

**Promotionsordnung (Doctoral Regulations)
of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Rostock
for attainment of the title of Doctor of Religious Studies
(Doctor rerum religionum)**

of 25 May 2009

Based on § 43(3) in conjunction with § 2(1) sentence 3 of the *Landeshochschulgesetz* – LHG-MV (State Higher Education Act) of 5 July 2002 (Law and Ordinance Gazette of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (GVOBl. M-V), p. 398)¹, last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 5 May 2009 (GVOBl. M-V, p. 330), the University of Rostock hereby passes the following *Promotionsordnung* (hereinafter Doctoral Regulations) for the Faculty of Theology at the University of Rostock on attainment of the title of Doctor of Religious Studies (Doctor rerum religionum):

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Preamble

These Doctoral Regulations are intended to enable academics who have completed a university degree course other than Theology (*Diplom*/teaching qualifications) to obtain a doctorate in a field of study covered by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Rostock or specified by way of example in § 3(1).

¹ Mittl.bl. BM M-V, p. 511

These Doctoral Regulations apply to academics who, for various reasons, are unable to obtain a doctorate from the faculty that covers their actual field of study (e.g. because the field of study is not represented at the University of Rostock or because a suitable supervisor cannot be found).

§ 1 Doctorate

(1) Based on these Doctoral Regulations, the Faculty of Theology awards the academic title of Doctor of Religious Studies (Doctor rerum religionum, abbreviated to Dr. rer. rel.) on the basis of an independently authored academic treatise (thesis) and a public thesis defence.

(2) Upon request and subject to approval by the Council of the Faculty of Theology, a doctorate may be awarded in a field of study other than those specified by way of example in § 3(1).

§ 2 Doctoral Board

(1) The extended Doctoral Board at the Faculty of Theology is responsible for implementing the doctoral procedure. The extended Doctoral Board is composed of the Doctoral Board established at the Faculty of Theology in accordance with the Doctoral Regulations for Theologians at the Faculty of Theology as amended from time to time, as well as three further members of the University of Rostock who hold habilitations and work in non-theological fields. The non-theological members of the extended Doctoral Board are proposed by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and appointed by the Council of the Faculty of Theology. The non-theological members have full voting rights in doctoral procedures for non-theologians.

(2) The Dean of the Faculty serves as the Chairperson of the extended Doctoral Board. The Dean of the Faculty may also delegate the role of chairperson to another member of the Doctoral Board; the Dean is obligated to do so if they are named as reviewer in a doctoral procedure. Reviewers cannot serve as Chairperson of the Doctoral Board.

(3) Members of the extended Doctoral Board serve a two-year term, with these terms running concurrent to those of the Doctoral Board of the Faculty of Theology. Re-election is possible. The extended Doctoral Board has a quorum if at least seven of its members are present.

§ 3 Admission requirements for the doctoral procedure

(1) In order to submit a thesis and gain admission to the doctoral procedure, applicants must

- demonstrate that they have completed regular studies at a German university or higher education institution of equal standing in an equivalent postgraduate degree course and
- have completed their studies by obtaining a *Diplom*, passing a *Staatsexamen* (state examination) or being awarded a master's degree in a subject pertinent to the doctoral field. These are usually subjects such as Jewish Studies, Islamic Studies, Oriental Studies, Indology, the Sociology of Religion, the Psychology of Religion, and Christian Social Welfare, etc. In case of doubt, the Doctoral Board consults the applicant and issues a recommendation to the Council of the Faculty of Theology.

(2) Upon request, studies outside Germany and university degrees awarded by institutions outside Germany may be recognised provided that they are equivalent to a German university degree as defined in sub-section (1). The Faculty Council makes determinations regarding equivalence. Equivalence agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) must be considered in this context. If the Faculty Council is unable to make a determination regarding equivalence on the basis of these documents, an assessment should be sought from the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) at the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK). Furthermore, the admission of applicants who completed their university degree course outside the Federal Republic of Germany and whose native language is not German also requires additional proof of adequate German or English language skills.

(3) Graduates of a theology-related degree programme at a university of applied sciences may be admitted if they achieved an above-average final mark in their degree course and demonstrate their academic aptitude for doctoral studies before a committee in a colloquium. The members of this committee are appointed by the Faculty Council. The colloquium is chaired by the Chairperson of the Doctoral Board. The outcome of the colloquium is a recommendation to the Faculty Council on whether or not to admit the applicant, potentially accompanied by conditions for admission. The Faculty Council then takes the final decision on admission to the doctoral procedure. The applicant is then informed of the decision in writing.

