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# Doctoral degree regulations of the Department of Social and Health Affairs of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia

from 27.04.2023

Based on § 67b (3) and § 67 (3) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG) of September 16, 2014, as amended by the Act Amending the Higher Education Act of July 12, 2019 (GV. NRW. p. 377) and the Framework Doctoral degree regulations of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia of January 31, 2023 (RPO), the Departmental Council of the Department of Social and Health Affairs has issued the following doctoral degree regulations:

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## § 1 Scope of application

(1) These doctoral degree regulations apply to all doctoral procedures conducted in the Department of Social and Health Affairs of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North

Rhine-Westphalia.<sup>1</sup> Insofar as no provisions have been made in these doctoral degree regulations, the corresponding rules of the framework doctoral degree regulations of the Graduate School for Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia of 31.01.2023 (RPO) apply.

(2) In the case of interdepartmental doctoral topics, a department is determined through whose doctoral degree regulations the procedure is handled.

## **§ 2 Conferral of doctoral degrees**

After passing the doctoral examination, the department awards the following academic degree in the doctoral program Shaping Social and Health Change

- a) Doktor der Philosophie (Doctor philosophiae – Dr. phil.),  
Doktorin der Philosophie (Doctor philosophiae – Dr. phil.) or  
Doktor\*in der Philosophie (Doctor philosophiae – Dr. phil.) or
- b) Doktor der Sozialwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.),  
Doktorin der Sozialwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.) or  
Doktor\*in der Sozialwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.)  
resp.  
Doktor der Politikwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.),  
Doktorin der Politikwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.) or  
Doktor\*in der Politikwissenschaften (Doctor rerum politicarum – Dr. rer. pol.).

## **§ 3 Purpose and form of the doctorate**

(1) The doctorate serves as proof of the ability to conduct in-depth academic work in the fields of social sciences and health. The doctorate is based on independent academic work (dissertation) and an oral examination (disputation).

(2) The doctorate takes place within the framework of the doctoral program specified in § 2 (1). The required courses and activities must be completed as part of the doctoral program. These are part of the requirements for admission to the doctoral procedure.

(3) Doctorates can also be carried out across departments.

(4) The duration of the doctorate should not exceed five years. In justified cases, the doctoral examining committee may extend the deadline by one year upon application submitted prior to expiry; the application must be accompanied by a justification and a statement from the supervisors responsible for the subject. The application for an extension may be submitted a total of three times. Acceptance as a doctoral candidate expires at the end of the maximum permitted duration of the doctorate (5+1+1+1 years), unless the doctoral procedure has

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<sup>1</sup> The provisions in these regulations do not apply to cooperative doctoral procedures in which the procedure is conducted exclusively via the right to award doctorates of the university or other universities entitled to award doctorates.

already been initiated. Protection periods and leaves of absence in accordance with § 20 are not counted towards the duration of the doctorate.

#### **§ 4 Doctoral examining committee**

(1) The composition, responsibilities and working methods of the doctoral examining committee are regulated by the RPO.

(2) In addition, when electing the doctoral examining committee, the aim is to achieve representation of both the social and health sectors, taking gender equality into account.

#### **§ 5 Admission requirements**

(1) Access to the doctoral procedure is granted to those holding

- a) a degree following a relevant university course of study with a general standard period of study of at least eight semesters, for which a degree other than “Bachelor” is awarded, or
- b) a degree after a relevant university degree with a general standard period of study of at least six semesters and subsequent appropriate studies in the doctoral subjects in preparation for the doctorate or
- c) a degree from a Master's degree program within the meaning of HG § 61 (2) sentence 2

in a social or health science subject with at least a good grade and who

- d) has not already been accepted as a doctoral candidate or admitted to doctoral studies in the same academic subject at another faculty or university and has not already passed a corresponding doctoral examination in the same academic subject at a university.

If the qualified degree according to sentence 1 a) to c) was not obtained in a social or health science subject, the doctoral examining committee may, in individual cases, admit the applicant to doctoral studies as an exception, provided that the other admission requirements are met.

