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Membership regulations of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW

in the version dated 13.02.2023

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Preamble

These membership regulations serve to ensure the quality of the doctorates carried out within the framework of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW. Together with other regulations, they ensure that the requirements of § 67 (1) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG) are met. It refers to the administrative agreement concluded on 14.12.2020 and to the Basic Regulations in the version dated 30.11.2021 of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW (Promotionskolleg NRW).

§ 1 Members

According to § 7 of the administrative agreement, members of the Graduate School NRW are

1. the members of the executive board,
2. the directors of the departments,
3. the professors admitted in accordance with § 8 of the administrative agreement,
4. the full-time staff of the Graduate School NRW according to § 9 of the administrative agreement, who are not only working temporarily or as guests and
5. the admitted doctoral candidates according to § 10 of the administrative agreement.

§ 2 Rights and obligations of members

(1) With regard to the rights and obligations of members and associate professors, § 10 HG applies accordingly to the Graduate School NRW.

(2) The members of the Graduate School NRW keep their data updated.

§ 3 Professorial membership

(1) Professors with a doctorate from supporting universities and habilitated staff from these institutions may become professorial members in accordance with § 1, No. 3 upon application and after fulfilling the requirements if they are willing to participate in doctoral procedures.

Professors from non-state universities may become members in accordance with the cooperation agreement pursuant to § 67b (4) sentence 3 half-sentence 2 HG; the same applies to professors from other universities.

(2) Professors with a doctorate from universities (Universitäten) in North Rhine-Westphalia who are willing to participate in doctoral procedures of the Graduate School NRW can become professorial members upon application and if the requirements are met, even if no cooperation agreement has been concluded with the university (Universität).

(3) Prerequisites for professorial membership are the appointment by the university management and confirmation by a corresponding letter as well as active academic activity in a research area represented in a department of the Graduate School NRW in the last three to five years. This is demonstrated by corresponding publications in accordance with § 3 (4) and the acquisition of third-party funding in accordance with § 3 (5). Professors from universities (Universitäten) in NRW do not need to be seconded. Furthermore, appropriate experience in the supervision of doctoral candidates acquired after their own doctorate is required. This can be acquired through participation in university (universitär) doctorates or through participation in doctorates of the Graduate School NRW or comparable organizations.

(4) When submitting the application, the applicant must specify a reference period of three, four or five years. During the reference period, the applicant must provide evidence of at least one peer-reviewed publication per year on average in recognized journals. Depending on the subject culture, other academic achievements¹ can be used as an alternative to peer-reviewed publications, e.g. in subject-relevant media or through subject-relevant media, invited peer-reviewed lectures, monographs or scientific editing activities. A habilitation can be counted as fulfilment of the publication achievement up to a maximum of five years after completion. Patents granted can be counted as equivalent to a maximum of one quarter of the required publications.

(5) In the reference period prior to the application, evidence must be provided of competitively² research-related third-party funding acquisition of at least EUR 100 thousand

¹ The core data set for research can serve as a guide.

² The definition of third-party funding refers to § 71 HG. Competitively acquired third-party funds are taken into account, including from approved projects of the state, provided the funds were not awarded to the universities

per year on average in the life sciences, natural sciences or engineering or EUR 50 thousand per year on average in other subject areas in accordance with § 71 HG.

1. With regard to the third-party funding criterion, affiliation to a scientific field is not determined by affiliation to a faculty or department, but by the predominant affiliation of the research actually carried out.
2. The amount of third-party funding is measured in terms of the sum raised and distributed over the reference period. The self-declaration is confirmed by the university administration of the applicant's sending university. In the case of joint projects, the share attributable to the applicant counts.
3. Third-party funds acquired before the appointment to a professorship can be recognized if they were acquired independently after the doctorate at a university or a university-like institution and a confirmation of this can be presented from the relevant institution.
4. If the required amount of third-party funding is not undercut by more than 10 %, this can be compensated for by special achievements in the qualification area of publication that go beyond the minimum level to be demonstrated in paragraph 4.
5. In individual cases, if it is very difficult to acquire third-party funding in the subject concerned, a shortfall of more than 10 % of the required amount can also be compensated for by doubling the achievements to be proven in accordance with paragraph 4. Sufficient justification is required which takes into account the special nature of the subject with regard to third-party funding and the quality and quantity of publications. This justification must be approved by the department board.

