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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

Regulations Governing Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Bern (PromR Theol 22)

Dated May 19, 2022

The Faculty of Theology,

pursuant to Article 44 paragraph 1 (c) of the Act governing the University of September 5, 1996 (UniG)¹, Article 33 of the University Ordinance of September 12, 2012 (UniV)² and Article 43 of the Statute of the University of Bern of June 7, 2011 (University Statute, UniSt)³,

issues the following regulations:

I. General

AREA OF APPLICATION

Art. 1 ¹ These regulations govern doctoral studies at the Faculty of Theology (Faculty) of the University of Bern.

² The foregoing is without prejudice to joint regulations with other faculties or universities.

³ Special agreements at the University level apply to dissertations with binational supervision.

TITLE

Art. 2 ¹ The Faculty awards the following titles:

a Doktorin der Theologie oder Doktor der Theologie (Dr. theol.), Universität Bern
or
PhD in Theology (PhD), University of Bern;

b Doktorin der Religionsstudien oder Doktor der Religionsstudien (Dr. rer. rel.), Universität Bern
or
PhD in Religious Studies (PhD), University of Bern.

² In the case of the title referred to in paragraph 1 (a) (Dr. theol.), the special qualification in “Old Catholic Theology” or “Protestant Theology” may be mentioned in the Diploma Supplement upon the request of the doctoral candidate to the Doctoral Committee, made at the time of registration for the doctoral degree (Art. 20).

¹ BSG 436.11

² BSG 436.111.1

³ BSG 436.111.2

	<p>³ It is up to the doctoral candidate to decide whether the title is awarded in German or English.</p> <p>⁴ The title PhD in Theology (PhD) is derived from <i>doctrix theologiae</i> or <i>doctor theologiae</i> in Latin. The title PhD in Religious Studies (PhD) is derived from <i>doctrix rerum religionum</i> or <i>doctor rerum religionum</i> in Latin.</p>
GOALS	Art. 3 Doctoral studies serve as an academic qualification, namely proof of the ability to contribute to the development of the field of study through independent academic research.
STRUCTURE	<p>Art. 4 ¹ The doctorate level takes place as part of a doctoral program or as a traditional individual doctorate.</p> <p>² The achievements at the doctoral level consist of a monographic or cumulative dissertation and an oral examination as well as any other achievements that are governed by the regulations governing the course of studies or the Doctoral Agreement.</p> <p>³ A transfer between a doctorate as part of a doctoral program and the traditional individual doctorate is possible upon request to the Doctoral Committee, but only once.</p> <p>⁴ Details are set out in the regulations governing the course of studies.</p>
DURATION	<p>Art. 5 ¹ Doctoral studies generally last three to four years. It is possible to complete the doctorate on a part-time basis.</p> <p>² The details are set out in the Doctoral Agreement (Art. 14).</p>
COURSE OF STUDIES	Art. 6 The Faculty issues the course of studies for the doctorate as part of a doctoral program and the traditional individual doctorate.
INVOLVEMENT IN FACULTY TEACHING AND RESEARCH	Art. 7 Articles 88 and 89 of the University Ordinance and the relevant University regulations apply to the limits on the participation of doctoral candidates in teaching and research at their institute or another organizational unit.
II. Admission	
REGISTRATION	<p>Art. 8 ¹ Doctoral candidates must be registered (Art. 6 para. 1 University Ordinance).</p> <p>² Persons who are not registered may not make use of University services, specifically not attend courses, make use of supervision services, or sit evaluations (Art. 6 para. 3 University Ordinance).</p>
ADMISSION	<p>Art. 9 ¹ The prerequisite for admission to the doctoral level of the Faculty is:</p> <p style="margin-left: 2em;"><i>a</i> a degree as per paragraph 2 or 3 with a minimum grade of 5.0 or an equivalent final grade, and</p>

b the approval of the dissertation project by a person authorized in accordance with Article 12 who is willing to act as primary supervisor.

² Admission to doctoral studies in Theology is open to anyone who

a has majored in Theology in their master's degree from the Faculty or an equivalent degree from a Swiss or recognized foreign university, or

b has obtained a university degree that is not equivalent to letter a, provided that the necessary requirements for successful completion of the doctoral level can be met by fulfilling requirements of a maximum of 60 ECTS credits.

