

# Regulations of the Graduate School “Empirical and Applied Linguistics”

UNOFFICIAL VERSION

**[Please note: This rough translation of the official German version of the regulations for the Graduate School has been prepared as a guide and help for foreign students. All claims and complaints relating to these regulations have to make reference to the official German version (Amtliche Fassung)]**

(Doctoral College in Empirical and Applied Linguistics)  
Faculty of Philology, University of Münster  
dated 19 January 2026

On the basis of Sections 2(4) and 67(3) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG) in the version of the Higher Education Future Act of 16 September 2014 (GV. NRW. p. 547), most recently amended by Article 2 of the Act of 19 December 2024 (GV. NRW. p. 1222), the University of Münster has issued the following regulations:

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## § 1 Objectives

1. Based on the Bologna recommendations, the Doctoral College in Empirical and Applied Linguistics offers particularly qualified early-career researchers the opportunity to complete a doctorate within three years as part of a structured doctoral program under intensive supervision. Part-time study is also possible, in which case the duration of study may be extended to up to six years.
  2. The Doctoral College provides doctoral candidates and participating professors in linguistics with an interdisciplinary institutional framework for intensive academic exchange and the development of joint research initiatives.
  3. The Doctoral College aims to establish linguistics in Münster as a nationally and internationally visible center of innovative and excellent linguistic research.
  4. The Doctoral College seeks to open up career opportunities for its graduates both in academia and in non-academic professional fields.
  5. The principles of gender mainstreaming adopted in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 shape the concept of the Doctoral College both organizationally and in terms of thematic orientation.
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## **§ 2 Doctorate**

1. The Doctoral College in Empirical and Applied Linguistics leads to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.), awarded by the Faculty of Philology or the Faculty of Psychology and Sports Science. The doctoral procedure consists of doctoral studies and the doctoral examination.
  2. Doctoral studies are governed by these regulations.
  3. Proof of the academic qualifications required for the doctorate must be provided through the doctoral examination. This consists of a written dissertation and a final oral colloquium.
  4. The doctorate is completed in one major subject.
  5. Unless otherwise specified here, the provisions of the Doctoral Regulations of Faculty 09 (Philology) apply; with regard to Psychology, the Doctoral Regulations of Faculty 07 (Psychology and Sports Science) apply.
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## **§ 3 Doctoral Subjects**

The doctorate may be completed in one of the following subjects:

1. General Linguistics
2. German Philology
3. English Philology
4. Romance Philology
5. Dutch Philology
6. Scandinavian Studies
7. Slavic Studies
8. Arabic and Islamic Studies
9. Indo-European Linguistics
10. Psychology

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## § 4 Organization of the Doctoral College

The Faculty of Philology establishes the following bodies for the organization of the doctoral procedure:

### 1. Assembly of Doctoral Candidates (PPP)

Members:

- Formally admitted doctoral candidates
- Visiting doctoral candidates admitted for a limited period

The Assembly elects one representative and one deputy annually to the Executive Board. Re-election is permitted.

### 2. Assembly of Teaching Staff (PL)

Members:

- All members of the Faculty of Philology with the right to award doctorates in linguistics who apply for membership and are accepted
- Individually co-opted professors from other disciplines at the University of Münster or other national/international universities
- Individually co-opted doctoral researchers in linguistics or psycholinguistics (advisory, non-voting members)

Membership for teaching staff lasts three years and may be extended upon application.

The PL elects a spokesperson and deputy (term: two years).

The PL decides by simple majority on:

- Admission to the Doctoral College and appointment of supervisors
- Admission of members to the PL
- Election of spokesperson and deputy
- Election of the three members (and two deputies) of the committee evaluating the final colloquium

Decisions are taken by simple majority of members present. Circulation procedures are possible in exceptional cases.

### 3. Executive Board

Consists of the spokesperson, deputy, and the doctoral candidate representative. Responsible for representation, preparation of PL decisions, teaching and supervision program, management and budget. Primary contact for candidates and applicants.

### 4. Advisory Board (optional)

Three to five members; supports and advises the PL on strategy and development.

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## § 5 Admission to Doctoral Studies

1. Requirement: completed university degree in accordance with the relevant doctoral regulations.
2. Applicants must demonstrate required foreign language proficiency (as specified in the Faculty regulations). Exceptions may be granted. Missing language skills may be acquired during doctoral studies.
3. Special suitability for doctoral work in Empirical and Applied Linguistics is required.
4. Application (in writing) must include:
  - Proof of qualifications
  - CV
  - Copy of Master's thesis (PDF)
  - Dissertation proposal (1500–1750 words) with timeline
  - List of publications/presentations (if applicable)
  - Specification of doctoral subject and proposed supervisory panel
5. 1–2 letters of reference are recommended.

