

Important:

Please note that this document is a translation based on the “Promotionsordnung Wegleitung der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Basel” and as such is NOT legally binding.

For legal purposes, please always refer to the original German document.

Faculty of Medicine Regulations for the Attainment of MD/PhD Doctorates

## 1. Introduction

The following guidelines summarize and supplement the “Promotionsordnung der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Basel” i.e., “PhD regulations of the Faculty of Medicine University of Basel,” (PhD Regulations) enacted 25 September 2014.

In the University of Basel’s Faculty of Medicine, qualified graduate students can pursue PhD studies in subjects specified in the relevant subjects regulations. This education prepares them for the demands of research, teaching, clinical and industrial contexts.

## 2. Admission (§4, PhD Regulations)

In addition to the Student Administration Office application form, the PhD student application dossier must include a brief description (one-half to one full A4 page (2000 – 5000 characters)) of the proposed PhD project and a request for the affirmation of a primary advisor. This request includes the proposed advisor’s guarantee of financial support according to current Swiss National Fund guidelines, assures the student’s availability (minimum 50% of regular working time) over the target period, and nominates a secondary advisor.

The application dossier is to be submitted to the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine for examination and recommendation by the PhD Board of the Medical Faculty. Following a positive recommendation, the Dean of Research submits an application for admission to the office of the Rector.

A maximum of six months after approval, a PhD Agreement and a detailed research proposal must be received by the Office of the Dean. An insufficient research proposal can be revised within a maximum of three months. If necessary, the PhD Board can request the students deregistration.

Further information, forms and an example of the student portfolio can be downloaded from the University of Basel Faculty of Medicine website (<http://medizin.unibas.ch/lehre/promotionen/PhD-dr-sc-med.html>).

## 3. Responsibilities

*PhD Board of Medical Faculty (§8 PhD Regulations)*

The PhD Board is able to make decisions if at least half of its members participate in a vote. Each PhD subject should be covered by at least one expert.

*PhD Committee (§9 PhD Regulations)*

The PhD education will be supervised as appropriate by a PhD Committee. The primary and secondary advisors oversee the parts of the PhD thesis pertaining to their respective subjects. The primary advisor should be employed a minimum of 50% at the University of Basel or an associated institution over the entire period of dissertation supervision and

devote a minimum of 10% of their respective working hours to the support of each of their PhD students.

Any external experts should be neither members of the student's research group nor co-authors of their publications.

Upon request to the PhD Board more advisory staff can be designated. For this, an informal application stating reasons has to be submitted to the PhD Board, stating a description of the position, institutional connection, and the address (mail, e-mail) of the desired advisor(s). For persons outside of the medical faculty, a CV and list of publications should also be included. The application should be supported by the primary advisor. Acceptability will be determined by the PhD Board. To ensure adequate support, the PhD Board can propose that the PhD Committee nominate further advisors.

The PhD Committee confers at least once yearly to evaluate the development of research projects and students' achievements. This evaluation determines whether the most important goals have been reached, and to confirm objectives to be reached in the coming year. After the completion of the first year's studies, the PhD Committee decides whether the work in progress can be continued. Based on the student's portfolio, the PhD Committee agrees to produce a yearly report to the PhD Board of the Faculty of Medicine.

On the basis of this annual report, the PhD Board decides how to proceed.

#### **4. Doctoral Education**

##### *Courses (§11 to §13 PhD Regulations)*

The mandatory PhD program consists of courses totaling at least 12 credit points (ECTS), which should include the topics of research methodology, statistics, philosophy of science and scientific conduct. In consultation with the PhD Committee, a PhD student can also compose a personal study program from regular master's and PhD course offerings at the University of Basel or other university-level institutions. As fully as possible, when students begin their PhD studies, they should submit the planned content and timetable for their PhD theses in written form to their PhD Committee as part of the PhD Agreement included in their student portfolio (§7 PhD Regulations). In mutual agreement with the PhD student, the PhD Committee will establish all further details. Upon consultation with the PhD Committee, further study-related matters may also be included, e.g., visits to partner universities within the framework of international research projects.

