

**Promotionsordnung (Doctoral Regulations)  
of the Faculty of Theology  
at the University of Rostock**

of 24 September 2008

Based on § 43(3) sentence 1 in conjunction with § 2(1) sentence 3 of the *Landeshochschulgesetz* – LHG M-V (State Higher Education Act) in the version announced on 5 January 2002 (Law and Ordinance Gazette of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (GVOBl. M-V), p. 398)<sup>1</sup>, last amended by Article 19 of the Act of 10 July 2006 (GVOBl. M-V, p. 539)<sup>2</sup>, the University of Rostock hereby passes the following *Promotionsordnung* (Doctoral Regulations) for the Faculty of Theology.

**Table of contents**

- § 1 Right to confer doctorates
- § 2 Doctoral work
- § 3 Interfaculty and binational doctorates
- § 4 Admission requirements for the doctoral procedure
- § 5 Admission to the doctoral procedure
- § 6 Initiation of the doctoral procedure
- § 7 Doctoral Board
- § 8 Thesis
- § 9 Assessment of the thesis
- § 10 Acceptance of the thesis
- § 11 Rejection of the thesis
- § 12 Oral examination
- § 13 Thesis defence (*Disputation*)
- § 14 Broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*)
- § 15 Assessment of the oral examination
- § 16 Determination of the final grade for the doctorate
- § 17 Conclusion of the doctoral procedure and conferral of the doctorate
- § 18 Publication and mandatory copies
- § 19 Right of appeal
- § 20 Invalidation and revocation of the doctoral title
- § 21 Honorary doctorates
- § 22 Renewal of a doctoral certificate
- § 23 Scope of application
- § 24 Entry into force

**§ 1**

**Right to confer doctorates**

(1) The Faculty of Theology confers the academic title of Doctor of Theology (Dr. theol.) for the doctoral fields specified in the Appendix.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mittl.bl. BM M-V, p. 511

<sup>2</sup> Mittl.bl. BM M-V, p. 635

(2) A doctorate verifies an individual's ability to perform independent academic work extending beyond general study objectives in a field of study covered by the Faculty of Theology.

(3) In recognition of outstanding academic achievements or exceptional services to theology and the Church, the Faculty of Theology may award the title of Honorary Doctor of Theology (Dr. theol. h. c.).

## **§ 2 Doctoral work**

(1) A doctorate is conferred on the basis of an academic treatise (thesis) written by the doctoral candidate in a field of study covered by the Faculty, and an oral examination.

(2) The thesis should demonstrate their ability to perform in-depth, independent academic work. An interdisciplinary treatise may also be recognised as a thesis, provided that one of the disciplines it examines is a field of study covered by the Faculty of Theology.

(3) The thesis should be academically supervised by a member of the Faculty of Theology. The following groups of people may serve as supervisors: university professors, junior professors, *außerplanmäßige Professors* (senior lecturers) and other members of the Faculty who hold a habilitation; professors at universities of applied sciences may also be involved in the supervision. The supervisor-candidate relationship may be continued in the event that the supervisor leaves the Faculty. If supervision of the thesis ends because the supervisor leaves the Faculty or due to their death, and upon request from the doctoral candidate, the Dean appoints a member of the Faculty in line with sentence 1 to assume responsibility for supervision.

## **§ 3 Interfaculty and binational doctorates**

(1) The Faculty of Philosophy permits interfaculty doctoral procedures provided that a sub-area of the doctoral field is covered by the Faculty of Theology and subject to fulfilment of the requirements set out in § 4. Upon receiving such an application for doctoral candidacy, the Doctoral Board of the Faculty of Theology immediately informs the Dean and Doctoral Board of the other faculty. The other faculty provides a reviewer. A further academic from the other faculty who holds a habilitation may be appointed to the Doctoral Board.

(2) A doctoral procedure can also be prepared and conducted as a binational doctorate jointly supervised by a foreign higher-education institution/faculty. The University of Rostock and the participating university must define the specific details of the procedure in a joint agreement.