(2) If admission to the doctoral procedure is granted in accordance with § 5 (1) b), the doctoral examining committee shall determine the modules and examinations to be completed as part of the preparatory studies for the doctorate, taking into account the completed degree and the envisaged dissertation topic. The required scope of performance may not exceed the number of ECTS credits required for a consecutive Master's degree. The modules and examinations are taken from the relevant Master's degree programs of the supporting universities. The pre-doctoral studies have been passed if all modules and examinations to be taken have been completed with an average grade of at least “good”. The requirements must be fulfilled by the start of the doctoral procedure, unless another deadline is specified.

## **§ 6 Acceptance as a doctoral candidate**

- (1) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate is regulated in § 6 of the RPO.
- (2) Acceptance is initially limited to five years and can be extended three times by one year upon application, provided that the supervisors of the thesis recommend this and confirm that the doctoral project can be successfully completed.
- (3) The application for admission as a doctoral candidate must state which doctoral degree is being sought. The research question of the dissertation is decisive in determining which doctoral degree can be obtained. If the research question of the respective doctorate has a social or health policy or social science focus, the degree Dr. rer. pol. can be awarded as an alternative to Dr. phil. The decision on the doctoral degree to be awarded is made by the doctoral examining committee.

## **§ 7 Supervision**

- (1) Supervision is regulated in § 7 of the RPO.
- (2) The supervisory team must also meet at least once a year and be informed by the doctoral candidate about the progress and status of the doctorate and participation in the doctoral program. Conversely, the doctoral candidate has the opportunity to discuss special supervision needs at these meetings.
- (3) In the case of interdisciplinary doctoral projects, the supervisors are appointed in such a way that the disciplines involved are represented accordingly.

## **§ 8 Opening of the doctoral procedure**

The opening of the doctoral procedure is regulated in § 8 of the RPO and in the following.

## **§ 9 Reviewers**

- (1) The appointment and exclusion of reviewers is regulated in § 9 of the RPO.
- (2) In the case of interdisciplinary doctoral projects, the reviewers should be appointed in such a way that the disciplines involved are represented.

## **§ 10 Examination board**

- (1) The composition and working methods of the examination board are regulated in § 10 of the RPO.
- (2) In the case of interdisciplinary doctoral projects, the members of the examination board should be appointed in such a way that the disciplines involved are represented.

## **§ 11 Dissertation**

(1) Writing and assessment of the dissertation are regulated in § 11 of the RPO.

(2) As a rule, the dissertation must be written in German or English. In special cases, other languages may be permitted if it is ensured that reviewers and examiners who are proficient in the relevant language can be appointed in accordance with §§ 9 and 10. If the dissertation is written in a language other than German or English, a summary in German or English must always be included.

(3) In the case of a cumulative doctorate, the following applies: The work of the doctoral candidate combined into a cumulative dissertation must be based on a common scientific question. A cumulative doctorate must be preceded by a detailed presentation of at least 40 pages, which critically classifies the research topics and most important findings from the publications in the context of the scientific literature on the topic, clearly delineates the doctoral candidate's own contribution, acknowledges the contributions of the other authors of the individual publications, if applicable, and makes the context of the individual publications clear. In the case of joint research work and publication, the doctoral candidate's individual contribution must be clearly distinguishable and assessable. In the case of a cumulative dissertation, at least three publications must be submitted, of which, as a rule, two must have been published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed and professionally recognized publication medium and at least one must have been published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed, internationally recognized publication medium. In the case of at least two publications, the doctoral candidate must be listed as the first author or sole author. If the authors are listed alphabetically, the first authorship must be plausibly justified.

None of the submitted theses may be the subject of another dissertation of an ongoing or completed doctoral procedure of the doctoral candidate.

(4) The reviewer's opinion must also be submitted in electronic form.

(5) The deadline for submitting the dissertation and the reviews to the department in accordance with § 11 (9) of the RPO may be shortened at the request of the doctoral candidate if there are serious reasons for doing so.

