

DOCTORAL REGULATIONS
OF THE FACULTY OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY (FB 02)
of the University of Münster

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On the basis of § 2 (4) and § 67 of the Higher Education Act of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia [*Hochschulgesetz – HG*] as amended by the Act on the Future of Higher Education [*Hochschulzukunftsgesetz – HZG NRW*] of 16 September 2014 (GV. NRW. 2014, p. 547), as amended most recently by Article 2 of the Act of 19 December 2024 (GV. NRW. p. 1222), the University of Münster has issued the following Doctoral Regulations (*Promotionsordnung*):

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I. General Information

§ 1 Doctoral Degree

The Faculty of Catholic Theology (FB 02) of the University of Münster confers the academic degree “Doctor of Philosophy” (PhD) in accordance with the following Doctoral Regulations. This title can be obtained with the following specifications:

PhD in

- Biblical Studies
- Early Christianity
- History of Christianity
- Philosophy of Religion
- Mission Studies/Intercultural Theology
- Ecumenical Studies
- Theological Ethics
- Systematic Theology
- Eastern Christianity Studies
- Practical Theology
- Canon Law
- Christianity and Culture
- Religious Studies.

§ 2 Goals of the Doctoral Degree and Structure of the Doctoral Programme

- (1) The conferral of the doctoral degree (PhD) demonstrates that the candidate has attained competence in independent research from one of the specification areas referred to in § 1 beyond the general academic objective of obtaining a professional qualification. This competence and a significant increase in subject-specific knowledge are substantiated by an academically significant written thesis – the doctoral thesis (*Dissertation*) – and a doctoral defence (*Defensio*). The PhD is a non-canonical academic degree without ecclesiastical recognition.
- (2) Candidates are required to complete the doctoral thesis and degree-relevant examinations (*Prüfungsleistungen*) as part of a doctoral programme. The programme consists of two phases: the supervised qualification phase, during which the candidate writes the doctoral thesis, and the examination phase. The doctoral programme begins with the applicant’s admission to the qualification phase; the examination procedure begins with the candidate’s admission to the examination phase.

II. Qualification Phase within the Doctoral Programme

§ 3

Admission to the Qualification Phase

- (1) Admission to the qualification phase is granted to applicants who have completed a relevant degree programme at a German state or state-approved institution of tertiary education and who provide evidence of having completed an undergraduate or consecutive programme in a subject that is fundamental to the doctoral thesis and the chosen specialisation at a state or state-approved higher educational establishment in Germany or abroad with a general standard duration of study of no less than eight semesters, for which a degree other than a bachelor's degree is awarded.
- (2) With regard to § 3 (1), the faculty board (*Fachbereichsrat*) shall decide in cases of doubt whether the programme completed has adequately prepared the applicant for the doctoral programme and whether the applicant has the aptitude for doctoral studies.
- (3) In the case of foreign degree programmes and degrees taken at foreign state or state-approved higher education institutions, § 3 (1) applies accordingly, provided that there is no substantial difference in the competencies gained. At the applicant's request, the head of faculty (*Dekan*in*) will review the relevant supporting documents and decide on recognition of qualifications and credits. Any equivalence agreements approved by the competent bodies in the Federal Republic of Germany must be observed. In case of doubt, the Central Office for Foreign Education (*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen – ZAB*) is to be consulted. If the Central Office for Foreign Education has expressed doubts as to the absence of substantial differences, the applicant may additionally be asked to prove their aptitude in a single subject-related examination in accordance with examination regulations of the Faculty of Catholic Theology prior to recognition.
- (4) Proof of the necessary knowledge of the respective source language must be provided for admission to the doctoral programme, in consultation with the Doctoral Thesis Board (*Dissertation Board*). This proof may also be provided as part of the Comprehensive Examination (§ 7 (2)). The Doctoral Thesis Board's decision on the necessity of language skills and proof thereof must be attached to the supervision agreement (*Betreuungsvereinbarung*) (§ 4 (5) (5)).

§ 4

Doctoral Thesis Supervision

- (1) The doctoral thesis is written in the context of a supervisory relationship and under the supervision of a Doctoral Thesis Board consisting of at least three members of the academic teaching staff. One member of the Doctoral Thesis Board acts as the principal supervisor (*Hauptbetreuer*in*) of the thesis. The candidate chooses the principal supervisor and the other members of the Doctoral Thesis Board upon mutual agreement based on the relevance of their area of expertise.
- (2) The principal supervisor must belong to the group of full-time professors or associate professors (*Juniorprofessor*innen*) of the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster.
- (3) The Doctoral Thesis Board members must be full-time professors or associate professors or adjunct professors, professors emeriti, honorary professors or senior lecturers (*Hochschul-/Privatdozent*innen*) of the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster or professors, senior lecturers or associate professors belonging to another academic institution. The faculty board determines the equivalence of international professional titles.
- (4) At least one Doctoral Thesis Board member must belong to another academic institution in Germany or abroad.

