

Procedures for Administering Graduate Programs

The policy has been valid as of September 1, 2013

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1. Graduate Programs

Jacobs University Bremen offers two kinds of Graduate Programs: PhD Programs, and Master's Programs. A Master's Program can be either an Academic Master's Program, or a Professional Master's Program. A PhD Program can be either an "Integrated PhD Program", or a "Research-only PhD Program". In addition, PhD Students may be admitted outside of Graduate Programs (see 24).

The program character of the PhD Programs beyond the courses offered is constituted by their research activities and by their academic events such as seminars and colloquia, in which all Graduate Students have to participate on a regular basis.

2. Academic Master's Program

Entry into an Academic Master's Program requires a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent. It is designed to take two years, including a Coursework Phase and a Master's Thesis as specified in (see 12).

3. Integrated PhD Program

Entry into an integrated PhD Program requires a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent. It is designed to take up to five academic years.

It begins with a Coursework Phase of up to three semesters, followed by a qualifying exam. The student develops a PhD Proposal, which is presented in public no later than nine months after the qualifying exam. A Research Phase follows which concludes with the writing of a PhD Thesis and a public Defense. No Master's Degree is obtained.

4. Research-Only PhD Program

Entry into a Research-only PhD Program requires a Master's Degree or equivalent. It is designed to take up to three academic years.

It begins with the development of a PhD Proposal, which is presented in public no later than nine months after the entrance into the PhD Program. A Research Phase follows which concludes with the writing of a PhD Thesis and a public Defense.

5. Double PhD

Students can obtain a double PhD degree. The Double PhD Research/Thesis is supervised in common with the respective other university. The rules of the double PhD are defined by a mutual agreement between the two universities, which is based on the graduate policies and appendices of Jacobs University Bremen and the respective other university. The agreement needs to be defined at the beginning of the PhD program within the period allocated for the presentation and approval of the PhD Proposal.

6. Professional Master's Program

Entry into a Professional Master's program requires a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent. The respective programs specify the duration and graduation requirements.

7. Steering Committee / Program Coordinator

Every Graduate Program has a Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator is a professor at Jacobs University Bremen. The Program Coordinator carries the general responsibility for administering the Graduate Program. The Program Coordinator may be assisted by a Steering Committee in which case the Program Coordinator is the chairperson of the Steering Committee.

8. Graduate Students

All students in Graduate Programs at Jacobs University Bremen are called "Graduate Students".

9. Academic Advisor

Every Graduate Student entering Jacobs University Bremen is assigned one Academic Advisor by the Steering Committee / Program Coordinator of the program. In PhD Programs, this Advisor is the PhD Advisor once the latter is determined. Any change of the Academic Advisor requires the approval of the old and the new Advisors. The Steering Committee / Program Coordinator of the program may appoint more than one Academic Advisor for a student.

10. Dissertation Committee in PhD Programs

Each PhD student chooses a PhD Advisor, who is also a Faculty member at Jacobs University Bremen and, in cooperation with her or him, a Dissertation Committee. The PhD Advisor is the Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee. If the PhD advisor is no longer affiliated with Jacobs University Bremen, one of the internal Dissertation Committee members is designated as the Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee. Faculty members leaving the university due to retirement may complete all pending doctoral examination procedures.

The Dissertation Committee is composed of:

1. At least two Jacobs University Faculty members (out of which at most one adjunct professor). If at any point the PhD Advisor is no longer affiliated with Jacobs University Bremen, he/she can continue to supervise the PhD thesis, but will become an extraordinary member of the Dissertation Committee. In addition, the student chooses an additional Jacobs University Faculty member to join the Committee. One of the internal Dissertation Committee members is then designated as the Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee.
2. 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. Former Jacobs University Faculty members, but not the PhD Advisor, 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 Bremen.

Internal and external committee members are considered regular members of the committee (as opposed to extraordinary members, e.g. a supervisor leaving the university).

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

Prior to the Presentation of the PhD Proposal, the Dissertation Committee must meet at least Point 1 of the requirements. The definitive composition of the Dissertation Committee as outlined above must be finalized prior to the submission of the dissertation for evaluation.

The Dissertation Committee is actively involved in the dissertation process: At least two Committee members must be present at the presentation of the PhD Proposal, and all Committee members shall be involved in the evaluation of the PhD Dissertation, i.e., each Committee member must either evaluate the PhD Thesis or be present at the PhD Defense.

11. Graduate Courses

The Graduate Courses are graded with the usual Jacobs University Bremen grades. Additional courses may be offered on a "pass/fail" basis. The Graduate Programs specify which undergraduate courses, if any, may be taken for Graduate Credit.

12. Graduation Requirements for Academic Master's Degree

A Master's Degree requires at least 120 ECTS credit points, including a Master's Thesis of 15-30 ECTS credit points and, possibly, a credited Master's Examination as specified by the Graduate Programs.

The Graduate Student writes the Master's Thesis under the guidance of a Thesis Supervisor of his or her choice. For the evaluation of the Master's Thesis, the Steering Committee / Program Coordinator establishes an Examination Committee, which consists of the Thesis Supervisor and at least one other member. The other member(s) can be Jacobs University Bremen Faculty members or external members (see 10).

