

The Senate of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Foundation decided on the following joint regulations on the course of study, examinations and graduation for the PhD program of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover at its meeting on 31.01.2008:

**Regulations on the Course of study, Examinations and Graduation for the PhD Programs with a PhD (PhD course of study) at the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover**

**Section One:  
Objectives of the PhD Programs**

**§1  
Objectives**

(1) The PhD Programs at the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover with the objective of graduating with a PhD offer a project orientated course of study in research with the aim of enabling in-depth independent scientific work and an advanced professional qualification for tasks in research or related fields. They should cater for the needs of particularly competent scientific doctoral candidates. A standard period of study of three years applies for the PhD programs.

(2) The Centre for Systemic Neurosciences (ZSN) Hannover, which comprises working groups of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, the Hannover Medical School, Leibniz University Hannover and the University of Music and Drama Hannover, organises the Graduate PhD course of study "Systems Neuroscience" jointly with the aim of graduating with a PhD at the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover.

(3) After successful completion of the PhD program and the taking of the PhD examination, this is followed by the granting of the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover.

**Section Two  
Admission and Enrolment Requirements**

**§2  
Admission Requirements**

(1) The PhD programs are open to persons who have successfully completed a university course of study in veterinary medicine, medicine or dentistry (state examination), biology, biochemistry, chemistry or in another natural sciences subject (diploma, master`s). A successfully completed corresponding degree in the named fields abroad can be recognised by the PhD Committee as being equivalent.

(2) The first section of a university master`s program can be recognised by the responsible PhD Commission on request as sufficient for entrance requirement if the student has achieved excellent performance in this section and the responsible student committee for the master`s examination has recommended the validation.

(3) Applicants should be able to provide evidence of outstanding academic achievement. Their previous career should reflect their particular skills and motivation for scientific work. The PhD Commission responsible decides the aptitude of the applicants.

### **§3**

#### ***Admission to PhD-Program***

(1) The number of participants admitted from the applicants is fixed for each program as a rule at 20 per year. The selection of participants is made by the appropriate PhD Commission (§ 4). The course normally starts twice a year at the beginning of the summer and winter semesters.

(2) Admission to the PhD program takes into account the overall final examination results as well as the degree of motivation. The PhD Commission responsible may interview applicants in order to gain more insight into their particular skills and motivation. Furthermore, the quality of the proposed project, allowing for the working conditions in the working group will also be taken into consideration on admission. The Commission responsible may obtain an external assessor for assessing the project.

(3) Application documents are to be submitted to the Chairperson of the respective PhD Commission. These include the following:

- an informal letter of application for the chosen PhD program providing evidence of suitability and motivation for this PhD program, scientific fields of interest and further perspectives for the individual professional career;
- a curriculum vitae und certificates as well as proof of knowledge in English or German. German courses are if appropriate recommended to applicants from non-German speaking countries;

(4) For deciding whether the student is to be admitted into the PhD program and determining the field of scientific research for the PhD the following documents have to be submitted to the PhD Commission:

- a letter of recommendation from the supervisor (§ 4, (4) including the topic of the research project, confirmation of the scientific supervision and of the place of employment, details concerning funding the research work and two scientists who should be proposed as external adviser in the tutorial group (§);
- a description of the planned research project with the most important aspects of the current state of research and a work schedule of the project with the title in German and in English (after consulting the supervisor); in doing so it should be emphasised that it is a matter of a sophisticated research project which expects an important scientific contribution;
- the naming of the scientific specialist area in which the PhD degree should be acquired; this specialist area must be covered by the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover or in cooperation study courses by one of the involved working groups.

(5) Students on the PhD program “Infectionbiology” of the Centre for Infectionbiology (ZIB) of the Hannover Medical School with a completed degree in veterinary medicine can be admitted on application to one of the PhD programs of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover before registering for the examination (§ 9). Documents in accordance with Paragraphs 3 and 4, as well as proof of previously rendered performance are necessary for the application. The PhD Commission responsible makes the decision concerning approval of the performance. The Supervisory Group decided on by the ZIB and the specialism determined should be carried over. For admission to one of the PhD programs of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover the applicant is obliged to unsubscribe him/herself from the PhD program of the ZIB of the Hannover Medical School.