## § 4

### Admission requirements for the doctoral procedure

(1) In order to gain admission to the doctoral procedure, the applicant must have passed the *Erstes Theologisches Examen* (First Theological Examination) or the *Diplom* examination in theology or the *Erstes Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) for teaching at *Gymnasien* (grammar schools) with Protestant Religious Education as an examination subject, or evidence of a completed master's degree equivalent to one of the aforementioned qualifications, achieved with an above-average grade at a higher-education institution with the right to confer a doctorate. An above-average grade is when the applicant's average grade in the final examination for the qualification specified in sentence 1 is 2,5 or better or was graded "gut" (good/B) or better. Above-average achievements can also be demonstrated by means of academic achievements, such as publications after completing their academic studies. The Faculty Council decides on such cases.

(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 a university degree course in theology 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 course at a university of applied sciences may be admitted if they achieved an above-average final mark in their degree in accordance with sub-section (1) and demonstrate their academic aptitude for doctoral study before a committee in a colloquium. The members of this committee are appointed by the Faculty Council.

(4) If the applicant's university degree did not require knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, the applicant must provide evidence in the form of certificates from successful language tests.

(5) The Faculty Council may decide to waive the admission requirements set out in sub-sections (1) to (4) in duly justified cases. In such cases, the applicant must submit a written application to the Dean and demonstrate their compelling reason. In particular, the Faculty Council may reduce the foreign languages requirements by one – or, for international students, two – of the languages specified in sub-section (4) where this is offset by knowledge of modern or other classical languages, provided that this would not be detrimental to the success of the doctoral project. The Faculty Council decides on reduction and offsetting arrangements on proposal by the supervisor. The waiving of requirements may be made contingent on fulfilment of conditions and therefore issued subject to revocation.

## **§ 5**

### **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 § 4 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. three 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 § 4(4) and, if applicable, § 4(2);
  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 sought unsuccessfully to obtain a doctorate at the University of Rostock or at another university.
- (3) The doctoral candidate may withdraw their application without consequence provided that the doctoral procedure has not yet been initiated.

## **§ 6**

### **Initiation of the doctoral procedure**

(1) The Faculty Council decides within two months whether to initiate a doctoral procedure and regarding the request for verification of fulfilment of the admission requirements pursuant to § 5(1). The Dean informs the doctoral candidate in writing of the Faculty Council's decision within 14 days; in the event that the request is rejected, the Dean also details the reasons for this rejection.

(2) A request to initiate a doctoral procedure is rejected if

- the doctoral subject is not covered by the Faculty,
- the Faculty is not able to provide any competent, specialist reviewers,

- the applicant has not demonstrated fulfilment of the doctoral requirements set out in § 4 or
- the doctoral candidate has sought unsuccessfully to obtain a doctorate on the same topic in the past, either at the University of Rostock or at another higher-education institution.

(3) After initiating the procedure, the Faculty Council assembles the Doctoral Board and, after consulting with the doctoral supervisor and the relevant subject representative, usually appoints two reviewers to assess the thesis; the doctoral candidate's proposals may be considered in this context. The supervisor is usually appointed as the first reviewer. Only full-time or emeritus professors, junior professors, *außerplanmäßige Professors* (senior lecturers), or academics who hold a habilitation may be appointed as reviewers. At least one reviewer must be a full-time member of staff at the Faculty of Theology.

## **§ 7 Doctoral Board**

(1) The Doctoral Board is the body responsible for implementation of the doctoral procedure and assessment of the doctoral work. It is made up of the reviewers of the thesis and academics from the Faculty who hold a habilitation. The Dean of the Faculty serves as the Chairperson. 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.

(2) The Doctoral Board decides the form of the oral examination in accordance with § 12, taking account of the proposal made by the doctoral candidate. If the Doctoral Board decides a broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*), the Doctoral Board then appoints the examiners. The examiner in the main subject must be a professor responsible for the doctoral field at the Faculty of Theology. All professors and academics at the University of Rostock who hold a habilitation and are responsible for the respective subsidiary subject at the University of Rostock can be appointed an examiner for the subsidiary subject. The Doctoral Board decides on exceptions to this provision.

(3) The Doctoral Board only has a quorum when at least half of its members are present, including one of the reviewers. The Doctoral Board takes decisions by means of a majority of present members; if there is a tied vote, the Chairperson's vote is decisive.

