either

- a. proof of distribution by means of (1) a print process with a first print run or (2) a print-on-demand process with guaranteed availability for at least five years or (3) an electronic version (e-book), or
- b. submission of an electronic version, data format of which must be agreed with the university library of Bielefeld University, or
- c. proof of publication in a journal.
- d. In the case of the cumulative doctoral thesis, the jacket text must be submitted in electronic form to the University Library of Bielefeld University; the format must be agreed with the library.

In cases a) and c), two copies printed on age-resistant wood- and acid-free paper and bound in a durable binding must be submitted to the Faculty free of charge for storage in the Bielefeld University Library.

(3) The voucher and compulsory copies must be submitted to the Faculty within two years of passing the colloquium. The delivery period may be extended by one year at a time, but no longer than five years in total in justified cases. The dean will, on the recommendation of the doctoral committee, determine the cancellation of all rights acquired through the examination if this deadline is not met. The Faculty Conference will decide on an appeal by the doctoral student against the notice after hearing the doctoral committee.

## **§ 15**

### **Deception, invalidity of doctoral exam results, and withdrawal of the doctoral degree (§ 15 RPO)**

(1) The dean may, at the suggestion of the doctoral committee and after hearing the doctoral student, declare the doctoral exam results void if it is established before the conferral of the doctorate that the doctoral student has committed academic fraud in their doctoral exam results or that any essential requirements of the doctoral procedure have been misrepresented.

(2) The doctoral degree can be withdrawn if

- a) it is found out subsequently that it was obtained through academic fraud in the doctoral exam results or through fraudulent misrepresentation of essential requirements for the doctoral procedure;
- b) the person holding the doctoral degree has been convicted of a deliberate criminal act misusing their doctoral degree when preparing or committing this criminal act.

(3) The Faculty Conference decides on the withdrawal after the dean has heard the person concerned.

## **§ 16**

### **Appeal against decisions in the doctoral procedure (§ 17 RPO)**

(1) The candidate may file legal remedy against any unfavourable notices issued based on these rules in writing with the competent body in accordance with § 4 within one month. The competent body in accordance with § 4 decides on the legal remedy, if necessary, after hearing the examination committee.

(2) An objection and objection procedure will be subject to the provisions stipulated in the Rules of the Administrative Courts (*Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung*).

## **§ 17 Inspection (§ 16 RPO)**

The doctoral student has the right to inspect the doctoral documents within one year of completing the doctoral procedure.

## **§ 18**

### **Honorary doctorate (§ 18 RPO)**

(1) The Faculty may award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy honoris causa (Dr. phil. h.c.) for outstanding academic merit or achievement.

(2) The Faculty Conference will decide on the awarding of the doctoral degree honoris causa upon application by at least two members of the Faculty who hold a doctorate by a three-quarters majority of all voting members of the Faculty Conference who hold a doctorate.

(3) The honorary doctorate is awarded by presenting a certificate prepared for this purpose and signed by the dean, in which the academic achievements of the recipient of the doctorate are honoured.

**§ 19**  
**Joint doctorate with other universities (§ 19 RPO)**

- (1) The Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies awards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) also in cooperation with a foreign partner university or partner faculty. It will also participate in awarding of a corresponding academic degree by the foreign partner university or faculty.
- (2) Implementation of the doctoral procedure in accordance with paragraph 1 requires an agreement with a foreign partner university or faculty in which both institutions undertake to facilitate a joint doctorate and to regulate the details of the cooperation.
- (3) Proof of the academic qualification required for the doctorate must be rendered by the doctoral student in the form of the examination results. These comprise an academically significant written thesis (doctoral thesis, § 10) and an oral exam (colloquium, § 11).

**§ 19 a**  
**Corresponding application**

The provisions of §§ 2-17 apply to the doctoral procedure in accordance with § 19, unless otherwise specified below. The provisions contained in the agreement will apply to participation in accordance with § 19 (1) sentence 2.

**§ 19 b**  
**Access to the doctoral procedure**

- (1) § 5 applies with the proviso that the doctoral student must provide evidence of a degree entitling them to a doctorate from a university in the country in which one of the two partner universities or partner faculties is located.
- (2) § 6 (1) applies with the proviso that the application must also include:
- a) a declaration from the partner university or faculty that the requirements for access to the doctorate have been met;
  - b) a declaration by a member of the partner university or faculty that they are willing to supervise and, if necessary, review the doctoral thesis.

**§ 19 c**  
**Doctoral thesis**

The doctoral thesis must be written in German or in a language specified in the partnership agreement in accordance with § 10 (1) sentence 2. A summary in the respective other language must be added.

**§ 19 d**  
**Supervision and enrolment**

- (1) The supervisors of the doctoral thesis are one member of the Faculty and of the partner university or faculty each who must be authorised to supervise in accordance with § 7. The declarations in accordance with § 19 b (2) a) and b) should be submitted to the doctoral committee at the beginning of the supervision relationship.
- (2) The doctoral student must be enrolled as a regular student or doctoral student at the partner university or faculty for at least one semester while working on their doctoral thesis. Students who have already completed a study programme of a corresponding duration at the partner university or faculty may be exempted from this requirement. This does not affect the obligation to enrol at Bielefeld University in accordance with § 3 (3).