(6) The doctoral candidate will be notified of the reviews before they are displayed, with the opportunity to comment.

## **§ 12 Disputation**

(1) The conduct and assessment of the disputation are regulated in § 12 of the RPO.

(2) As a rule, the oral examination must be held in German or English. The doctoral examining committee decides on exceptions.

## **§ 13 Overall grade of the doctorate**

The determination of the overall grade of the doctorate is regulated in § 13 of the RPO.

#### **§ 14 Completion of the doctorate and certificate**

The completion of the doctorate is regulated in § 14 of the RPO.

#### **§ 15 Publication of the dissertation**

The publication of the dissertation is regulated in § 15 of the RPO.

#### **§ 16 Withdrawal from the defense**

Withdrawal from the defense is regulated in § 16 of the RPO.

#### **§ 17 Deception and revocation of the doctorate**

The procedure in the event of cheating and withdrawal of the doctorate is regulated in § 17 of the RPO.

#### **§ 18 Inspection**

Inspection is regulated in § 18 of the RPO.

#### **§ 19 Appeal against decisions in the doctoral procedure**

Appeals against decisions in the doctoral procedure are regulated in § 19 of the RPO.

#### **§ 20 Protection periods**

The protection periods are regulated in § 20 of the RPO.

#### **§ 21 Compensation for disadvantages**

Compensation for disadvantages is regulated in § 21 of the RPO.

#### **§ 22 Retention of examination documents**

The retention of examination documents is regulated in § 20 of the RPO.

### **§ 23 Doctorate in joint supervision with universities entitled to award doctorates and joint awarding of degrees**

Doctorates under joint supervision with universities entitled to award doctorates and joint awarding of degrees are regulated in § 21 of the RPO.

### **§ 24 Cooperative doctorates with universities not authorized to award doctorates**

Cooperative doctorates with universities that are not authorized to award doctorates are regulated in § 22 of the RPO.

### **§ 25 Entry into force**

Issued on the basis of the resolution of the Department council of 08.05.2023. The regulations come into force on the day after their announcement in the Official Notices of the Graduate School for Applied Research in NRW.

Cologne, 08.05.2023

The Chairwoman of the Department council

signed *Leitner*

(Prof. Dr. Sigrid Leitner)

### **Attachments**

Doctoral program Shaping social and health change



# Annex: Doctoral program Shaping Social and Health Change of the Department of Social and Health Affairs

The doctoral program focuses on social interaction in its specific forms of social coexistence. In particular, it focuses on those members of society who require social or health-related help and support. The members of society who provide services and opportunities for participation in the care and health systems, in social work or in social security systems in different contexts are also analyzed. Questions are asked about how formal and informal care services and support systems are designed and which social inequality structures they mitigate and/or reproduce, what needs the recipients of support services have and how they can meet these needs in a self-determined manner within the given circumstances, how care structures and forms of organization work, how the health and social professions are professionalizing and how their role is shaped between professional ethical issues, client interests, organizational integration and the state's mandate.

The program is aimed at doctoral candidates who have completed a degree in a social or health science subject and are seeking a doctorate in the above-mentioned field of research.

## I Aim of the program

The program provides structured support for the doctoral candidates and their supervisors and accompanies the doctoral candidates in their development process towards becoming independent researchers. It is intended as a contribution to the quality assurance of the doctoral process. Professional and interdisciplinary skills are acquired.

*Specialist competencies:* The "Social and Health Affairs" department has four main research areas: (1) social and health policy research, (2) health services research, (3) professions and professionalization research and (4) inequality, inclusion and participation research. The core of the doctoral program relates to these thematic core areas by offering a lecture series on the topic of "Shaping social and health change" as a collaborative event between the four research focus areas. This gives doctoral candidates *in-depth knowledge of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects of their research topic* and provides them with an overview of the research program and the department's current research activities.

