

# Policies and Regulations for PhD Studies at Jacobs University

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## **Disclaimer:**

**SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE BREMER HIGHER EDUCATION ACT (BREMHG) THESE POLICIES CONSTITUTE THE VERSION WHICH IS VALID FOR ALL PHD DEGREES AT JACOBS UNIVERSITY STARTING SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 2016 AND SUPERSEDE THE VERSION FROM SEPTEMBER 2013. CHANGES TO THESE POLICIES ARE POSSIBLE UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF 1.2 “CHANGING THESE POLICIES”.**

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## 1. About these Policies

### 1.1 Scope of these Policies

This policy is valid as of September 1st 2016 based on a decision by the Academic Board dated 29.06.2016. Due to its accreditation by the German Research Council (Wissenschaftsrat) and its recognition by the Federal State of Bremen, Jacobs University Bremen gGmbH (from here forth Jacobs University) has the right to award the doctoral degree "Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD) in different fields of science. The doctoral degree is awarded by Jacobs University to a candidate who demonstrates that he or she is able to conduct independent and in-depth academic research which advances the state of the art in the respective field of science. The award of the doctoral degree is based on a written piece of work (PhD Thesis), a public oral examination (PhD Thesis Defense) and the publication of the successfully defended Thesis. The following policies define the prerequisites, rules and procedures for earning the title of PhD from Jacobs University. In cases in which policies need further interpretation or clarification the binding decision will be taken by the Academic Board.

### 1.2 Changing these Policies

Changes and modifications of the Rules and Regulations for PhD Studies including the list of fields in which PhD degrees can be awarded are evaluated by the Academic Board and recommended to the Executive Board for decision.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1 Student

For the purpose of this policy a "PhD student" is someone who is enrolled at Jacobs University for a PhD degree in a specific field.

### 2.2 Degree

Upon successful completion of the PhD studies Jacobs University will award a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). A list of fields in which a PhD degree can be awarded can be found on the university's webpage.

## 3. Admission and Enrollment

### 3.1 Admission

The Dean's letter of admission is the only valid and official offer of admission issued by the university.

Prerequisite for the enrollment as a PhD student is a completed Master degree (or equivalent). Fulfillment of the requirements which are outlined in the "Admission and Enrollment Policy" is evaluated formally as well as academically by the university. If the formal requirements are fulfilled, the final decision on acceptance lies with the prospective PhD Advisor.

Students already holding a PhD degree cannot apply for PhD studies leading to a PhD degree of the same denomination.

The admission letter may include information on requirements that the PhD student needs to fulfill within a defined period of time after the enrollment as a PhD student in order to be allowed to continue and finish his/her PhD degree at Jacobs University.

In exceptional cases students holding a Bachelor degree may be admitted to PhD studies. Applications must be submitted by the potential PhD Advisor. Admission criteria are as follows:

1. Applicants have to be among the best 10% of their study program.
2. Applicants must submit a scientific transfer document, e.g., a publication. The nature of this transfer document is determined by the Dean based on a recommendation of the prospective PhD Advisor.
3. Applicants must pass an oral examination in the respective research field evaluated by a committee consisting of the Dean of the respective focus area as well as two faculty members of the respective research field. The prospective PhD Advisor is not a member of this committee but may direct recommendations for potential members to the Dean.
4. The committee decides on the scope of the oral examination, but as a rule it should not exceed 60 minutes.
5. The committee may decide that the candidate has to attend additional courses, research seminars, or colloquia to improve the candidate's knowledge necessary for the PhD project.

### 3.2 Double and Joint PhD Degrees

Double registration at Jacobs University and one other university is possible if formal cooperation contracts are in place. Such contracts can define double or joint degrees. In case of double degrees each university issues a certificate awarding a degree in the same research field. The certificate is only valid in connection with the certificate of the partner institution and must contain a respective reference. In case of joint degrees only one joint certificate is issued.

As a rule the policies for PhD studies at Jacobs University apply or, in case of joint degrees, the regulations as specified in the respective contract.

The following rules apply to double degrees only:

In case of double degrees an agreement with the partner university defines the arrangements between the universities. The agreement is to be fully determined at the beginning of the PhD studies (within the first 6 months) at Jacobs University. It is the PhD student's responsibility to fulfill the respective requirements at both universities.