(4) Admission to the doctoral procedure requires knowledge of one European language (not including German) and knowledge of either Latin, Greek or Hebrew. The applicant must provide proof of this in the form of certificates from language tests they have passed.

(5) The Faculty Council decides on exceptions to the admission requirements in duly justified cases. In such cases, the applicant must submit a written application to the Dean that explains their compelling reason. Exceptions may be made contingent on fulfilment of conditions and therefore issued subject to revocation.

(6) The applicant for doctoral studies should be academically supervised by a professor, junior professor, Privatdozent (senior lecturer), or an academic who holds a habilitation at the University of Rostock's Faculty of Theology. Interdisciplinary co-supervision with an academic from another faculty who holds a habilitation is possible. As a general rule, the Dean of the faculty at the University of Rostock at which the applicant completed their previous studies is asked whether a suitable supervisor is available

for the proposed thesis.

(7) In exceptionally justified cases, theses may be accepted without supervision by a suitably qualified member of professorial staff at the Faculty of Theology. In this case, proper supervision that is in line with the subject-specific regulations must be ensured and an agreement concluded with a professor at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Rostock. In this agreement, the professor should declare their willingness to supervise the thesis on behalf of the Faculty and serve as a reviewer.

§ 4

Admission to the doctoral procedure

(1) Prior to submission of the thesis, the doctoral candidate must request verification from the Dean that all admission requirements specified in § 3 have been fulfilled. The decision is binding for the remainder of the procedure.

(2) Upon submission of the thesis, the doctoral candidate must submit a request to the Dean of the Faculty for initiation of the doctoral procedure, stating the doctoral subject in their request. The candidate must attach the following documents to their request:

1. four copies of their thesis including written hypotheses;
2. an academic CV;
3. their degree certificate (legally attested copy);
4. evidence of their language skills in accordance with § 3(4);
5. a list of their academic publications to date;
6. an official certificate of good conduct (*Führungszeugnis*);
7. an affirmation that the doctoral candidate has written the submitted thesis independently and without external assistance, other than the declared sources and resources, and that any passages taken verbatim or content taken from other works are indicated as such, and
8. a declaration of whether and with which result the doctoral candidate has previously unsuccessfully sought to obtain a doctorate at the University of Rostock or at another university.

§ 5

Withdrawal from the doctoral procedure

The doctoral candidate may withdraw their application without consequence provided that the doctoral procedure has not yet been initiated.

§ 6

Thesis

(1) The subject of the thesis must be a topic of relevance for religious research and demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to perform independent, in-depth academic work. The research results presented in the thesis must reflect the latest developments in the field of study, demonstrate a knowledge gain and take account of essential international literature.

(2) A thesis is generally written in German. In exceptional cases, and with the approval of the Faculty Council, a thesis may be written in another language, provided that it can be properly assessed by the Faculty of Theology. In such cases, a summary must also be submitted in German.

(3) The thesis must contain a complete list of all literature and other sources used. Its results should be summarised in a series of written hypotheses, which form part of the thesis and are considered in its assessment. A brief CV detailing the candidate's academic career to date should also be attached to the thesis.

(4) The thesis must be submitted in a publication-ready format and firmly bound.

(5) In exceptional cases, the Faculty Council may permit the submission of a thesis jointly authored by multiple doctoral candidates if justified by the subject examined and methods applied. In this case, however, the individual contribution of each doctoral candidate must be clearly indicated in order to verify their ability to perform in-depth academic work.

(6) The Faculty Council may accept a previously published treatise as a thesis if it corresponds to the current state of research. This does not include papers previously submitted by the doctoral candidate for examination purposes. However, the doctoral candidate may use the results of previous papers in their thesis, provided that such papers are duly listed in the bibliography.

(7) In exceptional cases, several individual papers may be submitted as a cumulative thesis, provided that these papers have close chronological and topical connections and, as a whole, correspond to the requirements of a thesis. In this case, the candidate must systematically integrate the individual papers into the respective research context and produce a summary of the results in order to make clear the theoretical connection between the individual papers.