- (5) Prior to admission to the qualification phase, i.e. at the latest when the candidate registers their thesis with the faculty board in accordance with § 6, a written supervision agreement between the doctoral student and their supervisors concerning the supervision of the doctoral thesis must be concluded and signed by all parties. All parties receive a copy of the signed supervision agreement.

The supervision agreement contains the following information:

1. the candidate's name
 2. the specification in which the doctoral thesis is to be written
 3. the provisional working title of the planned doctoral thesis
 4. the names of the proposed supervisors, stating the designated principal supervisor and the other Doctoral Thesis Board members, a statement expressing their willingness to supervise the candidate, and an agreement between the applicant and the proposed supervisors to enter into the planned supervisory relationship
 5. the Doctoral Thesis Board's decision on the necessary language skills (§ 3 (4))
 6. a work plan and schedule for the doctoral thesis
 7. in the event of a doctorate by publication, an ongoing list of the publications that are to form the basis of the doctorate by publication, including the thematic focus and the planned place of publication
 8. a project outline of the doctoral thesis of ca. 7,000 to 14,000 characters (including spaces) in length, describing the state of research on the chosen topic, the research question and the methodological implementation of the doctoral thesis.
- (6) If the other members of the academic teaching staff required for the Doctoral Thesis Board have not yet been determined by the time the supervision agreement is concluded, the candidate may, in justified cases, communicate the proposed members belatedly to the faculty board (§ 6) within one year of registering the doctoral thesis. If the candidate fails to do so, or fails to do so fully, in the time allotted, the head of faculty will allocate up to two Doctoral Thesis Board members to the candidate.
- (7) The principal supervisor must be available for at least one personal consultation session with the doctoral student per semester. This meeting may not be substituted by a presentation in an advanced research seminar (*Oberseminar*) or colloquium for doctoral students. The results of these meetings are to be briefly summarised in writing. These minutes are then signed by the supervisor and doctoral student and given to the doctoral student. In the event of a dispute or arbitration (see § 4 (10)), they must be able to produce the minutes.
- (8) The doctoral student must submit a written report to the Doctoral Thesis Board at least once a year, describing the status and progress of the doctoral thesis. The doctoral student presents the progress of their doctoral thesis to the Doctoral Thesis Board in a meeting organised by the principal supervisor. This consultation meeting may take place digitally. The principal supervisor documents the doctoral student's reports in an appropriate manner and, if necessary, reminds them of their reporting obligations.
- (9) In addition, consultation meetings with individual board members can be arranged at any time.
- (10) If a member of the Doctoral Thesis Board leaves the board, the head of faculty will seek a replacement in consultation with the doctoral student, subject to the agreement of the other board members. The resignation of a member and the subsequent appointment are announced to the faculty board.
- (11) The supervisory relationship may be terminated by mutual agreement prior to the submission of the doctoral thesis, with the reasons being stated in writing. In the event of a serious breach

of the supervisory relationship by either party (including failure by the supervisors to comply with the supervision obligations or failure by the doctoral student to comply with the reporting obligations), the head of faculty or a representative delegated by them may be called upon to arbitrate between the parties or to terminate the supervisory relationship. The head of faculty, or their designated representative, may appoint a two-person arbitration committee consisting of a professor from the faculty (*Fakultät*) and a representative of the non-professorial academic staff (*Mittelbau*). The head of faculty must be notified of any decision to terminate the supervisory relationship.

§ 5

Doctoral Procedure in Cooperation with another University in Germany or Abroad with the Right to Award Doctoral Degrees

- (1) The Faculty of Catholic Theology can also confer the title “PhD” in cooperation with another university with the right to award doctoral degrees.
- (2) To this end, the University of Münster and the other university must conclude an agreement setting out the details of the procedure and their cooperation, as well as the language in which the doctoral thesis is to be written and the doctoral defence conducted.
- (3) The agreement must stipulate that the University of Münster is represented at least equally in the procedure (e.g. in the composition of the examination committee) and that all applicable formal regulations of both universities are taken into account. Different arrangements can be made regarding the practical implementation (e.g. the number of supervisors or examination committee members) than those set out in these Doctoral Regulations, provided that the essence of these Doctoral Regulations remains unchanged.
- (4) The doctoral student must be enrolled at the University of Münster for the entire duration of the doctoral degree. They should spend roughly the same amount of time at both the University of Münster and the other university, with a minimum of one year at each.

§ 6

Registering the Doctoral Thesis

- (1) Upon registration of the doctoral thesis and subsequent confirmation of registration by the faculty board, the doctoral student is admitted to the qualification phase and a doctoral file (*Promotionsakte*) is created for them.
- (2) In order to register their doctoral thesis, the doctoral student must, in agreement with their principal supervisor, submit the necessary documents to the head of faculty. The following documents are to be submitted with the registration application:
 1. the declaration of thesis registration containing the personal details of the doctoral student, the names of the supervisors and the working title of the doctoral thesis
 2. the supervision agreement in accordance with § 4 (5)
 3. a letter of recommendation by the principal supervisor.
- (3) The registration is placed in the candidate’s doctoral file, which is created at the time of the candidate’s thesis registration to the faculty board.