### **Section 3: PhD Commissions**

#### **§ 4 *PhD Commissions***

(1) The PhD Commissions appointed by the Senate of the University of Veterinary Medicine are responsible for the respective PhD programs concerning regulations of admission, enrolment, study program, examination and graduation.

(2) The PhD Commission for the program “Veterinary Research and Animal Biology” consists of the Vice-President for Research, as well as seven other representatives of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, specifically five faculty members, one postdoctoral research assistant and a PhD student (in an advisory capacity). The members of the PhD Commission are appointed by the Senate for the duration of their term in office according to a proposal of the PhD Commission; the PhD students elect their own representative. The faculty members as well as the postdoctoral research assistant of the PhD Commission should come from different university institutes and departments. The Commission is constituted by the Vice-President for Research and elects one of its faculty members as Chairperson.

(3) The PhD Commission for the program “Systems Neuroscience” consists of eight members, six of them faculty members of the working groups of the ZSN, a postdoctoral research assistant and a PhD student (in an advisory capacity). The members of this PhD Commission are appointed by the Senate for the duration of their term in office according to a proposal of the Board of the ZSN; the PhD students elect their own representative. The faculty members, as well as the post-doctoral research assistant of the PhD Commission should come from the various universities involved in the ZSN. The Commission is constituted by the Chairperson of the ZSN and elects one of its faculty members as Chairperson.

## **Section 4 Curriculum**

### **§ 5 Course of Study**

(1) The course of study is divided into experimental research work and project-related as well as interdisciplinary research orientated courses and seminars.

(2) The course of study is fixed and published by the responsible PhD Commissions after consulting those institutes and departments involved in the PhD program. Interdisciplinary courses are fixed by the PhD Commission, specialist courses are fixed by the respective supervisor in consultation with the PhD student and published in the time-table.

(3) The courses are mostly run by faculty members of the University of Veterinary Medicine or of the ZSN and supplemented by guest scientists. They should be held categorically in English. Postgraduate program courses can be part of a PhD program. Suitable courses from other scientific institutes can also be attended after approval from the PhD Commission. At the same time the students should also be independently active, e.g. by way of presentations or doctorate programs. Academic accomplishment in the compulsory courses of the PhD program is checked by means of course-related practical examinations. In the case of failing a practical examination the examination and if necessary the course must be repeated.

(4) The PhD students compile their individual course of study in accordance with the curriculum of the responsible PhD Commission in consultation with their supervisors. The time-table is approved by the Supervision Group. The course of study comprises a minimum of 300 hours of seminars and coursework, approximately 50% of which are compulsory (interdisciplinary and project-related courses) and approximately 50% of which are elective courses.

### **§ 6 Supervision**

(1) For each PhD student the PhD Commission responsible appoints a three-man Supervision Group with the following tasks:

1. Mentoring of and individual expert advice for the PhD student during the entire PhD program
2. Evaluation of the PhD student during the course of study by means of inspecting reports and examinations as well as assessment of written final examinations
3. Lending planning support in publishing activities.

(2) The Supervision Group employed by the PhD Commission for the program “Veterinary Research and Animal Biology” comprises a full-time member of the faculty, the respective specialist tutor (supervisor) at the University of Veterinary Medicine, as well as a professionally competent scientist outside the university. The

members of the Supervision Groups must be qualified as a professor or show proof of a comparable scientific qualification.

(3) The Supervision Group employed by the PhD Commission for the program “Systems Neuroscience” comprises the respective specialist tutor (supervisor) of the ZSN, as well as two further members of ZSN which are not allowed to be members of the working group of the supervisor. The members of the Supervision Group must be qualified as a professor or show proof of a comparable scientific qualification.

(4) In case of a joint conferral of a doctorate with a university at home or abroad or with other research institutes which are not involved in the PhD programs of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, the PhD Commission is authorised to reach settlement in individual cases. Concerning the requirements these must not be inferior to this PhD regulation.

(5) In the case of interdisciplinary research projects the PhD Commission can in agreement with the first supervisor appoint a second supervisor who must have a close specialist relationship to the theme of the project. The Commission confirms the intended supervisor for the project and appoints the Supervision Group. Within eight weeks after appointing the Supervision Group the first exchange of information takes place between the student and the Supervision Group.