**§ 19 e**  
**Reviewers**

- (1) The doctoral thesis is generally reviewed by one reviewer appointed by the partner institution and one member of the Faculty authorised to review the doctoral thesis in accordance with § 9 (2).
- (2) The doctoral committee can appoint the supervisors as reviewers.
- (3) The language of the opinion is subject to § 19 c sentence 1 accordingly.

## **§ 19 f**

### **Colloquium**

(1) The oral exam takes the form of a colloquium. § 11 applies accordingly to this, unless otherwise stipulated in the partnership agreement.

(2) § 19 c sentence 1 applies accordingly to the language of the colloquium.

## **§ 19 g**

### **Examination committee**

The examination committee usually comprises at least four persons who are authorised to examine doctoral students in accordance with the requirements of the Faculty or partner university or faculty in accordance with the partnership agreement. Two examiners should be authorised examiners of the Faculty in accordance with § 9 (2) and two should be authorised examiners from the partner university or faculty. Each Faculty must be represented by at least one person.

## **§ 19 h**

### **Completion of the doctoral procedure**

§ 13 (2) applies to completion of the doctoral procedure, with the proviso that the cross-border doctoral procedure must be referred to in the doctoral degree certificate and in the doctoral examination certificate. The dean of the Faculty signs and seals the German part. The candidate is informed in an accompanying letter that they must only use the title either in German or in the language specified in the partnership agreement in accordance with § 19.

Certification may take place either

- a) in separate final documents in the respective national languages. The dean of the Faculty will sign and seal the doctoral examination certificate for the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies. The partner university or faculty prepares its final documents in accordance with its own rules and, if necessary, arranges for the state certification of the jointly supervised doctorate, or
- b) in a joint final document signed and sealed by the dean of the Faculty and the responsible representative of the partner university or partner.

## **§ 20**

### **Withdrawal from the oral exam; disadvantage compensation (§ 20 RPO)**

The regulations on withdrawal and the regulations on disadvantage compensation in the Examination Regulations Framework of Bielefeld University as amended from time to time apply to withdrawal from the oral exam.

## **§ 21**

### **Scope of application and transitional regulations (§ 21 RPO)**

(1) These Doctoral Degree Regulations, hereinafter referred to as the Doctoral Degree Regulations 2025, apply to all doctoral students who are accepted as doctoral students by the Faculty after entering into effect of these rules in accordance with § 22.

(2) Doctoral students who were accepted as a doctoral student before these rules entered into effect may request opening of the doctoral procedure under the doctoral degree regulations of 1 April 2015 (Bielefeld University Gazette – Official Announcements – Vol. 44 No. 5 p. 138) until 31 March 2024 and complete it in accordance with the doctoral degree regulations 2015 applicable to them; otherwise, they will automatically be transitioned to the doctoral degree regulations 2025. These doctoral students can switch to the Doctoral Degree Regulations 2025 by application as long as they have not yet submitted an application to open their doctoral procedures under the doctoral degree regulations of 2015; the application is irrevocable upon application.

## **§ 22**

### **Entering into effect and transitional provisions (§ 21 RPO)**

These doctoral degree regulations are published in the Bielefeld University Gazette – Official Announcements – and enter into effect on 1 April 2025. At the same time, the doctoral degree regulations of the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies of 1 April 2015 (Bielefeld University Gazette – Official Announcements – Vol. 44 No. 5 p. 138) lose their effect, notwithstanding the provisions in § 21.

## **No complaints**

Claims from violation of any procedural or formal rules of the HG NRW or the university's regulatory or other autonomous law by these rules can only be asserted within one year of their publication, except if

- a) the rules have not been duly published,
- b) the rectorate has previously objected to the decision of the body adopting the rules,
- c) the university has been notified of the formal or procedural defect in advance and the violated legal provision and the fact giving rise to the defect have been designated in the course of this, or
- d) the legal consequence of the exclusion of complaint was not referred to in the public announcement of the rules.

The supervisory authorisations under § 76 HG will not be affected by this.

Issued based on the resolution of the Faculty Conference of the Faculty of Linguistics and Literary Studies of Bielefeld University of 18 December 2024.

Bielefeld, 1 April 2025

The rector  
of Bielefeld University, University  
Professor Dr Angelika Eppe

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## **Annex: Language requirements for the individual doctoral subjects**

In the subjects listed below, language proficiency is required for the reception and processing of academic literature. Language skills generally must be proven by written academic achievements in the study programme or by examinations already taken. International doctoral students must provide evidence of comparable language proficiency. The proof acceptable for German is set out in the Regulations on the Access of International Applicants to Studies at Bielefeld University (OZIS); further proof of German and English language proficiency is set out in Bielefeld University's Guidelines on Language Proficiency in German and English (Guidelines), as amended. The doctoral committee makes decisions on deviations from the language requirements in individual cases. The doctoral committee decides on suitable formats of proof at the suggestion of subject representatives for languages not mentioned in the OZIS or the guidelines.