³ Admission to doctoral studies in Religious Studies is open to anyone who

a has majored in Ancient Judaism in their master's degree from the Faculty or in the major study program in Interreligious Studies or an equivalent degree from a Swiss or foreign university,

b has completed a degree in a branch of studies related to the doctoral subject at a Swiss or recognized foreign university, or

c has obtained a university degree that is not equivalent to letters a and b, provided that the necessary requirements for successful completion of the doctoral phase can be met by fulfilling requirements of a maximum of 60 ECTS credits.

⁴ The admission of applicants with a master's degree from a university of applied sciences or a university of teacher education is governed by the relevant regulations of the Executive Board of the University of Bern.

⁵ The Doctoral Committee assesses the content and decides on the recognition of an equivalent or non-equivalent degree and, if applicable, on the equivalence of the final grade. Negative decisions take the form of an announcement by the Doctoral Committee that can be appealed.

⁶ There is no entitlement that the Faculty provide a primary supervisor.

REQUIREMENTS

Art. 10 ¹ Knowledge and skills not acquired by the time of completion of the master's degree program can be stipulated as admission requirements for doctoral studies. The requirements for admission are defined individually by the Doctoral Committee.

² For applicants with a master's degree from a tier-one university, admission requirements of up to 60 ECTS credits are possible.

³ Applicants with a master's degree from a university of applied sciences or a university of teacher education must complete admission requirements of between 30 and 60 ECTS credits.

⁴ Requirements must in principle be met at the University of Bern. Individual courses or existing modules of the master's degree programs can be specified as admission requirements.

⁵ If admission is granted with admission requirements which can be fulfilled during the program of study, failure to fulfill the requirements will lead to exclusion.

⁶ Failure to fulfill requirements may not be compensated by other achievements.

⁷ The admission requirements must be fulfilled during the doctoral phase by a deadline set by the Doctoral Committee.

⁸ Additional requirements are listed separately as additional achievements in the Diploma Supplement.

III. Supervision and Doctoral Agreement

SUPERVISION

Art. 11 A Supervisory Committee (Art. 13) is set up to provide the doctoral candidate with appropriate support.

PRIMARY
SUPERVISOR

Art. 12 ¹ The primary supervisor is a member of the Faculty of Theology who belongs to one of the following categories:

- a full professors,
- b associate professors,
- c adjunct professors,
- d titular professors,
- e assistant professors,
- f full-time lecturers with a qualification to teach at a university,
- g private lecturers and
- h postdoctoral researchers without a qualification to teach at a university in the "Advanced Postdoc" and "Senior Research Assistant" categories.

² At the beginning of the doctorate and in consultation with the doctoral candidate, the primary supervisor sets up a Supervisory Committee.

³ The primary supervisor provides feedback on the quality and progress of the research work at least every semester.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Art. 13 ¹ The Supervisory Committee consists of the primary supervisor and at least one additional supervisor.

² Other supervisors may also belong to other faculties and higher education institutions. They must belong to an equivalent category as defined in Article 12 paragraph 1 (a) to (h).

³ If the primary supervisor is a postdoctoral researcher without a qualification to teach at a university, at least one additional supervisor must hold such a qualification.

⁴ The Supervisory Committee meets with the doctoral candidate at least once a year for a discussion of the progress of the work and the amendment of the Doctoral Agreement.

⁵ The other supervisors are available to the doctoral candidate for additional consultation.

IV. Doctoral Agreement and Exposé

DOCTORAL AGREEMENT AND EXPOSÉ

Art. 14 ¹ A Doctoral Agreement must be concluded between the doctoral candidate and the Supervisory Committee no later than six months after registration. The first Doctoral Agreement must be submitted to the Doctoral Committee for information purposes with the signatures of the doctoral candidate and the members of the Supervisory Committee.

² The Doctoral Agreement contains information on the timetable, goals, and framework conditions as well as any requirements or other achievements.

³ The first Doctoral Agreement pursuant to paragraph 1 must also be accompanied by an exposé of the content, including selected secondary literature and a statement from the Supervisory Committee for the attention of the Doctoral Committee.

⁴ The Doctoral Agreement is a binding instrument for optimizing the framework conditions. It is discussed annually between the doctoral candidate and the Supervisory Committee and revised in writing.

⁵ Details are set out in the regulations governing the course of studies.

V. Evaluations

CARRYING OUT THE EVALUATIONS

Art. 15 With the exception of the dissertation and the associated oral examination, Articles 18 to 25 and 31 to 38 of the regulations governing studies and evaluations at the Faculty of Theology of April 9, 2020 (RSL Theol 20) apply for the evaluations.