(6) Within the framework of the research project a defined theme as regards content should be worked on with appropriate methods, so that with realistic chance of success a scientific accrual of knowledge occurs and the achieved results can be published in international journals with a referee system. The supervisor must ensure and the PhD Commission has to state that the student will not be burdened with tasks unrelated to the qualification for a PhD. This does not apply to a combined PhD/Residency-Program.

(7) The supervisors are responsible for funding the research project and should seek financial support of those PhD students assigned to them, if necessary for longer than the three years standard period of study of the PhD program. As far as funding is made available for PhD scholarships, its distribution is determined by the respective PhD Commission.

(8) The PhD students are looked after by their respective supervisors and have an informational meeting with their Supervision Group at least once a year. The Supervision Group appraises the student`s progress and submits a brief report thereto to the PhD Commission once a year.

(9) Should after one year into the study a successful completion of the course of study not be foreseeable due to the student`s previous performance, the Supervision Group can suggest the premature ending of the PhD study course.

(10) If the premature discontinuance of a project is impending for these or other reasons, a mutual meeting between the PhD student, the Supervision Group and a member of the PhD Commission takes place. The PhD Commission responsible decides the further course of action and if necessary exmatriculation of the student.

(11) After a successfully completed study course the supervision ends when the PhD student has passed the PhD examination. The doctorate has to be completed within no more than five years after commencing the PhD course. In well-founded cases the PhD Commission may grant an extension.

## **§ 7** ***Scientific Colloquia***

Once a year the PhD Commission invites the PhD students to participate in a colloquium open to those of the university. The students give either a lecture or a poster presentation about the progress made in their research. The form and content of the presentations are evaluated by the PhD Commission.

## **Section 5:** **Examinations**

### **§ 8** ***Interim Examination***

The oral interim examination generally takes place 18 months after beginning the PhD program. This examination focuses on topics related to the research project as well as the courses attended by the student and is conducted by the Supervision Group. If the student fails the interim examination, a retake is scheduled by the Supervision Group at least three months, but no more than six months later. After failing the interim examination for a second time the exam cannot be re-sat. The Supervision Group informs the PhD Commission responsible of the results of the interim examination. The PhD Commission resolves to exmatriculate the student after failing the interim examination finally.

### **§ 9** ***Prerequisites for admission to the PhD Examination***

(1) Having completed the PhD program, i.e. as a rule after three years, the student has to take the PhD examination administered by the Supervision Group. For admission to the PhD examination the PhD student must provide the following documents:

1. Evidence of regular and successful participation in all courses and seminars as specified in the curriculum, i.e. at least 300 hours of attendance of seminars as well as successful attendance of two colloquia according to § 7;
2. Passing of the interim examination (§ 8);
3. Two submitted publications in recognised scientific journals with peer review; in well-founded cases the PhD Commission may deviate from this rule.
4. A PhD thesis written by the student in German or English on the research project completed during the PhD study course. The thesis contains an introduction, methods, results, discussion and a summary in both German and English. The thesis must contribute considerably to the chosen specialism of the research project.

5. Alternatively, the student may submit a cumulative thesis in German or English if this comprises at least two publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals bearing the name of the student as the first author; works that have been accepted for publication are considered as published. Information must be provided explaining the student's particular contribution to the scientific design, laboratory work, evaluation and scientific writing. These publications must be thematically related; when submitted as a cumulative thesis under a single title they must be supplemented with a comprehensive summary of the research topic and a discussion of the results in German or English.

(2) A separate statement has to be submitted should the Dr. med. Vet. degree (veterinary medicine study course or Dr. rer. Nat. (natural sciences study course) be strived for.

(3) The entering of the field of study in accordance with § 3 (4) on the final examination certificate has to be submitted in writing.

## **§ 10**

### ***Evaluation of the PhD thesis***

(1) Final evaluation of the thesis is the responsibility of the PhD Commission, to which the Supervision Group submits a report. The PhD Commission also requests submission of an external evaluation. All evaluations must be written independently of each other and must contain a final evaluation of the thesis “passed with distinction” (summa cum laude), “passed” or “failed”. If the judgement differs, the Commission can request a second evaluation.

(2) If on the basis of the evaluations the PhD Commission comes to the conclusion that the thesis is not satisfactory because of numerous shortcomings, then the criteria for admission to the final PhD examination will not be met; in this case exmatriculation of the PhD student takes place.