In addition, the research focus areas alternate between in-depth courses that offer doctoral candidates the opportunity to *deepen their knowledge in the research areas relevant to their doctorate*. This is also supported by participation in national and international conferences and summer schools as well as research stays in the compulsory elective area of the program. The doctoral candidates also deepen their *knowledge of the application of scientific methods* in specific methods courses tailored to their respective doctoral projects. Finally, doctoral candidates acquire the *ability to present their research topic and discuss it in a protected environment* through the department's doctoral colloquia. Through regular progress reports and discussions with the supervisory team, *project management skills* are acquired *in relation to their own doctoral project*.

*Interdisciplinary skills:* The courses "Good scientific practice" and "Ethics and responsibility in society" impart key research ethics skills. They encourage students to reflect on scientific research strategies and their own scientific actions, the methods to be used in the doctoral project and responsible contact with the research field. These courses are offered centrally by the PK NRW.

Further interdisciplinary skills can be acquired in the compulsory elective area of the doctoral program. On the one hand, this involves *key qualifications relevant to the professional field*, such as the acquisition of language, project management and leadership skills or knowledge of appointment procedures, and on the other hand the acquisition of *teaching skills*, such as knowledge of university didactics, presentation and lecture techniques or academic writing.

Overall, the majority of the work in the doctoral program must be completed at the PK NRW. External achievements can also be credited.

## **II Doctoral degrees**

The department awards the degree of Dr. phil. or Dr. rer. pol. The topic of the dissertation determines which of the two doctoral degrees can be obtained. If the research question of the respective doctorate has a social or health policy or social science focus, the degree Dr. rer. pol. can be awarded as an alternative to Dr. phil.

## **III Structure/content of the program**

The three-year doctoral program consists of a compulsory area (Table 1) and a compulsory elective area (Table 2). While all of the courses in the compulsory area must be completed, courses in at least three of the six areas listed must be completed in the compulsory elective area. The indication of the year in the compulsory area of the doctoral program is a recommendation, the courses can also be completed differently. It is also possible to attend additional courses. The courses can also be offered and attended as online courses.

### ***Mandatory area***

#### *1st year:*

- Lecture series "Shaping social and health change": This consists of a total of eight lectures, which are organized by the four research focus areas. The doctoral candidates attend at least seven of the eight lectures and thus get to know the research program and current research projects of the department.
- Course on good scientific practice: This teaches basic knowledge of scientific ethics in relation to (your own) scientific work.
- Course on ethics and responsibility in society: This teaches basic knowledge of scientific ethics in relation to the relationship between science and society and one's own scientific actions in this context.

- Doctoral student colloquium: Doctoral candidates present their own research in a colloquium attended by their supervisors as well as other researchers and supervisors.
- Written progress report and discussion: The doctoral candidates prepare a written report on the progress of their doctoral project and discuss it with their supervisory team. The time and work plan set out in the supervision agreement is reviewed and modified or updated if necessary.

*2nd year:*

- Methods course to deepen specific knowledge on the application of scientific methods tailored to the doctoral project.
- Written progress report and discussion: The doctoral candidates prepare a written report on the progress of their doctoral project and discuss it with their supervisory team. The time and work plan set out in the supervision agreement is reviewed and modified or updated if necessary.
- Doctoral student colloquium: Doctoral candidates present their own research in a colloquium attended by their supervisors as well as other researchers and supervisors.

*3rd year:*

- Presentation of your own research at an external scientific conference
- Written progress report and discussion: The doctoral candidates prepare a written report on the progress of their doctoral project and discuss it with their supervisory team. The time and work plan set out in the supervision agreement is reviewed and modified or updated if necessary.

***Compulsory elective area***

*Area 1: Specialist meetings/conferences*

- This may involve participation in in-depth events on the department's research focus areas and in national or international conferences with their own contribution. Conference participation serves the purpose of networking in the scientific community.

*Area 2: Workshops/events*

- This includes participation in interdisciplinary qualification workshops, university didactic workshops, other further training courses, a summer school or a language course. Doctoral candidates acquire various interdisciplinary skills.

*Area 3: Publications*

- Publications in (particularly) recognized journals, publications in other organs (e.g. conference proceedings) and the editorship of anthologies or similar are recognized. Early publication activity promotes socialization in the scientific community.