(4) The Doctoral Board may charge the Chairperson with decisions regarding the structure of the doctoral procedure.

## **§ 8 Thesis**

(1) The subject of the thesis must be a topic of relevance for theology 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 authored and 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.

## **§ 9**

### **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 theologiae; 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:

- \* magna cum laude (very good) – 1
- \* cum laude (good) – 2
- \* rite (sufficient) – 3
- \* non sufficit (unsatisfactory) – 4

A particularly outstanding thesis should be assessed with the special mark of summa cum laude (excellent) – 0.

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

## **§ 10** **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 grades 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 grade 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 in writing 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' assessments.

(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.

## **§ 11** **Rejection of the thesis**

(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 and indicates which deficiencies were decisive for the decision. 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.

## **§ 12**

### **Oral examination**

- (1) The oral examination takes the form of either a thesis defence (*Disputation*) pursuant to § 13 or a broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*) pursuant to § 14.
- (2) The oral examination takes place following acceptance of the thesis. The Chairperson of the Doctoral Board sets a date and time in coordination with the doctoral candidate and the members of the Doctoral Board and issues an invitation by means of a public notice. The doctoral candidate and members of the Doctoral Board must be informed in writing at least seven days in advance.
- (3) The oral examination must be conducted in either German or English.
- (4) Oral examinations are open to members of the university community and are usually held during the lecture period. The members of the Doctoral Board participate in the oral examination.
- (5) The content and events of the oral examination should be minuted, with this record confirmed by the Chairperson of the Doctoral Board.
- (6) If the doctoral candidate fails to attend the oral examination for reasons for which they are responsible, or if they terminate the oral examination prematurely, they are deemed to have failed the examination. The doctoral candidate must state their reasons for such issues immediately. The Doctoral Board decides whether these are sufficient excuses. The Doctoral Board may demand evidence, in particular presentation of a doctor's certificate.
- (7) If the doctoral candidate credibly demonstrates by means of a medical certificate that they are unable to complete the oral examination in the designated form due to prolonged or permanent disability or chronic illness, the Doctoral Board must ensure that adequate compensatory measures are taken. The doctoral candidate must submit a written request for such compensatory measures.
- (8) If a candidate fails their oral examination, they may repeat it on one occasion within six months. If the candidate also fails the repeat oral examination, the doctoral procedure is concluded unsuccessfully.

## **§ 13**

### **Thesis defence (*Disputation*)**

- (1) The thesis defence (*Disputation*) provides an opportunity for the doctoral candidate to publicly present and defend the results of their thesis. In the course of a presentation lasting roughly 20 to 30 minutes and subsequent discussion, the candidate must demonstrate that they can theoretically substantiate the academic results of the thesis and engage appropriately with other views. The thesis defence also relates to areas of the doctoral subject area that are not explicitly addressed in the thesis. The doctoral candidate is also expected to integrate the results of their thesis into the overall theological context and make explicit connections to other theological subjects.
- (2) The thesis defence lasts between 90 and 120 minutes. The Chairperson of the



Doctoral Board chairs the thesis defence.

(3) If a candidate fails their thesis defence on the first attempt, they may request to repeat the oral examination, including in the form of a broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*). The Doctoral Board decides on such requests.

## **§ 14**

### **Broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*)**

(1) The broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*) covers the discipline examined in the thesis (main subject) and three other subdisciplines of theology (subsidiary subjects). The subdisciplines of theology are defined as: the Old Testament, the New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, Religious Education, the History of Religions and Ecumenical Affairs. The examination always covers at least one of the exegetical subdisciplines (i.e. Old Testament or New Testament) and one of the following subdisciplines: Church History/Systematic Theology/Ecumenical Affairs. The examiners appointed by the Doctoral Board for specific disciplines conduct the broader oral examination.

(2) Upon request, the doctoral candidate may replace one of the subsidiary subjects with an examination in a non-theological subject covered by the University of Rostock if they have properly studied the subject.

(3) An examiner, an observer and a minute taker, all of whom must be members of the Doctoral Board, must be present at each individual examination within the broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*). The minutes of the individual examinations are made in writing and signed by all examiners.

