

## **ZU | Doctoral Studies: Questions and Answers Regarding the Process**

### ***Who do I have to get in touch with if I'd like to enrol for doctoral studies at ZU?***

There are two options:

1. You can send an enquiry to the Program Directorate. This is where you will receive the Doctoral Studies Regulations, based on which you can perform an initial check of whether or not you meet the formal admission criteria according to Article 5 of the Doctoral Studies Regulations (a final check will be performed upon submission of your application for doctoral studies at ZU). In addition, you will receive information about the next step for you: contacting a potential supervisor for your proposed dissertation.
2. If you are already in contact with a ZU|Supervisor, you may ask them for advice on the area you could perform your doctoral studies in. For process-related questions, you may also contact the Program Directorate.

### ***How much are the tuition fees for doctoral studies at ZU?***

The tuition fees are composed of

- a fee of €1,000, due upon admission and enrolment to doctoral studies;
- a fee of €1,000, payable each semester;
- and a fee of €1,000, due upon completion of the doctoral examination.

Details of fee regulations can be found in the terms and conditions of the Study Contract.

### ***How will I finance my doctoral studies?***

The importance of this question is often underestimated. In any case, you should be able to produce a financial plan for a 3-year period. Expenses are not only made up of tuition fees (see above), but they also include living costs, costs of participating in potential external meetings or conferences, potential research trips, potential data collection and evaluation, publication, etc.

As an external doctoral student, you will largely be funding for yourself. You may wish to take on a part-time job (with your Promoter's consent) or apply for grants. However, grants which are not offered by ZU cannot be used as a basis to claim exemption from fees.

As an internal doctoral student, there are various options for arranging financing in consultation with your Promoter. In a classic scenario, you will be spending 50% of your time working at the chair, where you will also have commitments in research and teaching. You may be working as project staff, be a ZU scholarship holder, or become a certified Research Assistant with interim financing (at least 20 working hours per week!). In each of these cases, you will be exempt from tuition fees provided you submit an application and produce the required evidence. Please note that you should have your financing for 3 years firmly agreed before you submit your application for admission. Further information can be found in the enclosed Financing Guidelines for Doctoral Students at ZU.

### **A. Application for Admission to Doctoral Studies**

*What do I need for the Application for Admission to Doctoral Studies, and where and when will I have to submit it?*

1. The Doctoral Studies Regulations (PromO as of 08.05.2019) containing a list of documents required for the Application for Admission (Article 6 PromO)
2. The Application for Admission to Doctoral Studies form (containing a check list of all documents required for application on the reverse side)
3. A Commitment of Supervision including a rationale for the written qualification provided by your Supervisor (please complete the header of the form, and have the content fields at the bottom of pages 1 and 2 completed and signed by your Supervisor.)

Please also note that you will require an academic character reference for your Application for Admission that is not older than 6 months.

The complete application must be submitted to the Program Directorate at the ZUGS in order to be forwarded to the Doctoral Studies Committee which will notify you of its admission decision (reasons will be provided if the application is rejected).

**Doctoral students who are employed as academic staff at ZU must submit an Application for Admission to Doctoral Studies at the latest when taking up work at ZU. They have to proof admission by the Doctoral Committee within their probation period.**

## **B. Admission to Doctoral Studies**

*I have received Notification of Admission and would like to commence with my doctoral studies. What's next?*

1. You will receive two copies of the Study Contract for Doctoral Studies a few days after the Notification of Admission, signed by the management of the Zeppelin University Graduate School. You will have to sign and return one copy to the Student Service Center. Doctoral students employed as academic staff at ZU as well as ZU|Scholarship Holders must also sign the contract (terms and conditions overleaf).
2. Along with the Study Contract, you will receive the **Guidelines for Good Academic Practice at ZU** for your perusal. These guidelines are fundamental and serve as basis for our conduct in research.
3. **You will be enrolled as a doctoral student once you have returned the Study Contract.** All doctoral students supervised at ZU, including those who are employed as ZU academic staff, must enroll.
4. You must complete and sign the **Supervision Agreement** together with your Supervisor/Promoter or your Co-Promoters (if these have been determined yet) within the two months that follow, and submit it to the ZUGS.
5. The admission fee for doctoral studies in the amount of €1,000 will be payable upon receipt of the Notification of Admission and enrolment. You will also receive a **direct debit authorization** in the corresponding amount which you must return to the Student Service Center along with the other enrolment documents.
6. In duly substantiated exceptional cases, ZU|Management may grant accepted doctoral students exemption from fees. An **Application for Exemption from Fees** to be completed, signed, and submitted to the Program Directorate, can be found here. The Program Directorate will forward that application to ZU|Management.

