



Dissertations at the Geography Department

Content

This document supplements the official regulations for doctoral degrees of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, coming into effect on 11 July 2018, with regulations regarding dissertations at the Geography Department. With this document, we intend to inform doctoral candidates as well as supervisors about the formal and contextual requirements and framework conditions for dissertations, as well as procedures surrounding obtaining a doctoral title at the Geography Department. Our aim is to facilitate and promote high-quality dissertations, to create good and transparent conditions for doctoral candidates and to ensure a qualitatively high assessment and evaluation process.

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Key German terms and their English translation

Promotionskomitee	Doctoral degree board at the Geography Department (<i>handles questions surrounding admission and procedural questions at the Geography Department, prepares resolutions to the doctoral degree board of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences</i>).
Promotionsausschuss	Doctoral degree board at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (<i>official organ handling admission and procedural questions surrounding doctorates</i>)
Promotionskommission	Doctoral degree committee (handling the examination procedure once dissertations are submitted).



§1 Doctoral Degree Board (German: Promotionskomitee)

(1) All procedures relevant for carrying out a dissertation and obtaining a doctoral degree at the Geography Department are dealt with by the Doctoral Degree Board of the Geography Department. This applies in particular to the admission to doctoral studies, the assessment of whether Geography-specific admission requirements are met, the determination of additional course work to be completed, the appointment of the doctoral degree committee (German: Promotionskommission) and the initiation of the doctoral degree process. Officially, the Doctoral Degree Board prepares proposed resolutions on all these matters on which the Doctoral Degree Board of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences ultimately decides.

(2) The Doctoral Degree Board consists of three professorial members of the Geography Department. The Doctoral Degree Board elects a chairperson who represents the Department in the Doctoral Degree Board of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The assistant in doctoral matters of the Geography Department (German: Promotionsbeauftragte/r) is a permanent guest on the Doctoral Degree Board. The Doctoral Degree Board informs the Geography Department at regular intervals about new admissions to doctorates or the initiation of doctoral examination process.

§2 Supervision, examination and doctoral degree committee

Supervision

(1) Doctoral candidates and supervisors conclude a supervision agreement. Doctoral candidates should normally be supervised by more than one supervisor (principal supervisor plus at least one additional co-supervisor). All supervisors should sign the supervision agreement. The supervision agreement must be submitted with the documents for admission to the doctorate.

→ Appendix 1: Supervision Agreement

(2) To ensure high-quality dissertations, the Geography Department advocates a fully independent evaluation of dissertations according to international standards. Supervisors should therefore not act as reviewers of the dissertations of their PhD students. Exceptions can be made in justified cases, for example, if an adequate assessment of the dissertation cannot be guaranteed otherwise. In such cases a declaration explaining the reasons for why a supervisor must act as an evaluator must be submitted by the first supervisor with the application to initiate the doctoral examination process to the doctoral board of the Geography Department.

Doctoral degree committee

(3) The doctoral degree committee consists of at least five members:

- At least three professorial members,
- one additional member holding at least a habilitation degree, and
- another additional member holding at least a doctoral degree.

The principal supervisor should be a member of the doctoral degree committee. The head of the committee must be a professor at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. At the Geography Department, the role of committee head is usually taken on by the principal supervisor. In cases where the principal supervisor is not a professor, but a person with the right to supervise PhD students (e.g., Junior Research Group leaders), the principal supervisor shall replace the committee member holding at least a doctoral degree. The decision on the composition of the doctoral degree committee is made by the Doctoral Degree Board of the faculty on the recommendation of the doctoral board of the Geography Department [see §1 (1)].

(4) Members of the Geography Department should form the majority of the doctoral degree committee. In the case of structured doctoral programs (e.g., graduate schools) or interdisciplinary doctoral projects, this rule may be deviated from.

(5) One of the three reviewers of the dissertation must be a professor at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences.