§ 7 Reviewers

(1) If a candidate is admitted to the doctoral procedure, the Doctoral Board proposes reviewers to the Faculty of Theology. The applicant may also propose reviewers in coordination with their supervisor. The reviewers are appointed by the Council of the Faculty of Theology. The thesis must be assessed by at least three reviewers, at least two of whom must be members of professorial staff. Professors at universities and academics who hold a habilitation may also be appointed as reviewers. One reviewer must be a full-time member of staff at the University of Rostock's Faculty of Theology. Another reviewer from the University of Rostock must belong to the subject area of the candidate's previously completed degree programme. If this subject is not represented at the University of Rostock, an external reviewer from the subject area is appointed. No more than two reviewers may be full-time members of staff at the University of Rostock.

(2) The reviewers appointed by the Council of the Faculty of Theology have the right to decline to serve as reviewer in writing within 14 days, stating their reasons.

§ 8 Assessment of the thesis

(1) As a general rule, the reviewers should produce their assessments within three months of accepting to serve as reviewers.

(2) In their assessment, the reviewers state whether the thesis satisfies the requirements for conferral of the academic title of Doctor rerum religionum; they should also recommend whether the thesis should be accepted or rejected and award a grade for the thesis.

(3) Each reviewer must award the thesis one of the following marks:

- summa cum laude (excellent) – 0 as a special grade for a particularly outstanding thesis
- magna cum laude (very good) – 1
- cum laude (good) – 2
- rite (sufficient) – 3
- non sufficit (unsatisfactory) – 4

(4) The copy of a thesis provided to a reviewer becomes the property of that reviewer.

§ 9

Acceptance of the thesis

(1) The members of the Doctoral Board are presented with the thesis and the reviewers' assessments. The Doctoral Board decides whether to accept or reject the thesis on the basis of the reviewers' assessments. Each member of the Doctoral Board can vote in favour of or against accepting the thesis. Any votes contrary to the reviewers' assessments must be thoroughly justified. If the marks awarded in the assessments differ by more than one mark, or if one of the assessments provides a mark of "non sufficit", the Doctoral Board may obtain a further assessment. In this case, the doctoral candidate must provide a further copy of their thesis.

(2) A thesis is rejected if two assessments provide a mark of "non sufficit" – regardless of the total number of assessments.

(3) Upon accepting a thesis, conditions may also be issued for amendments that relate to the structure of the thesis but not to its academic content. Only following fulfilment of these conditions, which must be checked by the Doctoral Board, can the doctoral certificate be issued.

(4) The Dean must inform the doctoral candidate within one week of the Doctoral Board's decision to accept or reject their thesis. Following this decision, the doctoral candidate must be permitted to view the reviewers' assessment.

(5) If the thesis is accepted, a copy of the thesis and the reviewers' assessments are displayed in the Dean's Office for a period of four weeks for inspection by members of professorial staff, members of the Faculty who hold a habilitation and other members of the Faculty Council.

§ 10

Rejected theses

(1) If the thesis is rejected, the doctoral procedure has been concluded unsuccessfully. The Dean informs the doctoral candidate in writing that their thesis has been rejected, indicating the decisive shortcomings. Upon request, the doctoral candidate may be permitted to inspect the reviewers' assessments.

(2) An application for initiation of a new doctoral procedure may be submitted one time only, once at least six months have elapsed following rejection of the thesis, with either a significantly amended thesis or a thesis on a different topic. If applicable, a statement regarding previous rejection of the thesis should be attached to their application for a new doctoral procedure.

(3) A copy of the rejected thesis is retained in the doctoral records.

§ 11

Public thesis defence

- (1) Following acceptance of the thesis, the Chairperson of the Doctoral Board sets a date and time for the public thesis defence. The date and time must be announced in a suitable form.
- (2) The public thesis defence comprises the following parts:
 - 2.1 Introduction of the Doctoral Board
 - 2.2 Introduction of the doctoral candidate
 - 2.3 Lecture by the doctoral candidate on their thesis topic (max. 30 minutes)
 - 2.4 The Chairperson of the Doctoral Board or the reviewers read out excerpts from the assessments, limiting themselves to critical observations made by the reviewers and their summarised assessment of the thesis.
 - 2.5 Defence focusing on the candidate's lecture (max. 60 minutes on the doctoral topic and related fields)
- (3) The Doctoral Board deliberates in private to determine a grade for the thesis defence.