6–9. The Executive Board reviews applications; the Assembly of Teaching Staff decides on suitability. Conditional admission with additional coursework may be imposed if deficiencies are identified.

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## § 6 Supervision

- Structured, cooperative supervision.
- Each candidate has a primary supervisor and one or two additional supervisors (supervisory panel).
- A supervision agreement is concluded in writing covering:
  - Goals
  - Required qualifications
  - Individual study program
  - Timeline
  - Responsibilities

The panel provides ongoing evaluation and guidance. Conflict resolution procedures are defined.

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## § 7 Contents of the Program

Doctoral projects may address all subfields of linguistics, including philological and language teaching research.

A strong empirical basis is essential.

Primary goal: mastery and critical reflection on methods of linguistic data collection and analysis.

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## § 8 Scope of the Program and Coursework

- Standard duration: 6 semesters (part-time up to 12).
- Total: 180 ECTS credits.
- Dissertation: 130 ECTS.
- Remaining 50 ECTS through:
  - Mandatory components (25 ECTS)
  - Electives (20 ECTS)
  - Final colloquium (5 ECTS)

### **Mandatory Components (25 ECTS)**

1. Doctoral colloquium (9 ECTS)
  - Yearly presentation of progress
  - Proposal defense (1st), progress report (3rd), results presentation (5th)
2. Workshop/Project group (6 ECTS)
  - Self-organized doctoral collaboration with mentor
3. Individual study program (10 ECTS)
  - Tailored coursework to fill gaps or expand methodological expertise

### **Electives (20 ECTS)**

#### **Area A (minimum 8 ECTS required): Core academic activities**

- Teaching
- Conference presentation (8 ECTS)
- Peer-reviewed publication (10 ECTS)

#### **Area B: Academic organization and complementary studies**

Examples:

- Seminars
- Reading groups
- Workshops
- Language courses
- Key skills training
- Conference organization
- Internship/field research
- Study abroad organization (3 ECTS)

A 3–6 month research stay abroad is recommended if not previously completed.

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## § 9 Application for Admission to the Doctoral Examination

Application (in German) must include:

- CV
  - Proof of 45 ECTS
  - Proof of language proficiency
  - Two copies of dissertation
  - List of publications (if applicable)
  - Declaration of independent authorship (including disclosure of AI use)
  - Declaration regarding prior doctoral attempts
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## **§ 10 Admission to the Doctoral Examination**

Admission may only be refused if:

- Documents are incomplete
- Requirements are not met

Appeal procedures are specified.

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## **§ 11 Dissertation**

- Independent scholarly work
- Normally max. 90,000 words (120,000 if written in English)
- Must make a significant scholarly contribution
- Written in German or English (exceptions possible)
- Cumulative dissertations permitted if allowed under faculty regulations

For General and Indo-European Linguistics: additional requirements for cumulative dissertations apply.

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## **§ 12 Reviewers**

Two reviewers are appointed (usually primary supervisor + external reviewer).  
International reviewers are encouraged.  
A third review may be required in special cases.

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## **§ 13 Acceptance and Evaluation**

Written reviews must be submitted within three months.  
Faculty-level doctoral regulations apply additionally.

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## § 14 Final Oral Colloquium

- 60–90 minutes
- Academic discussion on a topic related to the dissertation
- 4–6 weeks' preparation time
- Candidate opens with 15-minute presentation
- Committee determines grade
- May be repeated once within 18 months

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## § 15 Overall Grade

Weighting:

- Dissertation: 2/3
- Oral colloquium: 1/3

“summa cum laude” only if both components receive that grade.

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## §§ 16–18

Invalidity, completion of procedure, and revocation of degree follow the relevant faculty doctoral regulations.

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## § 19 Entry into Force

These regulations enter into force the day after publication in the Official Announcements of the University of Münster. They apply to all applicants submitting an application after that date.

Issued on the basis of resolutions of Faculty 09 (Philology) of 20 October 2025 and Faculty 07 (Psychology and Sports Science) of 3 December 2025.

Münster, 19 January 2026  
The Rector  
Prof. Dr. Johannes Wessels