(6) If the dissertation (paper-based or monography) is in parts based on material that were developed in cooperation with others (e.g., concepts, analyses, or results) and that were published with co-authors, only one member of the doctoral degree committee shall be a co-author. If the principal supervisor does not act as a reviewer of the dissertation, up to two committee members can be co-authors.

§3 Cumulative Dissertations

(1) The Geography Department facilitates and encourages high-quality doctoral theses which are based on individual, peer-reviewed publications. Doctoral students and academic supervisors decide together, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether a cumulative doctoral thesis is reasonable and recommendable. The following paragraphs shall inform doctoral students and academic supervisors in a transparent manner regarding the formal and contextual minimum requirements for cumulative doctoral theses and provides assessors with a guiding framework for evaluating and assessing cumulative doctoral theses.

Formal und contextual requirements for cumulative doctoral theses

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

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

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

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

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

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

Publications with co-authors

(8) Articles may result from joint academic research work by several individuals and feature several authors. Since the doctoral thesis is an individual academic work of the doctoral student, it must be stated, individually and in agreement with the other co-authors, which parts of the academic work were written individually by the doctoral student. This must be separated per step of the work (e.g. conception, data analysis, interpretation, writing of the manu-



script). A template for a declaration in this respect can be found in the Doctoral Portal of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (<https://fakultaeten.hu-berlin.de/de/mnf/wisskar/promotionen/formulare>).

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

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

Evaluation of cumulative doctoral theses

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

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

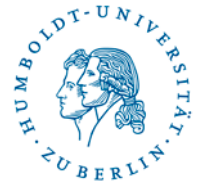
§4 Declaration of own contribution

(13) In the case of dissertations written as monographs as well as in the case of cumulative dissertations, a declaration of the own contribution of the doctoral candidate has to be enclosed (see §7 (5a) and (5b) of official regulations for doctoral degrees of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences). If the dissertation is in parts based on material (e.g., concepts, analyses, or results) that were developed in cooperation with others and that were published with co-authors, these co-authors must verify the doctoral candidate's own contribution. A template for this declaration can be found in the [Doctoral Studies Portal of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences](#).

(14) If the dissertation does not entail any parts that are based on publications of any form published together with co-authors, this must be clearly stated in the Declaration of Independence by the doctoral student. In this case, no additional co-authorship declaration is required.

§5 Extension of the time period foreseen for the dissertation

The regular 4-year period foreseen for completing the dissertation can be extended on written request. The extension time should normally be one year and a justification for the extension is to be submitted by the PhD student. Likewise, the principal supervisor has to submit a statement on the justification of the extension ((see. §5, clause 7 of the *doctoral degree regulations*)).



§6 Number of dissertations to be printed

Five printed copies of the dissertation have to be handed in when initiating the doctoral examination process (see §6, clause 2 of the doctoral degree regulations).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Supervision Agreement



Doctoral Supervision Agreement

between

(doctoral candidate),

(principal supervisor),

(secondary supervisor [optional])

To foster a constructive and productive collaboration with regard to the dissertation project, _____ and _____ sign the following doctoral supervision agreement. The agreement is based on the regulations for doctoral degrees of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, coming into effect on 11 July 2018 (*Promotionsordnung*, Official Bulletin No. 42/2018) and the Geography Department's resolution on structured doctorate programs at the Geography Department from 5 June 2012.

This doctoral supervision agreement must be submitted, together with the application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate, to the Geography Department's Doctoral Board no later than six months after the start of employment or scholarship.