§ 7

Workload and Required Coursework of the Qualification Phase

- (1) The doctoral programme normally takes six semesters to complete. According to § 67 (5) of the Higher Education Act [*Hochschulgesetz* – HG], all doctoral students must be enrolled at the University for the duration of their doctoral studies. Doctoral studies begin with the conclusion of the supervision agreement and end at the end of the semester in which the last degree-relevant examination is completed. Periods of study and coursework or examinations completed at other universities as part of the doctoral programme (see § 5) may be recognised after review by the head of faculty.
- (2) In the qualification phase of the doctoral programme, the doctoral student is required to:
 1. write a doctoral thesis
 2. take a 45-minute, graded oral examination (Comprehensive Examination), which covers the fundamental aspects of the chosen specification. The required language skills may also be assessed as part of this examination (§ 3 (4)). The examination is administered by the principal supervisor and another member of the Doctoral Thesis Board. The content of the examination is to be agreed upon by the principal supervisor and the doctoral student, with the involvement of the Doctoral Thesis Board, and recorded in the supervision agreement. As a rule, the examination is taken in the course of the first two semesters. If a doctoral student does not pass the Comprehensive Examination on their first attempt, they may retake it once within 14 days.
 3. participate in the colloquia for doctoral students or advanced research seminars on the specification area of the doctoral thesis. The principal supervisor must confirm in the course record book that the doctoral student has participated in six colloquia/advanced research seminars in total.
 4. complete two pieces of required coursework (*Studienleistungen*) from the catalogue (see Appendix to the Doctoral Regulations).
- (3) Candidates are required to submit certificates for all required coursework completed during the doctoral programme, for inclusion in the doctoral file.
- (4) In the case of a doctorate by publication (see § 8 (3) (2)), manuscripts of essays can only be submitted from the qualification phase onwards.

§ 8

Form of the Doctoral Thesis

- (1) The doctoral thesis to be written during the qualification phase must address a topic from one of the specification areas referred to in § 1. This topic must be related to at least one of the subjects taught at the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster.
- (2) The doctoral thesis must address a topic from one of the specification areas referred to in § 1 on the basis of an in-depth knowledge of its sources and literature, so that the doctoral thesis meets academic standards and serves to advance scholarship.
- (3) The doctoral thesis may be written as an independent scholarly work (monograph) or in the form of several individual, substantively related scholarly papers (publication-based):
 1. In the event of a monograph, the following requirements must be met:
 - a) The text of the doctoral thesis should, as a rule, not exceed 540,000 characters, including spaces. Exceptions can be made, upon request, by the head of faculty (particularly in cases of text editions, empirical research etc.) after hearing the Doctoral Thesis Board and the doctoral student.

- b) An academic work cannot be recognised as a doctoral thesis fulfilling the requirements for conferral of a PhD degree if it has already been published in substantial part or in its entirety. The faculty board is responsible for deciding on exceptions, upon request.
2. In the event of a publication-based (or cumulative) doctorate, the following requirements must be met:
- a) The doctorate by publication must consist of several specialist scholarly articles that have been published or demonstrably accepted for publication (see § 8 (2) (c) (ii)), as well as a separate framework text, which together are equivalent to a doctoral thesis within the meaning of § 8 (2).
 - b) The separate framework text should be at least 9,000 words long and consist of a theoretical framework, a methodological reflection and a discussion presenting the key innovations and conclusions and their significance for the discipline or sub-discipline. It must be written in sole authorship.
 - c) A doctorate by publication requires at least three separate but thematically related scholarly publications. The following rules apply to these publications:
 - i. At least two of the publications must be in recognised academic journals with a peer review process (double-blind peer review). A maximum of one publication may be a different type of publication (e.g. a book chapter). At least two of the publications must be in sole authorship.
 - ii. A declaration outlining the doctoral student's own substantive contribution to the publication must be provided for each publication. The declaration in accordance with sentence 1 must include the names, addresses, email addresses and signatures of the co-authors, in addition to their confirmation of the share of the work.
 - d) The publications intended to form the basis of the doctorate by publication are recorded in the supervision agreement on an ongoing basis (see § 4 (5)), along with the thematic focus and planned place of publication.
 - e) When a doctorate by publication is assessed, the panel of supervisors is named in the thesis. The assessment may not be carried out by any of the co-authors. If one of the supervisors of the doctoral thesis is also a co-author of one or more of the publications submitted as part of the doctorate by publication, they may not assess the doctoral thesis.
 - f) Papers can only be accepted if they were completed after the start of the qualification phase, and they must at least have been accepted for publication by the time of the examination phase.
- (4) The doctoral thesis must be written in either German or English, upon consultation with the Doctoral Thesis Board. The use of another language requires the approval of the head of faculty. In the event of a doctorate by publication, there may be a combination of German-language and English-language papers.
- (5) If the doctoral thesis is written (or partly written) in a language other than German, the doctoral student must include a table of contents and a summary (10,000-20,000 characters) in German.
- (6) If the doctoral thesis is based on research results obtained in collaboration with other doctoral students, each doctoral student must have written their contribution themselves and is responsible for the content. The individual contributions must be clearly identifiable and equivalent in quality to the content of a standard doctoral thesis.