The agreement stipulates:

- who supervises the Thesis at each of the universities
- the mutual study visits of the PhD student, covering of travel expenses
- how the oral PhD Thesis Defense / examination / reviews are administered respectively
- the composition of the Dissertation Committee and that PhD Advisors of each university belong to this committee
- that the language of the Thesis and the summary should be in accordance with the institutions involved
- use of intellectual property
- which policies govern the publication of the PhD Thesis in case both partner universities have such policies, and which university supervises and confirms the publication.

Exceptions to the general PhD policy apply as follows:

Each Dissertation Committee has two Chairs, which are the respective Advisors of the PhD Thesis. The external member of the Dissertation Committee must not be a faculty member of the partner university. The agreement between the partner universities defines where the PhD Proposal Defense as well as the PhD Thesis Defense take place. The logo and name of the partner institution should be displayed on the title page of the PhD Thesis.

### 3.3 Enrollment

All PhD students must register and must remain enrolled at Jacobs University throughout their PhD studies, failure to meet the enrollment requirements (which are outlined on the Student Records Office's website and in the "Admission and Enrollment Policy") will lead to disenrollment.

Enrollment as a part-time student is possible under certain conditions. Students willing to enroll part-time must direct an application to the Dean.

PhD students may take a "Leave of Absence" for the following purposes: research, prolonged illness, military or civil service, maternity and / or parental leave, and internships. A "Leave of Absence" must be approved in advance by the PhD Advisor and the Student Records Office.

As a rule PhD studies should be completed within three years.

### 3.4 Extension of PhD Studies

PhD students who are not able to finish their studies within 3 years must formally apply in time for an additional semester at the Student Records Office. The decision for granting an additional semester lies with the Dean. In case a student fails to apply or the Dean disapproves an extension of PhD studies the PhD student will be disenrolled and must leave the university without a degree.

### 3.5 Reenrollment

PhD students who have been disenrolled from Jacobs University but have not yet finished the degree which they have originally been admitted to may apply for reenrollment. The final decision rests with the Dean.

## 4. Graduation Requirements

### 4.1 Dissertation Committee

Each PhD student chooses a PhD Advisor, who is a faculty member at Jacobs University and, in cooperation with her or him, a Dissertation Committee. As a rule the PhD Advisor is the Chair of the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee is responsible for monitoring the academic progress of the PhD student and for the evaluation of both, the PhD Proposal and the PhD Thesis / Thesis Defense.

The Dissertation Committee is composed of

- at least two Jacobs University faculty members (out of which at most one may be an adjunct professor) serving as internal members of the committee,
- at least one external member: External members are professors from other universities or researchers with comparable level of scientific expertise in the respective field of research holding a PhD degree. Former Jacobs University faculty members may serve as external members of the Dissertation Committee only after

three years (or two years for adjunct professors) from the termination of the working contract with Jacobs University.

- The above defined internal and external members are considered regular members of the Dissertation Committee.
- If at any point the PhD Advisor is no longer affiliated with Jacobs University, he or she may no longer serve as the official PhD Advisor, nor as an internal member of the Dissertation Committee, but may become an extraordinary member of the Dissertation Committee. In these cases the PhD student must choose a new PhD Advisor and an additional internal member of the Dissertation Committee.
- Faculty members leaving the university due to retirement may complete all pending doctoral examination procedures.
- In case the PhD Advisor resigns from the supervision, the PhD student must find a new PhD Advisor within three months in order to avoid disenrollment.

The Dissertation Committee is approved by the Dean. The Dissertation Committee can be changed and/or enlarged subsequently. All changes need to be approved by the resigning and new members of the committee, as well as by the Dean.

## 4.2 PhD Proposal

Every PhD student develops a PhD Proposal in cooperation with the PhD Advisor. This Proposal is a written document, and it is presented at Jacobs University to the university public upon invitation by the Dean at most nine months after registration as a PhD student. In case the PhD Proposal is not presented within the given time frame the student may apply once for a three months extension of the deadline. Failure to present the PhD Proposal within the given time frame (including extension) will result in disenrollment of the student.

As a general rule, PhD Proposals at Jacobs University must be written in English. The PhD Proposal must include an abstract, a description of the major questions pursued, a time frame for completing the work, a comprehensive bibliography of relevant primary and secondary research materials and databases, and a review of relevant, current work in the area. Normally the PhD Proposal should not be longer than 30 pages.

Prior to the presentation of the PhD Proposal, the Dissertation Committee must consist of at least the Chair of the Dissertation Committee and one regular member. The definite composition of the Dissertation Committee as outlined above must be finalized prior to the final submission of the PhD Thesis for evaluation.