## **§ 11**

### ***Disputation***

(1) The disputation, open to all members of the University, consists of a lecture given by the PhD student on the research project in English. The lecture must last at least 30 minutes and should be followed by a public discussion of at least 15 minutes. For the disputation the PhD Commission extends the Supervision Group to include the external expert of the written PhD examination. All members of the Supervision Group are entitled to vote.

(2) If the student fails the PhD examination, it can be repeated once at a date scheduled by the Supervision Group at least three months, but no more than six months later. A second failure is final. After failing the interim examination for a second time the exam cannot be re-sat. In this case the PhD student is exmatriculated. The PhD Commission is informed of the results of the final examination.

(3) After the disputation the PhD Commission evaluates the overall quality of the thesis and disputation (§ 11) with the mark “passed” or “failed”.

(4) The PhD Commission can award to excellent theses distinction, “summa cum laude” if the thesis has already been published completely, or in part in at least two publications in accordance with § 9 (2), No. 5. Works accepted for publication up to the disputation date also count as published.

(5) The overall evaluation of students striving for the title of Dr.med.vet., according to § 12 (2), or the title of Dr. rer. Nat., according to § 12 (3) will be made in accordance with the regulations for the corresponding doctoral degree of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover.

## **§ 12**

### ***Awarding of the Academic Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)***

(1) When the student has successfully passed the final PhD examination, the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is awarded by the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover. A corresponding certificate according to Appendix 1 and 2 is

issued in German and English. The award allows the student to the academic title of  
PhD.

(2) Veterinary surgeons can upon application on submitting the thesis, elect to be awarded the title of Dr. med. Vet. in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the University of Veterinary Medicine. The corresponding certificate will be issued in accordance with the doctoral regulations.

(3) Graduates who prior to the PhD program have completed a natural science course of study may upon application at the time of submitting the thesis elect to be awarded the title of Dr. rer. Nat. in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover. The corresponding certificate will be issued in accordance with the doctoral regulations. The awarding of the Dr. rer. Nat. requires in addition that in the doctoral procedure one of the examiners comes from a natural science faculty.

## **§ 13**

### ***Duplication of the PhD Thesis***

The student is obliged to submit the written PhD thesis in digital form as a CD as well as to submit five university printed copies made from this CD to the University (<http://elib.tiho-hannover.de/dissertations>). The PhD Commission may require that amendments in content be made before the thesis is copied. Alternatively, five copies printed by the publisher may be submitted instead of the university printed copies.

## **§ 14**

### ***Annulment of Graduation***

The Senate is entitled to declare a graduation invalid if serious mistakes have been made in compliance with the admission requirements for the PhD course of study or in case of fraud committed by the student.

**§ 15**

***Withdrawal of the Academic Degree of PhD***

The PhD degree may be withdrawn by the Senate of the University of Veterinary Medicine in accordance with the current legal regulations.

**§ 16**

***Interim Regulations***

This regulation applies to those students who began their studies after these PhD regulations came into effect. Students who started before that time can choose to study according to the current or previous regulations.

**§17**

***Final Regulations***

(1) Amendments to these regulations require the agreement of both PhD Commissions and the Graduate School of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover.

(2) These regulations approved by the Senate are herewith published today in the "Verkündungsblatt" of the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover and go into effect on the following day.

Appendix 1: Specimen PhD certificate according to § 12 -English version-

(Logo)

**The University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover awards  
Mr/Ms**

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—  
born on \_\_\_\_\_  
in \_\_\_\_\_ -

the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

(summa cum laude) (optional in accordance with § 11 (3))  
in the field of (optional in accordance with § 9, (3))

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after she/he has provided evidence of scientific expertise in the scientific work (thesis)

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as well in a disputation according to the rules of the PhD examination procedure

Hannover, \_\_\_\_\_

(seal)  
President

Appendix 2: Specimen of the PhD certificate according to § 12 -English version –

(Logo)

**The University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover awards**

**Mr/Ms**

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**born** \_\_\_\_\_

**in** \_\_\_\_\_

**the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

Summa cum laude (optional in accordance with § 11, (3))

in the discipline (optional in accordance with § 9, (3))

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He/she has submitted a PhD thesis entitled

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and successfully passed the public disputation.

Hannover \_\_\_\_\_

(seal)

President