**The language requirements for the individual subjects of the Faculty are listed below, differentiated in accordance with the requirements for acceptance as a doctoral student and for the opening of the doctoral procedure:**

### **English/American Studies**

§ 5 (5):

All doctoral students must have English language proficiency at C1 level in accordance with the above guidelines upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

§ 8 (2) c:

Proof of proficiency in the German language at B1 level must also be provided at the latest with the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure.

### **DaF/DaZ**

§ 5 (5):

International doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

§ 8 (2) c:

English language proficiency at B2 level must also be documented at the latest with the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure; proficiency in another language can be recognised on request.

### **German studies**

#### **German literature and medieval studies**

§ 5 (5):

International doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS upon acceptance as a doctoral student. All doctoral students also must provide proof of proficiency in two other languages, one of which should be Latin (B2 level or Latinum). If the Latinum is not necessary for completion of the doctoral project, it can be replaced by proof of another language that is to be meaningfully related to the doctoral thesis project at the suggestion of the supervisor and with the approval of the doctoral committee.

§ 8 (2) c:

Proficiency in the examination language (usually German) at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS must be proven at the latest with the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure, if not already proven upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

#### **German Linguistics and Didactics (Language and Literature)**

§ 5 (5):

International doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS upon acceptance as a doctoral student. The desired C1 level of proficiency in the German language can be reduced to B2 upon the suggestion of the supervisor and with the approval of the doctoral committee unless the doctoral topic requires the higher level; the desired C1 level can then be acquired in the course of the doctoral phase. In addition, all doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in another language that is not German at B2 level.

§ 8 (2) c:

Knowledge of the examination language (usually German) at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS must be proven at the latest with the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure, if not already proven upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

#### **Linguistics, Clinical Linguistics, Text Technology, and Computer Linguistics**

§ 5 (5):

All doctoral students must have B2-level English language proficiency in accordance with the above guidelines upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

§ 8 (2) c:

Proof of proficiency in the German language at B1 level in accordance with the above guidelines must be submitted at the latest with the application to open the doctoral procedure. Proof of proficiency in the German language may be waived if the doctoral topic does not require proficiency in the German language upon the supervisor's suggestion and with the approval of the doctoral committee.

**Literary Studies, Romance Studies, and Latin**

**Literary Studies**

§ 5 (5):

Upon acceptance as a doctoral student, all doctoral students must prove proficiency in two languages other than German at B2 level, e.g., Latin, Ancient Greek, English, French, Spanish. International doctoral students must also provide proof of proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS. The desired C1 level of proficiency in the German language can be reduced to B2 upon the suggestion of the supervisor and with the approval of the doctoral committee; the desired C1 level can then be acquired in the course of the doctoral phase. If the doctoral subject does not require proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with the decision of the doctoral committee upon the supervisor's suggestion, proof of proficiency in the German language at B2 level will be sufficient.

§ 8 (2) c:

International doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS by the time the doctoral procedure is initiated at the latest, if required in accordance with § 5 (5) and not yet proven upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

**Romance studies**

§ 5 (5):

All doctoral students must demonstrate C1-level proficiency in the language of the doctoral thesis (usually French or Spanish) and B2-level proficiency in another language that is not German upon acceptance as a doctoral student. International doctoral students must also demonstrate proficiency in the German language at B1 level; if such proficiency is not yet proven upon acceptance as a doctoral student, they can be acquired during the doctoral phase.

§ 8 (2) c:

If international doctoral students have not yet demonstrated the proficiency in the German language required for acceptance at B1 level, they must provide proof of such proficiency with their application to start the doctoral procedure.

**Latin**

§ 5 (5):

All doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in Latin and Ancient Greek at the scope of the Latinum or Graecum, as well as proficiency in at least two modern foreign languages at B2 level, upon acceptance as a doctoral student. International doctoral students must also demonstrate proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS. The desired C1 level of proficiency in the German language can be reduced to B2 upon the suggestion of the supervisor and with the approval of the doctoral committee; the desired C1 level can then be acquired in the course of the doctoral phase. If the doctoral subject does not require proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with the decision of the doctoral committee upon the supervisor's suggestion, proof of proficiency in the German language at B2 level will be sufficient.

§ 8 (2) c:

International doctoral students must provide proof of proficiency in the German language at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS by the time the doctoral procedure is initiated at the latest, if required in accordance with § 5 (5) and not yet proven upon acceptance as a doctoral student.

**Art and Music Education**

§ 5 (5):

All doctoral students must prove proficiency in the language of the doctoral thesis (usually German or English) at C1 level in accordance with § 4 OZIS or the above guidelines upon acceptance as a doctoral student. Knowledge of another language at B2 level must be demonstrated as well.

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