Doctoral project

1. The doctoral candidate shall write a doctoral thesis at the Geography Department of Humboldt University Berlin. The project shall be described in detail in a dissertation proposal (extended abstract, see appendix for details). The time period and the extent of the project shall be stated in a detailed time schedule (see appendix).
2. The time schedule and, if applicable, the training plan that have been agreed upon by the doctoral candidate and the supervisors apply to the doctoral project. In accordance with the time schedule, the doctoral project shall be completed and this doctoral supervision agreement shall cease on _____¹.
3. If the completion of the doctoral project is delayed and the thesis is not submitted by the date stated in paragraph §2, reasons shall be given to the Doctoral Board when the doctoral procedure (submission of thesis and defence) is started.
4. This doctoral supervision agreement and its attachments are regularly reviewed and modified by the involved parties.
5. If the doctoral candidate has to fulfil other obligations or tasks occur than the work on the dissertation project (e.g. compulsory teaching or project work), the supervisors are obliged to design the additional work and time effort in a way that a completion of the doctoral thesis according to the time schedule remains possible.
6. The supervisor shall support a timely dissertation processes, particularly regarding the deadlines regulated in the specific regulations for doctoral degrees (*Promotionsordnung*).

Supervision of doctoral projects

7. The doctoral candidate and one or both supervisors shall discuss the progress and continuation of the project based on the initial dissertation proposal and time schedule, as well as progress reports, and the status of individual chapters of the thesis at length and at least once each semester. During these discussions or directly thereafter, the supervisor shall comment on the current status of the dissertation and progress made in detail either in oral or written form. Ad-

¹The completion of the envisaged dissertation project should be in accordance with internationally accepted time frames and should not exceed the (expected) period of funding.

ditional advising meetings can be arranged if necessary (e.g. if there are pressing questions or problems).

8. The doctoral candidate shall present the progress of the study in a research colloquium at least once per year and receive feedback and constructive criticism regarding the progress of the dissertation project.

Independent scientific contributions and supporting training program

9. During the doctoral phase, the doctoral candidate shall make independent scientific contributions in the form of e.g. attending and presenting at conferences, writing scientific articles, organising a conference, doing an internship or offering a university course such as a lecture or seminar. These activities shall be recorded in the time schedule and supported adequately by the supervisor in respect to the preparation and implementation of these activities. Furthermore, all planned activities are regularly checked against the time schedule and modified in accordance with the priorities of the doctoral project.
10. The doctoral candidate may attend courses of disciplinary or interdisciplinary qualification programmes. The attendance shall be agreed upon by both parties. The extent of the work and contents shall be recorded in the training plan.

Behaviour in conflict cases

11. If one or both parties do not comply with the doctoral supervision agreement, the Doctoral Board of the Geography Department shall be notified. In this case, the two ombudsmen (1 doctoral candidate, 1 university lecturer/professor) appointed by the Institutional Board will deal with this issue.

Additional agreements

This agreement, together with the required attachments, has to be submitted to the Geography Department's Doctoral Board at the beginning of the doctoral proceedings.

Date and Signature

(Date, doctoral candidate),

(Date, principal supervisor),

(Date, secondary supervisor, [optional])

Attachments to be submitted

Attachments to the doctoral supervision agreement:

1. Abstract (to be submitted with the doctoral supervision agreement):
 - Length: minimum of 1,500 words (excluding references, tables, figures, and attachments)
 - Content:
 - Working title
 - Short description of the current research status
 - Problem definition and purpose of the doctoral thesis
 - Research approach and possible research questions
 - Methods
 - References

2. Time schedule
 - The time schedule shall point out all relevant steps and cornerstones of the doctoral thesis in the form of a detailed GANNT chart.
 - The time schedule shall include all the major steps, including all scientific contributions, planned for the dissertation phase, e.g. preparing and giving conference presentations, writing chapters of the doctoral thesis in form of peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, or other scientific publications.
 - Buffer time and holidays will be allowed for in an appropriate extent.

3. Training plan [optional]
 - List of activities that are additionally agreed upon, in terms of a general academic education and/or as a direct support of the doctoral thesis.
 - Possible contents:
 - temporary stay abroad
 - language courses
 - further education in terms of "soft skills" (e.g. vocational courses)
 - scientific education through attending special courses or courses in related disciplines
 - organisation of conferences, leadership of a workshop
 - career coaching
 - teaching experience
 - Estimated extent, time period and, if applicable, funding opportunities have to be included for each activity.