### **C. Supervision Agreement and Annual Report on the Progress of the Dissertation**

*I have completed the Supervision Agreement together with my Promoters, we have signed it, and I have submitted the Agreement to the coordinating office. What exactly is the supervision process going to be like?*

1. The Doctoral Studies Committee will acknowledge the Supervision Agreement, and the Program Directorate will confirm its receipt.
2. In accordance with Article 10 Paragraph 5 of the Doctoral Studies Regulations, you will be required to submit annually a report on the progress of your research project and doctoral studies, signed by your supervisors. It may be advisable to arrange an appointment for a discussion with your Supervisors several weeks in advance in order to avoid delays in the submission of your annual report.

Both documents are intended to ensure continuous and reliable supervision at ZU. You are not going to be left on your own during your doctoral studies; instead, the two documents intend to guide you through the process, highlight problems early on, and ultimately, provide protection with regard to agreements you reach with your supervisor. Should you experience additional problems you cannot talk about with your supervisor, the ZUGS Program Directorate will offer advice. In cases of academic misconduct, you will have the opportunity to consult the ombudsperson of ZU (contact details: <https://www.zu.de/forschung-themen/profil-projekte/ombudsperson.php>).

### **D. Interim Evaluation**

*What is the interim evaluation all about?*

At an advanced point in time during your doctoral examination procedure, and before your application for the doctoral examination is submitted, the doctoral examination regulations demand an interim evaluation of the doctoral project. Proof of the interim evaluation is necessary when applying for the doctoral examination. Please find a date with your supervisor and co-supervisor (for instance in Friedrichshafen or at the co-supervisor's home university, maybe even in combination with a conference you visit together) and communicate it to ZUGS' program directorate. The interim evaluation consists of a presentation of about 30 minutes. The interim evaluation must be listed in the corresponding annual report (cf. Article 10 Paragraph 6 PromoO).

## E. Doctoral Studies Program

### *How does the doctoral studies program work?*

This doctoral studies program is compiled, organized, and published by the ZUGS|Program Directorate. It contains offers, in particular related to Module 2 of the program, in accordance with Article 9 Paragraph 2 of the Doctoral Studies Regulations (research practice, didactics, theories, methods, PhD SummerSchool). Module 1 consists of scientific events that accompany the PhD student's process of the doctorate (symposia, conventions, conferences, lectures, etc.). Module 3 consists of regular colloquia, which are also organized at the chair, within a research network, or between networks.

As an alternative to the offers of the Doctoral Studies Program, doctoral students at ZU may also attend events outside of ZU. You may have your attendance recognized by the Doctoral Studies Committee as an **alternative achievement to the Doctoral Studies Program** if all the quality criteria required are met. To have your attendance recognized, complete the corresponding request form and have it signed by your supervisor. Submit the request form to the Program Directorate of the ZUGS along with all necessary proof of attendance and prior to your request for admission to the doctoral examination.

## F. Co-Supervisor

### *I didn't have a Co-Supervisor when I submitted my Request for Admission. When will I have to inform the Doctoral Studies Committee of my Co-Supervisor?*

The Doctoral Studies Regulations provide in Article 10 Paragraph 2 that the doctoral student must submit a suggestion of a Co-Supervisor. The suggestion must be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Committee (Program Directorate) "along with their full contact details, and no later than with the first Annual Report on the Progress of the Dissertation" (see C. above). Furthermore, your Co-Supervisor has to conduct your interim evaluation along with your supervisor (see D. above).

For reasons of quality assurance, the Co-Supervisor should be an external person, i.e. they should be from a different university.

## G. Submitting the Dissertation | Request for Admission to the Doctoral Examination

*My dissertation is ready. What will I have to do to submit it?*

1. You can apply for admission to the doctoral examination as soon as the interim evaluation has been conducted, the doctoral program is completed, and finally your dissertation is ready.
2. Please see Sect. 12 Doctoral Studies Regulations for the format of the dissertation. In addition, all primary data must be submitted on a separate CD.
3. **The Request for Admission to the Doctoral Examination consists of**

a) **a minimum of four bound copies of the dissertation as well as a digital version on CD** (Note: The final version to be published may differ from the submitted version if your supervisor or the publishing company request (formal) changes!). Having your dissertation proofread is generally permitted. If the proofreader makes content-related changes, they must be cited.