III. Examination Phase

§ 9

Admission to the Examination Procedure

- (1) Admission to the examination procedure is contingent on the successful completion of the qualification phase of the doctoral programme in accordance with § 7.
- (2) The doctoral student must submit the written application for admission to the examination procedure to the head of faculty. The application must include the following documents:
 1. the doctoral student's personal details including address
 2. information on whether it is a monographic or publication-based doctoral thesis
 3. the written thesis (doctoral thesis) as required in § 2 (1) in triplicate (typed, bound and paginated), as well as an electronic version of the doctoral thesis, saved in a standard data format on a standard data carrier
 4. in the event of a doctorate by publication, a confirmation from the scholarly publication organ that the individual papers have been published or accepted for publication in accordance with § 8 (3) (2) (c)
 5. certificates of completion of the doctoral programme as stipulated in § 7 (2) and (3)
 6. the language certificates required under § 3 (4), where applicable
 7. a curriculum vitae (CV) in tabular form with an overview of the doctoral student's academic background
 8. a declaration in lieu of an oath, signed by the candidate, to the effect that the doctoral thesis submitted was – with the exception of the explicitly mentioned aids – personally and independently written by the candidate, without the use of any aids other than those explicitly cited and without the use of any unauthorised outside help (in particular, paid assistance from third parties)
 9. a written declaration
 - to the effect that any data and concepts taken directly or indirectly from other sources have been duly indicated with proper citation
 - that the doctoral thesis submitted, or any similar research work, has not been previously submitted as a doctoral thesis elsewhere
 - that the doctoral thesis, in the event of a monographic thesis, has not been previously published or is not in the process of being published in substantial part or in its entirety
 - that the individual papers, in the event of a doctorate by publication, have been published or accepted for publication by scholarly publication organs following a double-blind peer review
 - in which the doctoral student provides information about any previous attempts to obtain a doctorate and the corresponding results.
- (3) The doctoral thesis may be stored in a database for plagiarism checking purposes and a comparison with other texts to identify any plagiarised passages. The doctoral student must attach a written declaration to the doctoral thesis stating that they are aware of this fact.
- (4) The decision to admit the candidate to the examination procedure is made by the head of faculty.
- (5) Admission is to be denied if the candidate fails to submit all the documents listed in § 9 (2) (1) to (9) and, having been requested to submit the missing documents within a specified period of

time, fails to do so within that period.

- (6) Admission is also to be denied:
1. if the candidate has already submitted this or a similar thesis for consideration as a doctoral thesis (Dr theol/Dr phil/PhD) at another institution
 2. or, in the event of a monographic doctoral thesis, if the thesis has already been published in substantial part or in its entirety as referred to in § 8 (3) (1) (b) and no exception was granted in accordance with § 8 (3) (1) (b)
 3. or if the candidate has already definitively failed in a doctoral procedure (*Promotionsverfahren*) in the subject of Catholic theology (Dr theol/Dr phil/PhD) at a German university.
- (7) The doctoral student has the right to withdraw their application once at any time before the final assessment of the doctoral thesis by the faculty board.
- (8) The head of faculty is to notify the doctoral student in writing of the outcome of the admission procedure. If admission is refused, the notification must state the reasons for the refusal and provide information on the legal remedies available.