##### *Dissertation work (§14 PhD guidelines)*

The PhD dissertation consists of the design, execution and evaluation of a scientific project and demonstrates the student's scientific capabilities. Decisions on how to proceed with research projects are made in conjunction with the PhD Committee.

The PhD thesis is to be produced cumulatively. The entire document will include three publications in peer-reviewed journals as first author. Of these, at least one must have been accepted for publication when the PhD thesis is submitted.

In exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of the primary advisor, the PhD Board may approve candidates with fewer than three publications for the PhD examinations.

It is the PhD Boards decision if candidates are approved to the exams.

The PhD thesis is to be structured as follows:

- Title page (Regarding design, see website of the Faculty)
- Declaration: "Approved by the Faculty of Medicine at the request of: (name of primary advisor)" Date of PhD defense
- Table of Contents

- The candidate's acknowledgements and expressions of appreciation (1-2 pages)
- Conclusion (English and German)
- Introduction to the subject (literature overview, presentation of research issue, research gaps and resources, 6-8 pages)
- Research/study objectives
- Publications in notable peer-reviewed journals
- Discussion, conclusion and outlook
- Curriculum vitae

As the introduction highlights the student's achievements, fills in necessary details and connects related elements, it fulfills §14 subpara 4 of the PhD Regulations.

### **5. Admittance to the Oral Exam (PhD Viva/Defense) (§17 PhD Regulations)**

Upon completion of all study and research requirements, the PhD student presents the Application for PhD defense (Promotionsantrag) to the primary advisor to sign. By signing this form, the advisor confirms the truthfulness of all data, as well as the candidate's proper completion of the studies.

Before the application deadline (see posted notice) the student must submit the Application for PhD defense, which has been signed by the primary advisor, to the Office of the Dean, along with a copy of the PhD thesis manuscript (neither bound nor stapled), an electronic version of the PhD thesis manuscript, a copy of the candidate's student identification, proof of any required credit points according to the PhD Agreement, and a signed declaration composed as follows: "I affirm that I drafted this thesis (insert title) myself, assisted only by therein acknowledged sources, and have not admitted it to another university or to any other faculty within the University of Basel."

### **6. Assessment**

Along with the completed Application PhD defense, the PhD Committee provide the Office of the Dean with evaluations by the primary advisor, the secondary advisor and the external experts. Along with written assessments of the thesis, each of these evaluations includes a proposed grade (§19 PhD Regulations) and a recommendation to the Faculty of Medicine's PhD Board to request its acceptance or rejection.

The primary and secondary advisors and external experts should be unprejudiced and comment mainly on the following elements of the thesis in question:

1. Currentness and stringency of sources named in the context of research gaps and research questions.
2. Methods used
3. Value of results
4. Relevance of discussion

5. Global assessment of thesis

**7. The PhD defense (§18 PhD Regulations)**

The office of the PhD Board organizes the PhD defense process. The invitation of guests is the responsibility of the PhD student.

At the PhD student's written application to the PhD Board (at the time of submission of the Application for PhD defense), the PhD defense can also be taken in private. The PhD Board is to be informed of this request by the student.

The PhD defense is conducted as follows:

- Greetings by the chairperson and introduction of examination procedure
- Brief presentation of research work (20-30 mins) by the student
- Questions to the student by the PhD Committee (ca. 30 mins)
- Questions to the student by the audience
- Confidential consultation between the members of the PhD Committee, including any external experts, regarding the student's grade
- Chairperson's announcement of exam results
- Declaration of pledge, signing of diploma and acceptance by student
- (Possibly) thanks to or by student or chairpersons
- Announcement of graduation by chairperson

**8. Dissertation Awards**

In cases of exceptional achievement, PhD defense and PhD thesis manuscript grades, the PhD Committee can nominate the PhD student to the Faculty of Medicine's Dissertation Committee for awards.