GRADING OF THE
DISSERTATION AND THE
ORAL EXAMINATION

Art. 16 ¹ Adequate performance is assessed according to the following grading scale:

6	=	Excellent
5.5	=	Very good
5	=	Good
4.5	=	Satisfactory
4	=	Sufficient

² Insufficient performance is assessed according to the following grades scale: 3.5; 3; 2.5; 2; 1.5; 1.

³ If grades are rounded, the following rule applies:

Score in the range		Rounded score
5.75 ... to	6.00	6.0
5.25 ... to	< 5.75	5.5
4.75 ... to	< 5.25	5.0
4.25 ... to	< 4.75	4.5
4.00 ... to	< 4.25	4.0
3.25 ... to	< 4.0	3.5
2.75 ... to	< 3.25	3.0
2.25 ... to	< 2.75	2.5
1.75 ... to	< 2.25	2.0
1.25 ... to	< 1.75	1.5
1.00 ... to	< 1.25	1.0

VI. Dissertation

FORM OF DISSERTATION

Art. 17 ¹ The dissertation consists of an independent research contribution in a field that is represented by research or teaching in the Faculty. It can be interdisciplinary in nature.

² A dissertation is an academic monograph or an equivalent cumulative compilation of academic papers that have been published or accepted for publication, either as a sole author or as a first author. A cumulative dissertation must include a chapter on the thematic classification of the individual publications in a broader context.

³ In exceptional cases, the Doctoral Committee may also recognize a previous academic publication as a dissertation.

⁴ A thesis that has already been used to obtain an academic degree at a higher education institution cannot be submitted to the Faculty as a dissertation.

⁵ Details are set out in the regulations governing the course of studies.

LANGUAGE

Art. 18 ¹ The dissertation must be written in German, French, or English.

² Exceptions may be approved by the Doctoral Committee upon request. In this case, the dissertation must be accompanied by a summary of no more than five pages in German, French, or English.

DECLARATION

Art. 19 The following declaration, dated and signed by hand, must be enclosed with the dissertation:

“I hereby declare that I have written this thesis independently and that I have not used any sources other than those indicated. I have marked all co-authorships and all passages taken verbatim or analogously from sources as such. I am aware that otherwise, the Senate is entitled to withdraw the doctorate in accordance with Article 36 paragraph 1 (r) of the Act governing the University of September 5, 1996, and Article 69 of the University Statute of June 7, 2011.

For the purposes of assessing and verifying compliance with the declaration of independent working and/or the regulations on plagiarism, I grant the University of Bern the right to process the personal data required for this purpose and to perform usage actions, in particular to reproduce the dissertation and store it permanently in a database, and to use it to check the work of third parties or to make it available for this purpose.”

VII. Completion of Doctoral Studies

1. Registration for a doctoral degree

REGISTRATION FOR A DOCTORAL DEGREE

Art. 20 ¹ To attain a doctoral degree, the doctoral candidate submits an application to the Dean’s Office.

² The following documents must be submitted:

- a* the dissertation written by the doctoral candidate in four bound copies and in an electronic version;
- b* a declaration of independent work in accordance with Article 19;
- c* a curriculum vitae with details of education and degree program;
- d* proof of registration for doctoral studies at the University of Bern;
- e* proof that any requirements pursuant to Article 10 have been met with at least satisfactory performance;
- f* in the case of a doctorate as part of a doctoral program, proof of successful completion of the assignments in accordance with Article 4 paragraph 2;
- g* a receipt showing the fees paid in accordance with Article 38;
- h* any application in accordance with Article 2 paragraph 2.

2. *Peer Review and Grading of the Dissertation*

PEER REVIEWS

Art. 21 ¹ If the formal requirements set out in Articles 17 to 20 have been met, the dissertation is reviewed by peers.

² All reviewers are appointed by the Doctoral Committee after consulting the Supervisory Committee.

³ A maximum period of three months following the appointment of the reviewers applies to the submission of the peer reviews.

⁴ At least two expert reviews must be obtained for the assessment of the dissertation. One peer review is written by the primary supervisor and one by another member of the Supervisory Committee.

⁵ At the request of the doctoral candidate to the Doctoral Committee, a further peer review is prepared by a person outside the Faculty. The doctoral candidate has the right to propose the person to prepare such an external peer review.

⁶ At the request of the Supervisory Committee or, if necessary (specifically in the case of Article 22 paragraph 3), a further expert review may be obtained by decision of the Doctoral Committee.

GRADING

Art. 22 ¹ The peer reviews shall each contain a suggested grade in accordance with Article 16 paragraphs 1 and 2.