§ 10a

Assessment of the Doctoral Thesis

- (1) The head of faculty appoints two members of the academic teaching staff who meet the requirements set out in § 4 (2), (3) and (4) to assess the doctoral thesis, taking into account the doctoral student's wishes. One of them must be a full-time professor from the group of persons referred to in § 4 (2). The second assessor must belong to the group of persons referred to in § 4 (2) and (3), and may not be a member of the board. If, in the event of a doctorate by publication, one or more of the submitted articles were co-authored, none of the co-authors may be appointed as assessor (*Gutachter*in*).
- (2) If the doctoral procedure is conducted jointly with an external university or one of its faculties, the provisions in § 5 apply accordingly.
- (3) After the doctoral thesis has been assigned for assessment, the assessors must submit an assessment (*Gutachten*) to the head of faculty within four months stating whether the thesis is to be accepted or rejected. If the assessors recommend acceptance, they must simultaneously propose a grade. The doctoral thesis is to be awarded one of the following grades:
 - 1 = "*sehr gut*" / "*summa cum laude*" (excellent) = an excellent achievement
 - 2 = "*gut*" / "*magna cum laude*" (good) = a significantly above-average achievement
 - 3 = "*befriedigend*" / "*cum laude*" (satisfactory) = an average achievement
 - 4 = "*ausreichend*" / "*rite*" (pass) = an adequate achievement despite shortcomings
 - 5 = "*nicht ausreichend*" / "*insufficenter*" (fail) = an inadequate achievement due to serious shortcomings.
- (4) If the grades proposed in the first and second assessors' assessment differ by two grades, the head of faculty will request a third assessment to be drawn up.
- (5) Following written notification, the doctoral thesis and the assessments are made available to the professors of the faculty, the postdoctoral members of the faculty board, the members of the doctoral committee (*Promotionskommission*) and the candidate pursuing the PhD degree for review in the Faculty Office (*Dekanat*) for three weeks prior to the faculty board meeting at which the decision is made whether to accept the doctoral thesis and the recommended grade.
- (6) The candidate may appeal against the assessments to the head of faculty within one week of the

assessments being made available for review.

- (7) The head of faculty instructs the doctoral committee to propose a grade to serve as the basis for the faculty board's decision. Duly considering the assessments and the recommendation by the doctoral committee, the faculty board decides whether to accept the doctoral thesis and determines the overall grade in accordance with § 10a (3). All postdoctoral members of the faculty board are entitled to vote.
- (8) If the faculty board does not award the doctoral thesis a grade of at least "*rite*" / "*ausreichend*" (pass, 4.0), the doctoral thesis has been rejected. The examination procedure is therefore considered to have been unsuccessful overall and is terminated.
- (9) The head of faculty must inform the candidate in writing as to whether the doctoral thesis has been accepted or rejected and, if it has been accepted, what grade it has received, as soon as the faculty board has decided on the grade.
- (10) A copy of the doctoral thesis submitted for assessment, together with the assessments, remains in the doctoral file until the thesis is published. The doctoral file must be archived in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- (11) If a doctoral thesis is rejected, the candidate may reregister for the examination procedure once with a revised version of the doctoral thesis, but not before one year has elapsed.

§ 10b

Doctoral Committee

- (1) The doctoral committee discusses the doctoral thesis on the basis of its knowledge of the thesis and the assessments and informs the faculty board of its proposed grade.
- (2) The doctoral committee is composed of:
 1. four professors, one of whom is the chair, as permanent members;
 2. the two assessors of the doctoral thesis as invited members;
 3. the principal supervisor, if not selected as an assessor, and the other members of the Doctoral Thesis Board as invited members;
 4. two postdoctoral members of the non-professorial academic staff of the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster as permanent members. If the non-professorial academic staff does not have two postdoctoral members, one postdoctoral member will suffice to represent them. If there are no postdoctoral members among the non-professorial academic staff, two members of the non-professorial academic staff without doctorates are to be appointed to the doctoral committee as non-voting members.
- (3) Only permanent members of the committee are entitled to vote. If one of the assessors is also a permanent member of the doctoral committee, they are not entitled to vote on matters relating to the doctoral thesis in question.
- (4) The doctoral defence (see § 12) also takes place before the doctoral committee.

§ 11

Admission to the Doctoral Defence

The candidate may only be admitted to the doctoral defence if the doctoral thesis has been accepted in accordance with § 9 (9).

§ 12

Defence of the Doctoral Thesis

- (1) In the defence of the doctoral thesis (*Defensio*), the candidate demonstrates their ability to present orally the results of the thesis on the basis of previously submitted written hypotheses and to defend these in public discussion.
- (2) The candidate is expected to:
 1. precisely present the results of the doctoral thesis
 2. contextualise these subject-specific findings within the chosen specialisation.
- (3) The execution of the doctoral defence:
 1. The prerequisite for the doctoral defence is the acceptance of the doctoral thesis in accordance with § 9 (9). Once the thesis has been accepted, the faculty board, on the recommendation of the doctoral committee, sets a date for the doctoral defence. The doctoral defence must be held within six months of the faculty board's acceptance of the doctoral thesis and determination of its grade, but no earlier than two weeks thereafter. Once the thesis has been accepted and graded by the faculty board, the candidate must submit to the head of faculty the hypotheses for the doctoral defence in accordance with § 12 (1) at least one week before the date set for the doctoral defence. The faculty board must notify the candidate of the date of the doctoral defence as soon as the grade for the thesis has been determined.
 2. The candidate presents the doctoral defence to the doctoral committee in accordance with § 10b (3). All members present are entitled to ask questions. The doctoral committee, including the assessors of the doctoral thesis, is responsible for holding and grading the doctoral defence.
 3. The doctoral defence is open to the University community. Listeners may be admitted if space permits. This does not apply to the discussion of the examination result and its announcement to the candidate.
- (4) The doctoral defence consists of:
 1. a twenty-minute presentation in which the candidate elaborates on the results and findings of the doctoral thesis on the basis of the previously submitted hypotheses, and
 2. a forty-minute discussion in which the candidate responds to academic questions and comments directly related to the topic of the doctoral thesis.
- (5) The chair of the doctoral committee is responsible for moderating the discussion part of the doctoral defence.
- (6) As a rule, the doctoral defence is held in German. The use of another language requires the approval of the head of faculty.
- (7) The content and result of the doctoral defence are documented in writing and signed by the chair of the doctoral committee.
- (8) The doctoral defence is graded in line with § 9 (3). After the committee has deliberated and determined the grade, it immediately informs the candidate of the result in camera.