(4) The individual examination of the main subject lasts 60 minutes, while the individual examinations of the subsidiary subjects each last 30 minutes.

## **§ 15**

### **Assessment of the oral examination**

(1) Immediately after the oral examination, the Doctoral Board decides on the mark for the oral examination in a closed session. These marks are based on the marks set out in § 9(3).

(2) In the case of a thesis defence (*Disputation*), the mark for the oral examination is the average of the marks for both sections.

(3) In the case of a broader oral examination (*Rigorosum*), the Doctoral Board collates the marks for the individual examinations to produce an overall mark. The overall mark is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the marks proposed by the examiners, with the main subject weighted double in this calculation. If the candidate fails to achieve a mark of at least "rite" in a partial examination for a subsidiary subject, the overall mark for the remaining partial examinations must be at least "cum laude" for the candidate to pass the oral examination. However, if the candidate fails to achieve a mark of at least "rite" in their

main subject, they are deemed to have failed the entire oral examination.

## **§ 16**

### **Determination of the final grade for the doctorate**

(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 of the grade behind closed doors and provides an oral justification for the final grade awarded.

(2) The final grade is a combination of the average of the marks awarded in the reviewers' assessments (= mark for the thesis) and the mark for the oral examination. The final grade for 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).

## **§ 17**

### **Conclusion of the doctoral procedure and conferral of the doctorate**

(1) The doctoral procedure is complete when the final, overall result is announced. The Dean may inform 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, 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.

## **§ 18**

### **Publication and mandatory copies**

(1) The thesis must be published in appropriate form following conclusion of the doctoral procedure. The Dean, acting in consultation with the thesis supervisor, issues written permission for the doctoral candidate to publish their thesis. If the thesis version for publication is set to differ from the version submitted for assessment, the Doctoral Board must approve the amended version.

(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 within three years of the final examination date. If the doctoral candidate fails to comply with this deadline, they lose all of the entitlements acquired through the examination. The Dean may grant an appropriate extension to this deadline upon request.

## **§ 19 Right of appeal**

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

## **§ 20 Invalidation and revocation of the doctoral title**

- (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 doctorate. 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.

## **§ 21 Honorary doctorates**

- (1) In recognition of outstanding academic theological achievements or exceptional services to theology and the Church, the Faculty of Theology may award the title of Honorary Doctor of Theology (Dr. theol. h. c.).
- (2) A corresponding application must be submitted by at least two members of the Faculty

Council; the decision on whether to approve this application is only valid if no more than one member abstains or votes against the proposal.

(3) The Academic Senate of the University of Rostock is involved in this process in line with the University of Rostock's *Grundordnung* (Basic Regulations).

(4) The honorary doctorate is conferred through presentation of a certificate that acknowledges the merits of the recipient. The certificate is presented by the Dean. At the honorary doctorate presentation ceremony, the recipient usually gives a doctoral address on a topic of their choice.

## **§ 22**

### **Renewal of a doctoral certificate**

A doctoral certificate can be renewed in acknowledgement of certain anniversaries where appropriate in deference to exceptional services to academia or to the Church or because the recipient has particularly close links to the University of Rostock or to the Faculty of Theology.

## **§ 23**

### **Scope of application**

These Doctoral Regulations apply exclusively to doctoral candidates who submit their request to initiate a doctoral procedure after these Doctoral Regulations enter into force.

## **§ 24**

### **Entry into force**

These Doctoral Regulations shall enter into force on the day after their publication in the Official Gazette of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. At that time, these Doctoral Regulations shall replace the Doctoral Regulations of the Faculty of Theology of 10 January 2001.

Drawn up following the decision made by the Academic Senate of the University of Rostock of 3 September 2008 and following the Rector's approval of 24 September 2008.

Rostock, 24 September 2008

**The Rector  
of the University of Rostock,  
Prof. Dr. Thomas Strothotte**

Appendix: The doctoral fields are  
the Old Testament,  
the New Testament,  
Church History,  
Systematic Theology,  
Practical Theology,  
Religious Education,  
the History of Religions,  
and Ecumenical Affairs.