§ 12

Assessment of the public thesis defence

- (1) The Chairperson of the Doctoral Board keeps minutes, detailing events during the public thesis defence.
- (2) The overall mark for the public thesis defence is calculated from the equally weighted marks for the lecture and the defence. These marks are based on the marks set out in § 8(3). The Doctoral Board determines the mark by means of a simple majority.
- (3) The doctoral candidate is deemed to have failed the public thesis defence if
 - the candidate fails to attend the public defence, despite being properly invited, without providing reasons for which they were not responsible. Any such reasons must be raised immediately; or
 - more than half of the members of the Doctoral Board assess the candidate's overall performance in their lecture and defence as "non sufficit".
- (4) If a candidate fails their public thesis defence, they may repeat the thesis defence on one occasion, within six months. Further repeats are not permitted.

§ 13

Determination of the final grade

(1) After a candidate passes the oral examination, the Doctoral Board determines the final grade for the doctorate; the Chairperson then informs the doctoral candidate behind closed doors and provides an oral justification for the final grade awarded.

(2) The final grade is a combination of the average marks awarded in the reviewers' assessments (= mark for the thesis) and the mark for the oral examination. The final grade of the doctoral procedure is made up of the mark for the thesis, which counts double, and the mark for the oral examination. This total is divided by three to determine the result, which is calculated as a mark with one decimal place.

(3) The following grades are used for the final grade for the doctorate:

- summa cum laude (excellent; 0,0 to 0,4);
- magna cum laude (very good; 0,5 to 1,4);
- cum laude (good; 1,5 to 2,4);
- rite (sufficient; 2,5 to 3,4).

§ 14

Conclusion of the doctoral procedure and conferral of the doctorate

(1) The doctoral procedure is concluded when the final, overall grade is announced. The Dean informs the doctoral candidate in writing of their successful completion of the doctoral procedure, stating the final grade and individual marks.

(2) After fulfilling all obligations arising from the doctoral procedure (cf. § 16), including any conditions (cf. § 9(3)), a certificate is issued in German confirming conferral of the doctorate. The Dean concludes the doctoral procedure by sending or presenting the doctoral certificate to the candidate. The certificate contains the title of the thesis, the doctoral field and the final grade for the doctorate. It is dated when the doctoral procedure was concluded. It is signed by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology and furnished with the seal of the University of Rostock. Once the successful doctoral candidate has received their certificate, they are entitled to use the title of Doctor.

§ 15

Publication of the thesis and mandatory copies

(1) The thesis must be published in appropriate form following conclusion of the doctoral procedure and fulfilment of any conditions (cf. § 9(3)).

(2) The submission of mandatory copies is subject to the University of Rostock's regulations on submission of mandatory copies (*Pflichtexemplarordnung*). The number of mandatory copies specified in these regulations must be submitted no later than four weeks after the public thesis defence.

The candidate must send confirmation of this to the Doctoral Office.

§ 16 Doctoral records

(1) The entire doctoral procedure and results must be documented (doctoral records). The doctoral candidate may be allowed to view the doctoral records following conclusion of the doctoral procedure.

§ 17 Right of appeal

(1) If requested by a member of the Doctoral Board, procedural matters must be presented to the Faculty Council for decision-making.

(2) The doctoral candidate may object to a decision that infringes their rights, within one month of announcement of the decision, by filing an appeal either in writing or for recording with the Dean.

(3) The Faculty Council then examines whether it can resolve the appeal. If not, the Faculty Council submits the appeal to the Rector for a decision, who issues the appeal notification.

(4) The candidate may file an objection against this appeal notification within one month of receiving the appeal notification at the competent administrative court (*Verwaltungsgericht*).

§ 18 Invalidation and revocation of a doctorate

(1) If it emerges that the doctoral candidate was admitted to the doctoral procedure on the basis of false information or that they attempted or succeeded in cheating while completing the doctorate, the Faculty Council may declare their doctoral work invalid, revoke their doctorate and confiscate their doctoral certificate (if already issued).

(2) A doctorate may also be revoked and the doctoral certificate confiscated if the recipient has been convicted of an intentional criminal offence, the preparation or realisation of which was linked to the misuse of the doctoral title. Otherwise, revocation of the doctorate is subject to the applicable statutory provisions. Decisions in this regard are taken by the Faculty Council.

(3) Before a decision is taken, the person in question must be given the opportunity to make a statement before the Faculty Council.

§ 19
Entry into force

The Doctoral Regulations of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Rostock on attainment of the title of “Dr. rer. rel.” shall enter into force on the day after their publication in the Official Gazette of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Drawn up following the decision made by the Academic Senate of the University of Rostock of 1 April 2009 and following the approval of the Rector of the University of Rostock on 25 May 2009.

Rostock, 25 May 2009

The Rector of the University of Rostock,
Professor Dr. Wolfgang D. Schareck

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