*Area 4: Transfer services*

- This includes the organization and implementation of information events or workshops for the interested public or practitioners, among others. Competencies for the transfer of research results in different areas of society are acquired.

*Area 5: Teaching*

- The planning and implementation of courses is recognized. Central teaching skills in the field of university didactics and adult education are acquired.

*Area 6: Other*

- This includes a research stay of at least two weeks with a connection to a research institution or university, an internship of at least two weeks in an area relevant to the career path, the organization of an academic conference/event, activities in academic self-administration and examining committee work as well as the organization of an exhibition (e.g. an exhibition of dissertation projects). Subject-specific and professionally relevant skills are acquired.

Table 1: Mandatory area

Year	Event	Explanations
<b>1</b>	Lecture series: "Shaping social and health change"	The total of 8 events are organized by the four research focus areas in presence or online. The doctoral candidates should attend at least 7 events.
	Event on "Good Scientific Practice"	This event should be attended at the beginning if possible. It is offered by the PK NRW. In addition, thematically fitting events of a corresponding time frame can be credited.
	Event on "Ethics and responsibility in society"	This event is also offered by PK NRW. In addition, thematically fitting events of a corresponding time frame can be credited.
	Doctoral candidate colloquium	
	Written progress report judgement and discussion	The doctoral candidate and the supervisor are involved.
<b>2</b>	Methods course to deepen specific knowledge tailored to the doctoral project for the application of scientific methods.	Doctoral candidates attend an in-depth methods workshop offered either by the PK NRW or externally. Financial support for participation in external methods workshops can be provided by the department upon application and in accordance with the available resources.
	Written progress report and progress discussion	The doctoral candidate and the supervisor are involved.
	Doctoral candidate colloquium	
<b>3</b>	Presentation of your own research at an external scientific symposium	All conferences that are not organized by PK NRW are external.
	Written progress report and progress discussion	The doctoral candidate and the supervisor are involved.

Table 2: Compulsory elective area, a total of three performances must be achieved in at least three of the six areas listed

<p><b>(1) Symposiums/Conferences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in in-depth event on the research focus with own contribution or conference report</li> <li>• Participation in national or international conference with own contribution</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanation:</b></p> <p>If no contribution is made, a conference report must be submitted.</p>
<p><b>(2) Workshops/events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary qualification workshop</li> <li>• University didactic workshop</li> <li>• Further training</li> <li>• Summer school</li> <li>• Language course</li> </ul>	
<p><b>(3) Publications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article in a recognized journal (preferably peer-reviewed, high impact factor, relevance to subject)</li> <li>• Editorship of an anthology or similar.</li> <li>• Publication in other organs (e.g. conference proceedings)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanations:</b></p> <p>No distinction is made between first and second authorship. No publications that are mandatory for a cumulative dissertation will be counted.</p>
<p><b>(4) Transfer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information event or workshop for, among others, interested members of the public or practitioners</li> </ul>	
<p><b>(5) Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and implementation of a course</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explanation:</b></p> <p>Participation in a university didactics workshop is recommended.</p>
<p><b>(6) Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research stay with a connection to a research institution or university (at least 2 weeks) with submission of a report on the results</li> <li>• Internship in a field relevant to the career path (at least 2 weeks)</li> <li>• Organization of conferences/events</li> <li>• Activities in academic self-administration and examining committee work (e.g. participation in Department council, Graduate School senate, departmental or faculty councils or appointment committees, office of doctoral student spokesperson, office of equal opportunities officer)</li> <li>• Organization of an exhibition (e.g. exhibition of dissertation projects)</li> </ul>	

#### **IV Supervision agreement**

The supervision agreement specifies which services are to be provided in the compulsory elective area of the doctoral program in order to develop the doctoral candidate's individual profile and which scientific publications are aimed for. If special professional needs are identified in relevant areas, the supervisory team can specify specific qualification measures. In the annual progress meetings, the time and work plan set out in the supervision agreement is reviewed and modified or updated if necessary.

Non-official version