(6) The proven periods for the publications and the third-party funding obtained must be identical. It is up to the applicant to choose the reference period of three, four or five years.

(7) The specified period for proof of publications and third-party funding may include the current year.

(8) On application and with appropriate evidence, periods of child-rearing, caring for relatives or illness can be excluded from the reference period when providing evidence of publication achievements and the acquisition of third-party funding.

(9) The executive board appoints the seconded professor or habilitated member of staff in accordance with § 8 of the administrative agreement. The prerequisite for this is an academic assessment from the host department of the Graduate School NRW by the department's recommendation committee and a decision by the responsible department board. The academic assessment must address the necessary criteria listed in these regulations and must have been carried out with the assistance of professorial expertise from external institutions authorized to award doctorates. When assessing the appropriate experience in doctoral supervision, the special features of professors from universities not authorized to award doctorates should also be taken into account. Relevant training courses can be counted as a

as a lump sum. A research project awarded by a private company, organization or association without a competitive tender is only considered "competitively acquired" if it was awarded to the exact person or team on the basis of individual scientific expertise.

contribution to gaining experience. In exceptional cases, the executive board may request further academic assessments. It then determines whether the requirements for membership are met and makes the decision on admission to the Graduate School NRW. The board will communicate the reasons for its decision; the academic assessments will not be disclosed.

(10) The status for professorial membership is valid for a period of five years and is reviewed after five years at the latest. Members must keep their data up to date or update it for a new application at the latest. If the requirements for professorial membership are no longer met, the executive board shall decide on the exclusion from the Graduate School NRW after hearing the person concerned and hearing the department.

(11) If the requirements for professorial membership have not yet been met, the executive board can grant doctoral professors or habilitated staff the status of associate professor for a period of five years. The prerequisite for this is an academic assessment by the recommendation committee of the host department and a decision by the relevant department council. Admission as an associate professor is granted in accordance with § 7 (2) of the administrative agreement and § 4 of the basic regulations of the Graduate School NRW.

(12) When reviewing membership and after at least four years of membership in the Graduate School NRW, if the criteria of publication and third-party funding are not met, an overall assessment of the academic performance can be made, taking into account the doctorates supervised and assessed in the Graduate School NRW, and lead to further professorial membership for five years. The prerequisites for this are a detailed academic assessment and a decision by the responsible departmental council and the executive board.

§ 4 Membership as a doctoral candidate

(1) Doctoral candidates can apply for membership as a doctoral candidate if they fulfil and prove the requirements of § 67 HG for a doctorate (usually a Master's degree), have the professional and personal aptitude to write a dissertation and to do a doctorate, and submit an exposé of the planned dissertation.

(2) Doctoral candidates who are doing a cooperative doctorate with one of the supporting universities can become members if they are supervised by a professorial member or an associate professor of a department of the Graduate School NRW and are willing to participate in events of the Graduate School NRW.

(3) Pursuant to § 9 (1) HG, doctoral candidates who are doing their doctorate via the right to award doctorates of the Graduate School NRW are members of the Graduate School NRW upon enrolment at the Graduate School NRW. In addition, doctoral candidates who wish to do their doctorate via the doctoral right of the Graduate School NRW can become members of the Graduate School NRW before enrolment if they have been nominated by the university in accordance with § 10 of the administrative agreement, are supervised by a professorial member of a department of the Graduate School NRW, enrolment at a supporting university and the Graduate School NRW is planned and they show willingness to participate in the corresponding doctoral program of the department of the Graduate School NRW.

(4) In the case of doctoral candidates who are not yet enrolled as doctoral candidates at the Graduate School NRW at the time of application for membership, the executive board shall make a decision on admission as a member of the Graduate School NRW in accordance with § 10 of the administrative agreement, including an academic assessment by the recommendation committee of the responsible department of the Graduate School NRW.

§ 5 Change of university

(1) If a professorial member moves to another supporting university or a university that has concluded a corresponding agreement with the Graduate School NRW so that the status can be retained, the Graduate School must be informed of this immediately and a confirmation letter from the new university management regarding the secondment must be submitted within three months.

(2) If a professorial member moves to a university that can conclude an agreement with the Graduate School in accordance with paragraph 1 but has not yet done so, membership shall be suspended until an agreement has been concluded and a secondment has been made. If this does not take place within one year, membership expires and must be reapplied for once the requirements have been met.