² The dissertation and the peer reviews are made available to the Doctoral Committee for inspection. On the basis of the expert reviews, the Doctoral Committee determines the grade in accordance with Article 16 paragraphs 1 and 2.

³ If, in its assessment, the Doctoral Committee deviates from the average grade of the expert reviews rounded in accordance with Article 16 paragraph 3, it must justify this in writing. If necessary, it may obtain a further peer review.

ACCESS

Art. 23 Once the grade for the dissertation has been determined by the Doctoral Committee and before the oral examination, the dissertation is made available to the members of the Faculty for inspection in accordance with Article 12 paragraph 1.

RESUBMISSION

Art. 24 If the dissertation is awarded an unsatisfactory grade, it can be revised and resubmitted once within a year.

3. *Oral Examination*

FORM, DURATION

Art. 25 ¹ If the grade for the dissertation is satisfactory, the oral examination follows.

² In the case of a doctorate as part of a doctoral program, the oral examination consists of a defense of the dissertation.

³ In a traditional individual doctorate, the oral examination consists of a colloquium on the dissertation or an examen rigorosum in the doctoral subject and two other fields, depending on the doctoral candidate's choice.

⁴ The defense session lasts 60 minutes, the colloquium 105 minutes and the examen rigorosum 80 minutes.

⁵ Details are set out in the the regulations governing the course of studies.

DATE

Art. 26 The date of the oral examination is set by the Doctoral Committee in consultation with the examiner and the doctoral candidate. Details are set out in the the regulations governing the course of studies.

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE,
CHAIR

Art. 27 ¹ The oral examination is conducted by the primary supervisor and other examiners. The composition of the other examiners is based on the form of the oral examination. Details are set out in the regulations governing the course of studies.

² The Chair of the Examination Committee is a member of the Doctoral Committee and monitors the proper conduct of the oral examination and draws up minutes.

LANGUAGE OF EXAMINATION,
PUBLIC

Art. 28 ¹ The oral examination will be conducted in German, French, or English.

² The oral examination is open to the university. The doctoral candidate can invite other people to attend.

ABSENCE, DISCONTINUATION

Art. 29 ¹ Any person who fails to take the oral examination or discontinues it without good cause is awarded a grade of 1.

² Good cause includes illness, accident, pregnancy, and family care responsibilities. Good cause must be substantiated by evidence, in the first three cases by means of a medical certificate.

³ The Dean shall decide immediately on the admissibility of the absence or discontinuation. If necessary, the examiners shall take provisional measures.

⁴ In the event of a permissible absence or discontinuation, the repetition of the oral examination counts as the first attempt. The examiners determine the time of the retake.

GRADING AND
RETAKE

Art. 30 ¹ Immediately after the oral examination, the examiners determine the grade for the oral examination in accordance with Article 16 paragraphs 1 and 2. If no overall grade can be determined, the average of the individual grades rounded in accordance with Article 16 paragraph 3 shall apply.

² An insufficient oral examination may be retaken once. It must be retaken within one year. The examiners determine the time of the retake in consultation with the doctoral candidate. The Doctoral Committee decides whether to extend the retake period for good cause.

4. Degree

PASS STANDARD

Art. 31 The doctoral level is passed if:

- a the dissertation has been awarded a grade of 4.0 or higher,

- b* the oral examination has been awarded a grade of 4.0 or higher,
- c* any other requirements in accordance with the regulations governing the course of studies or Doctoral Agreement have been satisfied and
- d* all conditions have been met.

OVERALL GRADE AND RATING

Art. 32 ¹ The overall grade is calculated from the weighted average of the grading of the dissertation in accordance with Article 22 paragraph 2 and the grading of the oral examination in accordance with Article 30 paragraph 1 in a ratio of 3:1. The resulting grade is rounded in accordance with Article 16 paragraph 3.

² The doctoral degree is awarded with one of the following grades:

- 6 summa cum laude (excellent)
- 5.5 insigni cum laude (very good)
- 5 magna cum laude (good)
- 4.5 cum laude (satisfactory)
- 4 rite (sufficient)

NOTIFICATION

Art. 33 The doctoral candidate is informed of the result of the doctoral level in writing with an explanation of rights of appeal.

INSPECTION OF FILES

Art. 34 ¹ Inspection of the minutes of the oral examination and the peer reviews, including suggested grades, must be permitted. The details are set out in the regulations governing the course of studies.

² The guidelines of the Executive Board of the University of Bern regarding the inspection of files and the obligation to keep records in connection with evaluations at the faculties apply.