The following applies to **publications-based dissertations**: For the submission of the dissertation, the status of the review procedure must be verified for all contributions to the thesis. Please read the detailed requirements (e.g. how many papers must already have been accepted/published etc. when submitting your dissertation, etc.) in the relevant subject-specific appendix to the doctoral regulations. Book chapters and conference proceedings cannot be part of a dissertation.

For the Doctoral Studies Committee's perusal, you must therefore include a documentation of the review-process, detailing the status of your communication with the reviewers of your chosen journal publishers in the form of a copy-paste document with your Request for Admission to the Doctoral Examination. This documentation of the review process can also be supplemented by a note stating that individual submissions and/or synopses have been reviewed.

b) **a personally signed declaration**, in which the doctoral student declares that he/she has produced the dissertation without the unauthorized help of a third party, etc. (cf. Article 11 Paragraph 2b PromoO). Please also include this declaration in the four test copies.

c) **an informal request for changing the form of the dissertation**, (e.g. from monography to publication-based) signed off by the Promoter;

d) **evidence of additional study and examination achievements** to be provided, which have been defined upon admission to doctoral studies, **evidence of full completion of the Doctoral Studies Program including alternative achievements**

(see E. above), and **evidence of the conducted interim evaluation** (see D. above)

e) **proof of participation in a preventative plagiarism check for the dissertation.**

This check must be performed before submitting the request. Therefore, please allow at least two weeks for the full plagiarism check to be completed before you can submit your request. The ZUGS performs plagiarism control for you. Once the check has been completed, you will receive a corresponding confirmation and the plagiarism report. These documents are part of the request.

f) **suggestions for further external examiners**, e.g. if you are planning to submit a publications-based dissertation.

4. Your completed request must be submitted **two weeks before the next meeting of the Doctoral Studies Committee the latest**. The dates of the next meeting of the committee can be found on the intranet System One.
5. The Program Directorate will check your request for **completeness**. If your application is complete, your request will be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the Doctoral Committee.
6. Once the Committee has agreed to grant you admission to the doctoral examination, you will receive a **Notification of Admission to the Doctoral Examination**. This will also include a note on the form of your dissertation and the appointed examiners.
7. The Program Directorate will contact the examiners, set a deadline for the completion of their appraisal, and send each of them a copy of your dissertation for assessment.
8. The examiners will be given three (3) months to assess your dissertation (see Article 13 Paragraph 4 PromO). Each appraisal must include a recommendation for acceptance or rejection of the dissertation, as well as a grade (in accordance with Article 15 Paragraphs 1 and 2 PromO). The appraisals must be addressed to the Program Directorate at the ZUGS.

## **H. Public Inspection of the Dissertation**

*According to my Supervisor, the appraisals have been received. What are the procedures for public inspection?*

1. Once all appraisals have been received, the Study and Examination Center will put the dissertation on display for public inspection for a period of two weeks, or for six weeks during semester breaks. The SEC will notify all members of post-doctoral academic staff at ZU of the inspection deadline via e-mail (Article 15 Paragraph 3 PromO). During this period, those who have been notified have

the right to submit or announce position statements on the dissertation to the Legal Advisor. All position statements must have been received no later than one week after the inspection deadline.

2. After the inspection period (max. three weeks = two weeks for inspection + one week waiting period for announced position statements, if applicable), the acceptance of the dissertation will be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the Doctoral Studies Committee. The current dates are available here. If a dissertation is submitted during the long summer break, the ZUGS Program Directorate will ask the Doctoral Studies Committee to reach a decision on the acceptance and the grade of the dissertation in a circulation process.

## I. Acceptance and Grading of the Dissertation

### *How will the grade of the dissertation be determined?*

1. In its next meeting, the Doctoral Studies Committee will reach agreements on the following:
  - a) **acceptance of the dissertation** (= no examiner has rejected it, and no rejecting position statements have been received from members of post-doctoral academic staff; otherwise, Article 15 Paragraph 6 PromO will apply), and
  - b) **the grade of the dissertation**. The individual grades of the examiners and the grading of the dissertation as a whole will be determined in accordance with Article 15 PromO.