§ 13

Repeating the Doctoral Defence

- (1) If, for no valid reason, the candidate does not appear at the doctoral defence, or if they withdraw for no valid reason after beginning the examination, the examination is assessed as a fail. If there are valid reasons for the absence or withdrawal, the candidate must immediately submit these

reasons in writing to the head of faculty and substantiate them. In the case of illness, the candidate must submit a medical certificate.

- (2) If the candidate does not pass the doctoral defence at the first attempt or does not provide a medical certificate as a reason for withdrawal, they may retake the examination. The candidate may retake the doctoral defence only once.
- (3) Retake requests must be made in writing to the head of faculty. The head of faculty sets a new date for the oral examination. The retake must take place within six weeks of the request being approved by the head of faculty. The candidate must be notified of the new examination date at least three weeks prior to the examination.
- (4) If the candidate does not pass the doctoral defence at the second attempt, the doctoral procedure is considered to have been unsuccessful and is terminated. The head of faculty informs the candidate in writing of the unsuccessful completion of the doctoral procedure, including information on the legal remedies available.
- (5) If the candidate fails to attend the retake for a reason for which they are responsible, the examination is assessed as *“insuffizienter”* / *“nicht bestanden”* (fail, 5.0). Otherwise the provisions of § 13 (3) apply.

§ 14

Maternity Leave and Disadvantage Compensation

- (1) Maternity leave under the Maternity Protection Act [*Mutterschutzgesetz* – MuSchG] must be granted at the doctoral student’s request. The request must include the necessary documentation. Periods of maternity leave suspend any deadline under these Doctoral Regulations; the duration of maternity leave does not count towards the deadline.
- (2) If a doctoral student can credibly demonstrate that they are partially or wholly unable to complete required coursework or degree-relevant examinations in the form intended or by the deadlines set out in these Doctoral Regulations due to a disability or chronic illness, the head of faculty must – upon the doctoral student’s request and in compliance with the principle of equal opportunity – make allowances with respect to the type and duration of the examination and the use of aids or assistants, as need be. The same applies to any participation requirements in the required coursework and degree-relevant examinations set out in these Doctoral Regulations.
- (3) Upon the doctoral student’s request, the Faculty Representative for Students with Disabilities must be consulted with regard to decisions under § 14 (2). If consultation with a faculty representative is not possible, the University representative is to be consulted.
- (4) Disadvantage compensation as referred to in § 14 (2) is granted on a case-by-case basis; candidates may be required to submit appropriate documentation substantiating their disability or chronic illness. This includes, in particular, medical certificates or, if available, a severely disabled person’s pass (*Schwerbehindertenausweis*).
- (5) Provided that the condition/status of the doctoral student’s illness or disability is expected to remain unchanged, disadvantage compensation as referred to in § 14 (2) is to extend to all required coursework and degree-relevant examinations to be completed during the doctoral programme.
- (6) If a doctoral student is unable to complete all or part of the required coursework or degree-relevant examinations in the form intended due to maternity protection regulations, § 14 (2), (3), (4) and (5) shall apply accordingly.

§ 15

Calculation of the Overall Grade

- (1) If the candidate passes the doctoral defence, the overall grade of the doctoral examination is calculated as the weighted arithmetic mean of the grades awarded for the doctoral thesis and the doctoral defence. The grade of the doctoral thesis is triple-weighted and that of the doctoral defence is single-weighted.
- (2) The overall grade is calculated based on the following grading scale:
 - “*sehr gut*” = *summa cum laude* (excellent) = 1; for values between 1.0 and 1.49
 - “*gut*” = *magna cum laude* (good) = 2; for values between 1.5 and 2.49
 - “*befriedigend*” = *cum laude* (satisfactory) = 3; for values between 2.5 and 3.49
 - “*ausreichend*” = *rite* (pass) = 4; for values between 3.5 and 4.0.
- (3) The rules of mathematical rounding are to be used to calculate the overall grade. Decimal places are to be rounded up or down according to the following rules: If the value of the second decimal place is 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4, the grade is rounded down. If the value of the second decimal place is 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9, the grade is rounded up. The same principle applies to the rounding of the first decimal place to give a full grade.