(3) If a professorial member moves to a university with which no agreement pursuant to paragraph 1 can be concluded or no agreement pursuant to paragraph 1 is concluded, so that membership is no longer possible, membership shall end at the time of the move.

(4) If, during an ongoing doctoral procedure, a professorial member moves to a university with which no agreement pursuant to paragraph 1 has been concluded, or terminates her or his membership, and if the responsible doctoral examining committee grants her or him the right to complete the supervision, assessment or examination, the doctoral candidate may remain a member of the Graduate School NRW for a further three years with the consent of the university at which the doctoral project is being carried out.

(5) If the supervision of a doctoral candidate cannot be continued due to a change of professorial member or termination of membership, a new supervisor must be assigned to the doctoral candidate. The doctoral candidate's suggestions shall be taken into account.

§ 6 Suspension of membership

Membership at the Graduate School may be suspended upon request if there are verifiable reasons (e.g. parental leave, leave of absence to hold office). In the case of professorial members, the period of suspended membership is not counted towards the five-year term of membership for a maximum of five years. Confirmation from the university management must be submitted. Doctoral candidate members must inform the relevant department and submit a certificate.

§ 7 Termination of membership

- (1) Any member of the Graduate School NRW may terminate their membership at any time without giving reasons. Notice of termination must be given in writing.
- (2) If the basic requirements for membership of the Graduate School NRW cease to apply, membership is terminated on the date on which the requirements cease to apply.
- (3) In the event of serious academic misconduct, membership at the Graduate School may be terminated immediately by resolution of the executive board in consultation with the board of supporters and the relevant doctoral examining committee, and permanent exclusion from the Graduate School may be imposed. In less serious cases, membership may be terminated and a temporary suspension imposed.
- (4) In the event of retirement, professorial membership is terminated on the date on which retirement takes place. Continuation of membership is only possible if the university is willing to send a new letter of confirmation for the secondment and if there is still an affiliation with a university. The secondment can be limited in time by the university.
- (5) Membership as a doctoral candidate ends at the latest with the publication of the dissertation or upon exmatriculation.
- (6) Membership as a doctoral candidate also ends if the doctoral project is discontinued or continued outside of the Graduate School NRW. The Graduate School NRW must be informed of this immediately in writing.
- (7) The membership of doctoral candidates who are doing their doctorate via the doctoral right of the Graduate School NRW also ends if an application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate is not submitted within three months or if the application is finally rejected.
- (8) The membership of cooperative doctoral candidates ends if they are not accepted at a university entitled to award doctorates within one year. Exceptions must be requested from the relevant department and approved by the executive board.
- (9) If all three supervisors of a doctoral candidate who is completing a doctorate in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the Graduate School NRW are convinced that the doctorate can no longer be expected to be completed, the doctoral candidate will be heard on this matter by the responsible doctoral examining committee. If the information is refused or the supervisor's conviction is accepted, the doctoral candidate's membership can be withdrawn with a notice period of one year.
- (10) The status of associate professor ends automatically after five years and cannot be extended or reapplied for.

§ 8 Application

- (1) Persons who wish to apply for membership in accordance with § 3 or § 4 must submit their application online via the portal of the Graduate School NRW.
- (2) Applications can be submitted at any time.

(3) The application can be submitted as soon as all mandatory information has been completed and all supporting documents have been made available online via the portal of the Graduate School NRW. Only complete applications will be processed.

(4) After the submission of the scientific assessments of the recommendation committee of the department in which membership is applied for, as well as the decision of the responsible department board, the executive board decides on the admission.

(5) As a rule, the applicant must be notified of the decision in writing within four months, at the latest six months after submitting the application.

(6) Associate professors can apply for a review of their status at any time in order to obtain professorial membership. The application must be made in writing.

§ 9 Transitional provision

Persons who are members or associate professors of the Graduate School NRW on 17.11.2022 remain members or associate professors with the terms defined at the time of admission.

§ 10 Entry into force

Issued on the basis of the decision of the Graduate School Senate of 13.02.2023. The regulations come into force after the day of their announcement in the official notices of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW.

Bochum, 24.02.23

The Chairman of the Executive Board
signed *Sternberg*

(Prof. Dr. Martin Sternberg)

Sankt Augustin, 13.02.2023

The Chairman of the Graduate School Senate
signed *Jung*

(Prof. Dr. Norbert Jung)