

Guidelines for Writing Dissertations at Faculty IV

Resolution of faculty council IV 9/20-23.01.2019 (12 : 0 : 1)

The faculty council of faculty IV issues these Guidelines for Dissertations for the Doctoral Regulations of Technische Universität Berlin of 23 October 2006 (AMBl. TU 2008, p. 106ff) with amendment of 15 January 2014 (statute for amendment, AMBl TU 2/2014, p. 24ff).

Motivation

- securing the high quality of doctoral degrees
- securing equal and fair treatment of the candidates
- determining regulations regarding the content and
- informing candidates at an early stage

These guidelines do not affect the doctoral regulations of Technische Universität Berlin of 23 October 2006 (AMBl. TU 2008 p. 106 ff.) with amendment of 15 January 2014 (stator for amendment, AMBl. TU 2/2014, p. 24ff).

Dissertations

§2 (1) of the doctoral regulations: *The doctoral process establishes the qualification that the doctoral candidate has the capability of achieving an independent contribution to scientific research and development. This capability is demonstrated through the acceptance of a written dissertation and a successful scientific defense.*

Procedure

The status of “Doktorand/in” (doctoral candidate) is introduced at Faculty IV, so that doctoral candidates of faculty IV are known to the ombudsperson and can be advised/informed by him/her. Independent on their contract or financing source the supervisor reports name and work title of the doctoral candidate to the faculty administration about 6 months after starting the research. Name and research field are published so that doctoral candidates with related or neighboring topics can contact each other. In case the research field changes, the candidate has to communicate this to the faculty administration. Notifying the university that a research assistant has the status of a doctoral candidate does not mean he/she registered his/her already, but is a step prior to that. Usually, the dissertation is registered later on.

The dissertation procedure typically lasts 3 to 5 years. In the first years, there is regular counselling and advice by the supervising professor. At the same time a publication strategy is developed. The progress of the work is to be presented and discussed regularly in colloquia.

About one year before finishing, the doctoral candidate should start to close existing gaps, summarize the work and plan the doctoral committee.

According to §2 (3) of the doctoral regulations the thesis can be pre-published in parts or in its entirety. Publications in the dissertation area are strongly recommended and should typically exist. However, they are not a condition for gaining a doctor’s degree.

The candidate consults his/her supervisor before registering the dissertation and finishing working on it.

Written Dissertation

The written dissertation can have the form of either a monography or a cumulative dissertation.

Pre-publication

§2 (4) of the doctoral regulations: *Prepublication of scientific results which are part of the dissertation or contributions that constitute a cumulative dissertation can be co-authored. In cases of co-authored pieces the applicants has to demonstrate that she or he has substantially contributed to the concept, content or methodology of the piece..* His/her own scientific contribution must be clearly defined and indicated. Just stating the percentage is not sufficient here. In case of a monography the own scientific contribution shows because of the monography itself, thus it does not have to be indicated explicitly.

Cumulative Dissertation at Faculty IV

A cumulative dissertation contains at least three contributions, which are published or accepted and peer-reviewed in a scientific journal. Furthermore, the regulations of cumulative dissertations/habilitations of Faculty IV apply.

Doctoral Committee

The doctoral committee consists of at least 4 members:

- a head of the committee
- a full or junior professor of the faculty. In duly justified cases the faculty may decide that non-regular (außerplanmäßig) professors whose main occupation and employment is at the Technische Universität Berlin can be treated equally to full professors regarding the evaluation of doctoral theses (§6 (4) clause 1 and 2 doctoral regulations).
- an external reviewer who must be full-time professor at another university (according to §6 (4), clauses 4 and 5 dissertation regulations). Researchers who are not full-time professors but who themselves have "doctoral rights" at their own research institutions, such as senior lecturer / reader (UK) or habilitation à diriger la recherche [HDR] (FR), can also serve as external reviewers
- a further reviewer according to dissertation regulations, or in justified cases an evaluator may also be chosen from the circle of other scientists with advanced degrees (Ph.D)

Members of the Dean's office or their representatives are allowed to join all doctoral procedures as guests. They are entitled to speak but have no voting right.

§6 (3) clauses 3 and 4 of the dissertation regulations say that *one of the evaluators can also be a co-author of results or publications which are part of the thesis. In duly justified cases two evaluators can be co-authors if at least one further evaluator is named.* Faculty IV additionally demands that the advisor of the dissertation must not be the only reviewer who is not co-author. If he/she would, another reviewer has to be appointed.

If members of the dissertation committee cannot attend the defense in person, they can take part via video conference. According to the doctoral regulations the reports of the reviewers should reach the Dean not later than three months after commencing the doctoral procedure in.

§8 (4) clause 4 of the doctoral regulations says that *the overall decision "passed with distinction" should only be awarded if all evaluators assessed the dissertation as "very*

good” without qualifications and the scientific defense has been assessed with “very good” without qualification by all members of the doctoral committee..

Assessment for dissertations

„sehr gut“ very good

The research question was solved in a very good way and was excellently presented. Furthermore, the result is very valuable for the scientific and/or technical progress in this research area. The work also distinguishes itself by methodical progress and a high degree of originality and creativity. The candidate shows an over average degree of creativity, which shows itself in the presented thesis.

„gut“ good

The task of the thesis was resolved in a good way. There are hardly any open issues in its methods and its scientific-technical presentation. The focus was well chosen and, if necessary, corrected with the progress of the thesis. The result of the thesis is a clear scientific-technical progress. The candidate meets the state of the art in scientific and technical terms.

„befriedigend“ satisfactory

Without doubt the thesis can be accepted. It meets more than the minimal requirements to scientific-technical content and presentation. The following points could be applicable for grading it less than ‚good‘:

- weaknesses in the presentation
- methodical and/or technical weaknesses
- weaknesses in evaluation of technical relevance and focus of the topic
- corrections of questions that only concern neighboring areas of the topic were made only after being asked by the evaluators
- uncritical or missing use of literature

„ausreichend“ acceptable

There are weaknesses in the presentation. Subsequent corrections of excerpts which are close to the core area of the topic were necessary. However, the shortcomings are not so strong that they show that the candidate is not capable of solving a technical problem with scientific methods independently. It is possible to state that the candidate has basically solved a problem with scientific methods and the weaknesses lie only in the presentation and in that the candidate does not have full proficiency in the methods.

„nicht ausreichend“
not acceptable

The dissertation does not meet the minimal standards of a doctoral thesis.