§ 16

Examination Certificate

- (1) Once the doctoral thesis has been accepted and the candidate has passed the doctoral defence, resulting in the determination of an overall grade, the Faculty Office of the Faculty of Catholic Theology issues a certificate within two weeks listing all the examinations that the candidate completed. The certificate contains the following information:
 1. the conferring institution’s name, i.e. “Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Münster” (Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Münster)
 2. the candidate’s name
 3. the candidate’s date and place of birth
 4. the title of the doctoral thesis
 5. the specification area (PhD in ‘name of the respective specification area’)
 6. the names of the doctoral supervisors, assessors and examiners in the doctoral procedure
 7. the grades of the doctoral thesis and the doctoral defence, and the overall grade of the doctoral examination
 8. the date of issue, i.e. the date of the doctoral defence
 9. the name and signature of the head of faculty or their deputy
 10. the faculty seal.
- (2) This examination certificate does not entitle the candidate to use the title “Doctor of Philosophy” (PhD).

§ 17

Publication of the Doctoral Thesis and Submission of Mandatory Copies

- (1) The doctoral thesis should normally be printed in the form in which it was accepted by the faculty board and made available to the academic community in an appropriate manner. It is the

responsibility of the faculty board to decide on any conditions that have to be met prior to publication and any changes that the candidate may wish to make to the original version submitted as part of the doctoral procedure. Such requests are reviewed by the head of faculty.

- (2) If the doctoral thesis is to be published in a substantially different form from that in which it was submitted for assessment, the candidate must submit two copies of the original version to the Faculty Office for archiving.
- (3) The doctoral thesis must be published in one of the following forms:
 1. a printed or duplicated version of the entire doctoral thesis;
 2. publication by a scholarly publisher; proof of such publication is demonstrated by presenting a contract with a publisher to the head of faculty;
 3. delivery of an electronic version, for which the data format and data carrier have been agreed with the University Library.
- (4) The doctoral student must ensure that their doctoral thesis is published in accordance with the applicable rules of the University Library of Münster by submitting an appropriate number of copies to the library. The doctoral student must submit to the head of faculty a certificate from the library confirming that the thesis has been submitted.
- (5) The candidate must submit the mandatory copies or proof of publication of the doctoral thesis in printed or electronic form to the Faculty Office within two years of passing the doctoral defence. If the candidate fails to meet this deadline through their own fault, all rights to the doctoral title obtained by passing the doctoral examination are forfeited. The head of faculty may extend this deadline once for good cause. The candidate must submit a duly substantiated request for an extension at least three months before the end of the two-year period. The provisions on maternity leave set out in § 14 apply accordingly.

§ 18

Issue and Presentation of the Doctoral Degree Certificate

- (1) The doctoral degree certificate is issued as soon as the required number of copies of the doctoral thesis have been submitted in the prescribed form to the Faculty Office of the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Münster.
- (2) The head of faculty also confers the doctoral degree certificate if a written contract exists between the author of the doctoral thesis and a publisher guaranteeing its publication or the candidate provides written confirmation from the editor of an academic series that the doctoral thesis will be published in this series. The contract must state that the doctoral thesis will be published within two years. In addition, the candidate must provide a written declaration that they will submit the mandatory copies at a later date.
- (3) The doctoral degree certificate contains the following information:
 1. the conferring institution's name, i.e. "Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Münster" (Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Münster)
 2. the candidate's name
 3. the academic degree "Doctor of Philosophy in 'name of the respective specification area'" (PhD in 'name of the respective specification area')
 4. the title of the doctoral thesis
 5. the final grade for all the doctoral examinations
 6. the date of issue, which is the date of the presentation of the certificate
 7. the name and signature of the head of faculty, and the faculty seal.

- (4) As a rule, the candidate receives the doctoral degree certificate in an academic ceremony hosted by the faculty. The candidate may submit a request to the head of faculty to have the certificate presented at another time.
- (5) On presentation of the doctoral degree certificate, the doctoral degree is completed; from this point on, the holder is entitled to use the title “Doctor of Philosophy” (PhD).
- (6) The head of faculty places on record the doctoral degree awarded by entering it in the faculty’s list of doctoral degrees.