Students must schedule the presentation of their PhD Proposal with the Student Records Office. Students have to submit the completed "Defense of the PhD Proposal" form to the Student Records Office along with the PhD Proposal and a digital abstract two weeks before the presentation.

At least the Chair and one regular Dissertation Committee member must be present at the presentation. All present committee members, including the Chair, must sign the "PhD Proposal Evaluation Form" after the presentation indicating acceptance or rejection (with or without revision). In case of conflict the decision rests with the Dean. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee must write a detailed review of the written PhD Proposal and the PhD Proposal Defense. The Chair is responsible for submitting the review and the completed form to the Student Records Office within two weeks after the presentation.

In case of revision a revised PhD Proposal must be submitted and presented within three months. The PhD Proposal can be presented in a revised form only once.

## 4.3 PhD Thesis

The following rules apply to the PhD Thesis:

PhD projects are defined as independent scientific work which advances the state of the art in the respective research field. Usually, the PhD Thesis summarizes this scientific work in writing and puts it into a larger context. As a rule, the PhD Thesis, reviews and the PhD Thesis Defense at Jacobs University must be in English. Only for professional or contextual reasons the Dean may grant an exception to this rule.

The Thesis must include:

- a title page with name and logo of Jacobs University, the name of the Academic Department, the title of the PhD Thesis, the degree aimed for, the author, and a list of all members of the Dissertation Committee with the Chair named first and by mentioning the full name, academic title and affiliation of each member. Cooperation partners and/or institutions may be named on the title page by adding the corresponding logo,
- an English summary (irrespective of the language of the Thesis),
- a (Statutory) Declaration on Authorship by the PhD student that the Thesis has been written independently and has not been submitted at another university for the conferral of a PhD degree,
- a list of publications and conference contributions of the PhD student.

If co-authored manuscripts are included in the PhD Thesis a "Statement on Contribution" and a "Declaration of Consent" as described below are required for that part of the PhD Thesis.

It is possible to receive a PhD degree at Jacobs University based on a cumulation of articles under the following conditions:

- The articles need to be framed by an introduction (that develops the larger theoretical context of the Thesis), a discussion and a common thread that is leading through the different papers.
- The number and status (published, accepted, submitted) of articles necessary is decided upon by the Dissertation Committee.
- The student must submit, as an integral part of the Thesis, a "Statement on Contribution" defining his/her contribution to each article along with the PhD Thesis. The "Statement on Contribution" must also contain title, co-authors, journal, status, and date of submission/acceptance (if applicable). With his/her signature the student declares that all co-authors and the PhD Advisor agree with the information given in the "Statement on Contribution".
- Only articles with significant contributions of the candidate may be added to the cumulative PhD Thesis. Exceptions from this rule need acceptance by the Dissertation Committee.
- Upon submission of a cumulative PhD Thesis the student must insure that the thesis does not contain any infringement of rights of third parties. With respect to all claims made by third parties against Jacobs University for infringement of their rights by the thesis, the student will indemnify Jacobs University against such claims at first request, including the necessary costs of legal defense. Prior to the publication of the PhD Thesis the PhD student must submit "Declarations of Consent" of all co-authors.

The following number of copies of the Thesis must be submitted for review:

- one hard copy per member of the Dissertation Committee,
- one hard copy for the Student Records Office,
- one hard copy for the Dean,
- one hard copy for display in the Information Resource Center (IRC).

In addition, the PhD student must upload an electronic version of the Thesis to a plagiarism check platform defined by the university.

The Student Records Office sends the Thesis to the reviewers, as well as to the other members of the Dissertation Committee, the Dean and the IRC. The Thesis must be on display at the IRC for at least two weeks before the Defense and thus made public to the Jacobs University community.

The reviewers are expected to submit their reviews of the PhD Thesis within eight weeks unless a shorter review period is agreed upon within the Dissertation Committee. At least three regular members of the Dissertation Committee, including one external member and the Chair of the Dissertation Committee, each furnish a written report. Additional members of the Dissertation Committee have to at least submit a written review or participate in the Defense. The reviewers submit their reviews to the Office for Doctoral Education. Reviews need to include a summary evaluation of the Thesis as "pass", "fail" or "with distinction". In case amendments are necessary before a decision about pass or fail can be made, these need to be specified in the review.