AWARDING OF THE TITLE

Art. 35 ¹ Once doctoral studies have been completed, the Doctoral Committee submits a request to the Faculty Council regarding the award of the title and the grade.

² Once the title and grade have been awarded by the Faculty Council, the Dean's Office issues a confirmation of the completion of the doctorate. This confirmation entitles the holder to use the title in accordance with Article 2 for a limited period of time.

³ The confirmation is valid for two years. Upon request, the Doctoral Committee may extend the deadline by one additional year, up to a maximum of six years in the case of good cause. The title may no longer be used without a valid confirmation.

⁴ The definitive title in accordance with Article 2 is awarded by the Faculty if the conditions of Article 36 are met.

PUBLICATION AND
STATUTORY COPIES

Art. 36 ¹ The dissertation must be published during the validity period of the confirmation (Art. 35 para. 2 and 3), either as a stand-alone publication, or as an electronic publication in accordance with the specifications of the University of Bern, or in

academic journals. If the dissertation is not published during its validity period, the doctoral degree will not be issued.

² The Doctoral Committee may request changes to the publication. Even in the case of an electronic publication, their implementation is reviewed by the Supervisory Committee prior to publication and the results of the review are submitted to the Doctoral Committee for approval.

³ Upon submission of the six statutory copies of the published dissertation or six printed and bound copies of the electronic publication or cumulative dissertation, the doctoral degree is issued, which entitles the holder to use the title in accordance with Article 2 indefinitely.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

Art. 37 ¹ The doctoral degree contains the title awarded (Art. 2), the title of the dissertation, and the grade. It is signed by the Rector and the Dean.

² Depending on the doctoral candidate's choice (Art. 2 para. 3), the doctoral degree is issued in German or English. A translation into the other language is enclosed. The translation is not signed.

³ A Diploma Supplement is issued for the doctoral degree.

FEEES

Art. 38 The fee for the doctorate is based on the Executive Order of January 31, 2011, on the fees for doctorates and completed postdoctoral qualifications at the University of Bern (GebDV PHab)⁴.

VIII. Exclusion from Doctoral Studies and Withdrawal of Title

EXCLUSION FROM DOCTORAL STUDIES

Art. 39 ¹ If the student's performance is unsatisfactory when repeating insufficient evaluations or requirements, revising the dissertation, or retaking the oral examination, then doctoral studies cannot be continued. The Doctoral Committee orders the candidate's exclusion.

² The Supervisory Committee or at least two members of the Doctoral Committee may apply to the Doctoral Committee for exclusion if:

- a requirements are not met;
- b provisions of the Doctoral Agreement are not complied with by the doctoral candidate without good cause;
- c there is no prospect of a successful completion of the doctoral level, in particular in the event of serious shortcomings in the execution of the research work.

³ The Doctoral Committee shall order the exclusion after consulting the doctoral candidate.

⁴ BSG 436.111.3

WITHDRAWAL OF TITLE

Art. 40 ¹ The withdrawal of the doctoral degree is governed by Article 69 of the UniSt and Article 36 paragraph 1 (r) of the Act governing the University (UniG).

² Disciplinary measures in accordance with university legislation and criminal prosecution remain reserved.

IX. Administration of Justice

Art. 41 ¹ An appeal against announcements made by the Faculty's governing bodies may be lodged with the Appeal Committee within 30 days.

² The Act of September 5, 1996, governing the University (UniG) and the Act of May 23, 1989, on Administrative Law (VRPG) apply to the procedure.

³ In the case of appeals against examination results, complaints of unreasonableness are inadmissible.

X. Transitional and Final Provisions

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Art. 42 ¹ Doctoral candidates starting their doctoral studies at the Faculty from the fall semester 2022 are subject to these regulations.

² Doctoral candidates who started doctoral studies at the Faculty in accordance with the regulations governing doctoral studies at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Bern (doctoral studies regulations) of February 16, 2011, shall complete doctoral studies in accordance with the doctoral studies regulations of February 16, 2011.

³ Doctoral candidates as defined in paragraph 2 may transfer to these regulations upon request.

REPEAL OF DECREES

Art. 43 The regulations governing the doctoral level at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Bern (doctoral studies regulations) of February 16, 2011, are hereby repealed.

ENTRY INTO FORCE

Art. 44 These Regulations shall enter into force on September 1, 2022.

Bern, May 19, 2022

On behalf of the Faculty of Theology
The Dean:

Prof. Dr. David Plüss

Approved by the Department of Education and Culture:

Bern,

Head of the Department of Education and Culture:

Christine Häsler