§ 19

Declaration of Invalidity of Doctoral Examinations and Revocation of the Doctoral Degree

- (1) If the candidate is found to have acted dishonestly during the doctoral procedure, the faculty board may subsequently correct the assessment of the respective examinations or declare the doctoral procedure invalid or failed in part or in whole.
- (2) If the candidate acted dishonestly in a doctoral examination and this fact becomes known after the examination certificate has been issued in accordance with § 16, or after the doctoral degree certificate has been presented in accordance with § 18, the faculty board may subsequently correct the result of the respective examination or revoke the doctoral degree.
- (3) The doctoral degree can also be subsequently revoked if the candidate gained admission to the doctoral studies through dishonest means, intimidation or bribery, and this becomes known at a later time.
- (4) If the requirements for admission to the doctoral studies were not met but the candidate did not intend to act dishonestly, and if this fact becomes apparent only after the examination certificate has been presented in accordance with § 16, or after the doctoral degree certificate has been presented in accordance with § 18, the successful completion of the doctoral procedure rectifies this mistake.
- (5) If the doctoral degree is revoked in accordance with § 19 (2) or (3), or if the grades of the examinations have been changed in accordance with § 19 (1) or (2), the erroneous examination certificate (§ 16) and the doctoral degree certificate (§ 18) are to be withdrawn and, if applicable, replaced by new certificates.
- (6) The doctoral degree may be revoked by the faculty if the candidate has been finally convicted of an intentional crime relating to academic misconduct and sentenced to at least one year’s imprisonment or has been finally convicted of an intentional crime in the preparation or perpetration of which the doctoral degree was used.
- (7) Before a decision is made, candidates are to be given the opportunity to state their case.

§ 20

Access to the Doctoral Files

After completing the doctoral procedure, candidates can, upon request, gain access to their doctoral file. Candidates must file their request no later than one month after the presentation of the doctoral degree certificate. Compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act for North Rhine-Westphalia [*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen – VwVfG NRW*] must be ensured.

IV. Final Provisions

§ 21

Entry into Force, Publication

These Doctoral Regulations (in their original German version) enter into force on the day following their publication in the *Amtliche Bekanntmachungen* (Official Announcements – AB Uni) of the University of Münster.

Glossary of English-German translations

advanced research seminar	<i>Oberseminar</i>
assessment	<i>Gutachten</i>
assessor	<i>Gutachter*in</i>
associate professor.....	<i>Juniorprofessor*in</i>
Central Office for Foreign Education	<i>Zentralstelle für ausländisches</i>
.....	<i>Bildungswesen (ZAB)</i>
degree-relevant examination	<i>Prüfungsleistung</i>
doctoral committee	<i>Promotionskommission</i>
doctoral defence	<i>Defensio</i>
doctoral file	<i>Promotionsakte</i>
doctoral procedure	<i>Promotionsverfahren</i>
doctoral regulations	<i>Promotionsordnung</i>
doctoral thesis	<i>Dissertation</i>
Doctoral Thesis Board	<i>Dissertation Board</i>
faculty	<i>Fakultät</i>
faculty board	<i>Fachbereichsrat</i>
Faculty Office	<i>Dekanat</i>
head of faculty	<i>Dekan*in</i>
non-professorial academic staff	<i>Mittelbau</i>
principal supervisor	<i>Hauptbetreuer*in</i>
required coursework.....	<i>Studienleistung</i>
senior lecturer.....	<i>Hochschul-/Privatdozent*in</i>
severely disabled person's pass	<i>Schwerbehindertenausweis</i>
supervision agreement.....	<i>Betreuungsvereinbarung</i>

Issued (in the original German version) upon the resolution of the faculty board of the Faculty of Catholic Theology (FB 02) of the University of Münster of 25 August 2025. The above Regulations are hereby announced.

Please note that in accordance with § 12 (5) of the Higher Education Act of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia [*Hochschulgesetz* – HG NRW], violations of procedural or formal requirements of the HG NRW or the University's regulations or other legal provisions pertaining to university autonomy can no longer be asserted more than one year after this announcement unless

1. these Regulations were not properly published
2. the Rectorate previously raised an objection to the resolution passed by the deciding committee
3. the University had already been given notice of a formal or procedural defect and had been informed of the legal provision that has been violated and of the fact giving rise to

the defect or

4. the legal consequence of a deadline for violation notifications was not included in the public announcement of the Regulations.

Münster, 25 August 2025

The Rector

Professor Dr Johannes Wessels

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Translation: Supportstelle Englisch, University of Münster, 2026

Appendix to the Doctoral Regulations

The doctoral studies in accordance with § 7 comprise the writing of the doctoral thesis, participation in the advanced research seminars/colloquia offered by the principal supervisor, the taking of a 45-minute oral examination (Comprehensive Examination) and the completion of two pieces of required coursework from the catalogue below. Each piece of required coursework may only be completed once.

The principal supervisor confirms in the course record book that the doctoral student has participated in six colloquia for doctoral students or advanced research seminars in total. The Comprehensive Examination is taken on a topic from the foundation area of the chosen specification. The proof of required language skills (§ 3 (4); § 7 (2) (2)) may also be demonstrated by means of the Comprehensive Examination. To this end, a substantial part of the examination must be conducted in the relevant language.

Catalogue:

- Professional development in epistemological or university teaching methodology
- Planning and organisation of a conference
- Academic teaching
- Professional training and continuing education in relation to the doctoral thesis or career planning
- Contributions to or further training in science communication
- Research trip
- Involvement in drafting research proposals
- Acquisition of external funding or scholarships