Once all reviews have been submitted, the Office for Doctoral Education distributes the reviews to the members of the Dissertation Committee, the Student Records Office, and to the respective Dean. The reviews must be on display in the Office for Doctoral Education for a minimum of 5 working days prior to the day of the Defense (not counting the actual day of the Defense). The PhD student and Jacobs University faculty are eligible to read the reviews. The PhD student may receive hard copies of the reviews in case the respective reviewer agrees. The PhD Thesis is accepted once the Dissertation Committee unanimously evaluates it as pass. In order for a PhD Thesis to be evaluated "with distinction", all reviews that have been submitted to the Office of Doctoral Education must suggest an evaluation "with distinction". If at least one member or all members of the Dissertation Committee evaluate the Thesis as "fail", the evaluation process is stopped and the Chair of the Dissertation Committee is informed by the Office of Doctoral Education. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee, in cooperation with the Dean, determines whether the PhD student can resubmit the PhD Thesis and under what conditions.

In case of detected plagiarism the evaluation process is stopped and the Dissertation Committee meets to review the case. If the suspected plagiarism is substantiated, the Thesis may not be resubmitted.

#### 4.4 PhD Thesis Defense

After the PhD Thesis is approved, it is publicly defended at Jacobs University upon invitation by the Dean. All members of the Dissertation Committee must contribute to the evaluation of the PhD Thesis either by submitting a written review or by participating in the Defense. At least three regular members of the Dissertation Committee, the Chair, one internal member and one external member have to be present at the Defense. If the Thesis was evaluated "with distinction", the Dean (or a substitute) must participate. Prior to the beginning of the Defense a minute taker has to be defined. The Defense includes a presentation by the candidate on the most important part of the thesis work, a discussion of the research, and questions on the discipline in which the degree is to be granted.

The PhD student, in cooperation with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee, is responsible for scheduling the Defense. This is done via an online form provided by the Student Records Office. The Dean issues the invitation and announces the date of the PhD Thesis Defense to the university public.

After the PhD Thesis Defense, the Dissertation Committee has to come to a conclusion whether to evaluate the Defense with "pass", "fail" or "with distinction". Upon the final decision the Dissertation Committee completes the Evaluation Form of the Defense that needs to be submitted, together with the minutes (signed by the Chair of the Dissertation Committee), to the Office for Doctoral Education. If amendments to the PhD Thesis are required prior to the publication this must be stated on the Defense Evaluation Form. In order for the PhD student to be awarded a PhD degree "with distinction" the PhD Thesis and the PhD Thesis Defense need to be unanimously evaluated as deserving a "distinction" by all members of the Dissertation Committee. If the Defense is not approved, the Chair of the Dissertation Committee informs the Office for Doctoral Education as well as the Dean in writing. The Dissertation Committee decides whether or not the PhD student may repeat the PhD Thesis Defense. A repetition is allowed only once and has to take place within three months.

#### 4.5 Publication of the Thesis

The PhD Thesis must be published within one year after the Defense. In justified, exceptional cases the publication deadline may be extended by the Dean. All changes requested by the Dissertation Committee must be included prior to the publication of the Thesis. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee ensures that this requirement is met. The conferral of the degree is dependent on the publication of the Thesis.

There are three possibilities to publish the Thesis:

- publish the digital version online through the Information Resource Center of Jacobs University
- publish through a scientific or commercial publishing house
- publish the digital version online through the partner university in case of a double degree or joint degree

The publication must be approved by the Chair of the Dissertation Committee (Signature Sheet for the Conferral of the Degree) and a certain number of hard copies (defined by the „Guide for Publishing a Dissertation“ by the Information Resource Center) have to be submitted to the IRC.

The student must confirm by signing the "(Statutory) Declaration on Publication" that no rights of third parties will be infringed by the publication of the PhD Thesis.

In justified, exceptional cases, e.g. in pending patent issues, public accessibility of digitally published Theses may be suspended for one year upon application to the Dean.

In case of a cumulative PhD thesis, the student must hand in a copy of the "Statement on Contribution" as well as "Declarations of Consent" of all co-authors.

The introduction, the discussion and all articles that are not yet published at the time of the publication of the PhD Thesis must be published through the Information Resource Center. The PhD student is obliged to hand in proof that the remaining articles have already been published elsewhere.

#### 4.6 Conferral of the Degree

In order to graduate a PhD student must have:

- an approved PhD Proposal
- an approved PhD Thesis
- an approved PhD Thesis Defense
- an approved publication of the PhD Thesis

Once all the above requirements are fulfilled, a PhD degree in the respective research field is conferred. The PhD certificate will be dated according to the date of publication of the Thesis. Students may carry the German "Dr." (without specification of the field) upon application to the respective authority of the Bremen Senate.