#### **The individual grades of the appraisals can be:**

summa cum laude (distinction) = 1  
magna cum laude (excellent) = 1.3 or 1.7 or 2.0  
cum laude (good) = 2.3 or 2.7 or 3.0  
rite (pass) = 3.3 or 3.7 or 4.0  
non rite (fail) = 4.3 or lower

**The grade of the dissertation as a whole is** determined by computing the arithmetic mean of the individual grades assigned by all experts involved, and rounded to two decimal places. It can be:

summa cum laude (distinction) = 1.00  
magna cum laude (excellent) = above 1.00 and up to 2.00  
cum laude (good) = above 2.00 and up to 3.00  
rite (pass) = above 3.00 and up to 4.00  
non rite (fail) = above 4.00

2. The doctoral student will receive a **notification of the decision of the Doctoral Studies Committee on the grade**, which may include information of further appraisals that may be required (see I. below).
3. If no further appraisals are required (see I. below), the Doctoral Studies Committee will appoint the Doctoral Studies Board directly after the dissertation has been graded in order for the defense of the doctor's thesis to be conducted as soon as possible.

## **J. Additional Examiners**

*In which cases will appraisals from additional examiners be requested for a dissertation?*

Appraisals from additional examiners will be requested in **a number of cases:**

- a) **If your Co-Promoter is employed by Zeppelin University or by a school without the right to confer doctoral titles (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften)**, the Doctoral Studies Committee will appoint a third, external examiner based on your suggestion (Article 13 Paragraph 2 PromO).
- b) **In the case of a publications-based dissertation with a co-authorship**, the Doctoral Studies Committee will appoint a third, internal respectively external examiner (Article 14 Paragraph 4 PromO). It is not allowed that both reviewers are also co-authors.
- c) The Doctoral Studies Committee will appoint an additional examiner if **the individual grades from the examiners differ by more than 1.0.**
- d) **If the grade suggested for the dissertation by both examiners is "summa cum laude"**, the Doctoral Studies Committee will appoint an additional examiner unless the paper is a publications-based dissertation (Article 15 Paragraph 4 Number 2 PromO) with already three examiners.
- e) **If the dissertation has been rejected by one of the examiners, or in the event of a rejecting position statement from a member of post-doctoral academic staff**, the Doctoral Studies Committee may appoint up to two additional examiners (Article 15 Paragraph 6 PromO).

In each case, you will receive a **notification from the Doctoral Studies Committee** regarding the next steps and the additional examiners appointed. As a rule, this information will be included in the notification of the grading of the dissertation (see I. above).

### **K. Doctoral Commission Holding the Defense**

The **Doctoral Commission is appointed by the Doctoral Studies Committee**. You may submit suggestions of board members.

In accordance with Article 17 Paragraphs 1-3 PromO, the Doctoral Commission consists of your Supervisor and Co-Supervisor, a member of the Doctoral Studies Committee, as well as a professor from your department who will act as an observer. Minutes will be taken by the Program Director of the ZUGS or a third year doctoral candidate. He or she is neither entitled to ask questions nor to act as an examiner.

### **L. Organization and Timing of the Thesis' Defense**

*How can I complete my defense as soon as possible, and by when will I have to complete it?*

1. A defense of the dissertation thesis is most likely to take place without delay if no additional examiners are appointed (see I. above).
2. We advise you to speak to your supervisors as soon as possible, and to **find a potential date together**. Inform the Program Directorate of that date so that it can be considered in the committee meeting in which the Doctoral Commission is appointed.
3. As soon as the display period for the dissertation has ended and the Doctoral Committee has confirmed final acceptance as well as the grade of the dissertation, the date for the defense of the dissertation can be planned and communicated. The ZUGS Program Directorate will extend a public invitation to the academia, arrange the booking of the rooms, the catering for the candidate and the board members, as well as the reimbursement of the external supervisor's travelling expenses (guidelines: see below. Hotel room to be booked upon request).
4. Please state all **auxiliary tools you require** for your presentation once the date for the defense has been set.
5. Your defense should have to take place **within four months following the submission of the last thesis review at the latest** (Article 17 Paragraph 1 PromO).

## **M. Defense of the Doctor's Thesis**

### *What exactly is a defense like?*

1. When preparing for your defense, please note that it **should not exceed 90 minutes**, and that your **presentation in particular should not be longer than 30 minutes** (Article 17 Paragraph 4 PromO).
2. **Only the members of the Doctoral Commission** will be allowed to ask you questions. All other guests must listen in.
3. The session will be opened by the Chairman of the Commission. Then you will give your presentation (in public), which will be followed by a discussion and questions on the content and the wider scientific context and field of your dissertation topic (without any attending guests). The Program Director will take minutes of your defense. The Chairman will ensure adherence to the time limits (but preferably you should prepare your presentation accordingly in advance).
4. At the end of the process, you will leave the room in order for the Board to discuss the grade of your defense. This discussion will be held in camera and without the presence of the doctoral student.
5. The Chairman of the Doctoral Studies Board will then summon you back into the room where the Board will inform you of your grade for the defense.