Jacobs University reserves the right to revoke the PhD degree in case of:

- Severe and intentional academic or scientific misconduct e.g. the use of data which was knowingly false or fabricated, the infringement of intellectual property etc. (before or after the award of the PhD degree) by the holder of a PhD from Jacobs University.
- In case the degree was granted to a student who had pretended to fulfill the admission or graduation requirements, which were not in fact fulfilled.

When getting notice of a strong suspicion of a non-fulfillment or misconduct which might lead to the deprivation of a PhD degree, the Academic Integrity Committee of Jacobs University will install a committee consisting of two members of the original Dissertation Committee (or if not possible two faculty members from the field of the PhD degree), one faculty member from outside the field of the degree, and one representative from the Academic Integrity Committee. This committee will investigate the case and can either decide to terminate the investigations or to take further actions leading to the deprivation of the PhD degree. Before the deprivation the committee will

notify the holder of the PhD degree of the investigations and provide him with an opportunity to respond to the accusation.

#### 4.7 Graduation Ceremony

In order to participate in the graduation ceremony, PhD students must have defended their PhD Thesis at least 3 days before the date of the graduation ceremony.

### 5. Progress Administration

#### 5.1 Progress Monitoring

The progress of all PhD students is monitored, after the presentation of the PhD Proposal, by the Dissertation Committee. At the end of every academic year, the PhD Advisor informs the Dean and the Student Records Office in writing whether the student has made appropriate progress. In the case of a negative outcome, the Dean and the Dissertation Committee decide whether the PhD student is allowed to continue his or her education at Jacobs University, and if so, under which additional conditions. If a PhD student is suspended on the basis of a negative progress report, the Dean must inform the Student Records Office in writing of the suspension and the suspension date.

#### 5.2 Responsibility of the Faculty

The academic responsibility for the quality of the Thesis research rests with the Dissertation Committee and especially the PhD Advisor; they enjoy freedom of research.

### 6. Administrative and Legal Details

#### 6.1 Copyright Issues

The PhD student is the sole proprietor of any intellectual property incorporated in his/her academic work. For the avoidance of doubt, any issues concerning intellectual property and copyright questions shall be governed by the German copyright code (Urheberrechtsgesetz).

The PhD student grants Jacobs University an unlimited non-exclusive right to utilize the Thesis and portions thereof in any electronic or printed publications issued by Jacobs University free of charge, but restricted to academic purposes. Jacobs University is obliged to inform the PhD student of any such publication.

#### 6.2 Students with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases

The rules and provisions of the "German Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities Act" (§2) apply. Students with disabilities may apply for a compensation of disadvantages such as, among others, extended examination periods. Applications along with a disabled person card are to be directed to the Student Records Office upon registration.

#### 6.3 Appeals

Appeals against any decision of the Dissertation Committee and/or the Dean may be directed in writing to the Committee on Examinations and Standing.

### 7. Honorary Doctorate

#### 7.1 About the Honorary Doctorate

A Honorary Doctorate (PhD h.c.) can be granted by Jacobs University to persons who have rendered outstanding services to research or to Jacobs University through

- exceptional merits in scientific research
- exceptional merits in teaching
- by linking the realm of research with practice

In addition possible candidates are characterized by an outstanding and beneficial affiliation with Jacobs University.

The policy for granting such an Honorary Doctorate is outlined in the following.

#### 7.2 Proposal

Any member of the Jacobs University community – including students, faculty, academic staff as well as the Deans and Executive Board – can propose a candidate for an Honorary Doctorate. Nominations must include the candidates CV and a laudation detailing how the candidate qualifies under the above-listed criteria and how the granting of an Honorary Doctorate lies in the interest of Jacobs University.

The Dean responsible for the discipline in which the candidate has gained the merits assumes leadership in handling the proposal. If the proposed candidate potentially qualifies for receiving an Honorary Doctorate three external reviews are solicited. In case the external reviewers recommend the award of an honorary PhD degree the Dean submits a proposal to the Executive Board or the Executive Board informs the Dean on its decision.

### **7.3 The Executive Board**

The Executive Board informs the university about the decision and informs the candidate about the Honorary Doctorate.

### **7.4 Award**

The Honorary Doctorate (PhD h.c.) is granted in form of an official certificate, which honors the candidate's merits. The Student Records Office will issue the certificate, which must be signed by the University Leadership.