## **N. Overall Result of Your Doctoral Studies**

### *How will I eventually be informed of the overall result of my doctoral studies?*

1. Following the defense of the doctor's thesis, the Doctoral Studies Board must determine the overall result of your doctoral studies based on your grades for the dissertation (80%) and the defense (20%).
2. **You will be notified of the overall result of your doctoral studies by post as soon as possible.** Therefore, please do make sure to inform the Program Directorate of any changes of address. The notification also contains the transcript of records of the doctoral program as well as the permission of using the provisional title "Dr. des.".

## O. Using the Title

### *When can I call myself "Dr"?*

You may only use your title once your dissertation has been published and you have received your doctoral degree certificate (Article 22 PromO). Whether you will be allowed to carry your title shortly after your defense will depend on the type of publication you choose (see P. below).

In the meantime, and according to the notification of the overall result of your doctoral studies, you are allowed to use the provisional title "Dr. des.".

## P. Publication of the Dissertation

### *How long will it take for my dissertation to be published?*

1. The most important prerequisite for publication is the **Request for Permission to Print the Dissertation**. This must be completed **before you will be granted permission to publish your dissertation**, submitted to and signed by your Promoter, and handed in to the Program Directorate. Only then will you be allowed to start printing or conclude a publishing contract.
2. The duration of your publication will depend on the type of publication you choose (Article 23 PromO).  
A **publishing contract** (Article 23 Paragraph 3 Letter a)) can therefore be concluded immediately after your dissertation has been accepted and graded, for example, if you have had your manuscript checked beforehand by a publishing house of your choice for whether they would be interested in printing it. If the publishing house agrees, please note the following: Your duty to publish your dissertation in accordance with the PromO is not fulfilled by simply transmitting a reproducible text to the publishing house. This does not count as "**ready to print**". You will have to have your dissertation formatted as specified by the publishing house before it can be considered as "ready to print", and the publishing house must have issued a binding confirmation to this effect and of the fact that printing will take place within one year. Unless the above has been confirmed, your duty to publish will not be considered as fulfilled.
3. If you opt for publishing **30** compulsory copies as well as a digital version (Article 23 Paragraph 3 Letter d) or for adding your thesis to ZU's **Institutional Repository** (Article 23 Paragraph 3 Letter e) the timeline of your publication will be completely flexible.

As an alternative to publication by a publisher house, both monographs and

publication-based dissertations (secondary publication! Mind license agreements of journal publishers!) can be uploaded in the form of a pdf file to **the Institutional Repository** of Zeppelin University. In addition, you must deliver 3 printed copies of the complete dissertation free of charge to the Zeppelin University Library for archiving purposes (Article 23, Paragraph 3 lit.e PromO).

Furthermore, publication by submitting **40 mandatory copies** and a digital version is possible (article 23 paragraph 3 lit. d, so-called **self-publishing**).

**Please note:** Either way, uploading your thesis to the IR or self-publishing, **requires that you complete a declaration of consent to the library of Zeppelin University and assure that copyright and licensing issues do not conflict with the publication and third party rights (e. g. of magazine publishers, co-authors) are not being violated by publishing your dissertation this way.**

If problems should arise in the publication process, it is in any case important that you submit a **Request for Extension of the Duty to Publish to the Doctoral Studies Committee** in order to ensure that you will not lose the rights you have acquired (Article 23 Paragraph 1 Sentence 2).

## **Q. Graduation Ceremony**

*What is the Graduation Ceremony like and do I have to attend?*

ZU would like to award you the doctoral certificate during a **graduation ceremony** for which you and your family/friends will receive an invitation containing all necessary information regarding its time and place.

You will be handed over your doctoral certificate in a university-wide ceremony context.

If you are unable or do not want to attend your graduation ceremony at Lake Constance, the Program Directorate will be pleased to send you the document **by post**.

## **R. Removal from the Student Register**

*What will I have to do to have my name removed from the student register?*

To have your name removed from the student register, you will have to submit the corresponding application form to the ZUGS. We will forward your application to the Student Service Center.

Please note that, as a rule, **your contract as a member of academic staff at ZU will also end** with the removal of your name from the student register of the Graduate School. Only your student email-address will be active afterwards.