The Master's Thesis is graded according to the usual Jacobs University Bremen grading scheme by all members of the Examination committee. The Thesis is accepted if the resulting grade is 4.0 or better. If not, the Examination Committee decides whether the student is granted the right to resubmit within 3 months.

13. Graduation Requirements of Professional Master's Programs

Professional Master's Degrees may require less credit points, but no less than 60 ECTS credit points. The detailed Graduation Requirements are specified by the Graduate Programs.

14. Coursework in PhD Programs

The coursework requirements in PhD Programs are specified by these programs.

15. Qualifying Examination in Integrated PhD Programs

The Qualifying Examinations in Integrated PhD Programs take place before the beginning of the fourth semester, assuming that the student has completed the coursework requirements. The programs specify the type of exam (written, oral, a combination of both, etc), and the professors involved in them. In case of an oral exam, at least three professors must be present, and the typical duration is no less than one hour. The Qualifying Examination has the outcome "pass" or "fail".

16. PhD Proposal

Every student in a PhD Program develops a PhD Proposal in cooperation with a PhD Advisor. This Proposal is a written document, and it is presented in public upon invitation by the Provost at most nine months after the qualifying exam or after entrance into the PhD Program. The Dissertation Committee approves the PhD Proposal.

17. PhD Thesis

Every PhD Thesis is on public display in the IRC from the time of submission until the Defense. The Dissertation Committee evaluates the PhD Thesis. It is not graded. As a rule, three regular members of the committee, including one External Member, each furnish a written report. The Dissertation Committee may require additional reports. The Dissertation Committee approves the Thesis.

If a PhD Thesis is exceptionally strong on an international scale, the award of distinction must be recommended by the Chair of the Dissertation Committee to the Elected Deans and the Provost for approval.

18. PhD Defense

After the PhD Thesis is approved, it is defended to the university public upon invitation by the Provost and Elected Deans. At least three regular members of the Dissertation Committee, the chair, one internal member, and one external member, have to be present. The Defense includes a presentation by the candidate, a discussion of the research, and questions on the discipline in which the Degree is to be granted. The Dissertation Committee approves the Defense.

19. Publication of PhD Thesis

Dissertations must be published within one year after the Defense in the form accepted by the Dissertation Committee. Minor editorial amendments are possible. The conferral of the degree is dependent on the fulfillment of this requirement which will be checked by the Chair of the Dissertation Committee.

20. Graduation Requirements for PhD Degree

Graduation requirements for a PhD Degree are the following:

- coursework as prescribed by the programs (see 14)
- a passed Qualifying Examination in integrated PhD Programs (see 15)
- an approved PhD Proposal (see 16)
- an approved PhD Thesis (see 17)
- an approved Thesis Defense (see 18)
- an approved publication of the PhD Thesis (see 19)
- and any further requirements as specified by the Graduate Programs.
- Exceptions are possible for advanced students (see 23)

21. Academic Master's Option

If a Graduate Student in an Integrated PhD Program requests to work toward a Master's degree (given that he/she fulfills the graduation requirements of a Master degree program) he/she has to submit the completed "Master's Option" form to the Registrar's Office and complete the requirements for a Master's degree

The Master's option is applicable only to students who do not already hold a Master's Degree in the respective subject. Under extraordinary circumstances the Provost may approve exceptions. It may be exercised whether or not the student plans to continue work towards his/her PhD.

22. Failed Examinations or Approvals

Failed Examinations may be retaken once, at most one semester later. If a student has failed the Qualifying Exam twice, the student may no longer work for a PhD. The Dissertation Committee may allow the student to exercise the Master's Option.

If the PhD Proposal is not presented within nine months after the qualifying exam or after admission to the PhD Program, the Dissertation Committee decides whether the Student may get a prolongation of three months. If not or if the PhD Proposal is not presented within the prolongation period, the Student may be removed from the register of students.

If the PhD Proposal is not approved, the Dissertation Committee decides whether the student may present a modified Proposal within three months. If not, the student may exercise the Master's Option or be removed from the register of students.

If the PhD Thesis is not approved, then the Dissertation Committee may decide to allow resubmission within a specified period of time. In the negative case, or if the PhD Thesis is again not approved, then the PhD project has failed and the student may exercise the Master's Option.

If the PhD Defense is not approved, it may be repeated once within three months. If it is again not approved, then the PhD project has failed and the student may exercise the Master's Option.

In all cases where a student works for the Master's Option because of failed Examinations or approvals, he or she has one semester to satisfy all Graduation Requirements. The Master's Option is available only for eligible students as specified in [\[21.\]](#).

23. Advanced Admission

Students with advanced background may be admitted into Graduate Programs at an advanced level, or they may proceed faster within the program. In particular, students holding a Master's Degree or equivalent may be admitted into an Integrated PhD Program so that the Qualifying Exam is waived altogether; the student begins by writing a PhD Proposal, which is then defended at most one semester later.

24. Students Outside of Graduate Programs

PhD Students may engage in graduate study within or outside of Graduate Programs. The academic and administrative rules and the treatment by Jacobs University Bremen apply to all Graduate Students alike, whether they are within a Graduate Program or not, and irrespective of their sources of funding (Jacobs University Bremen fellowship, external stipend, project support, self-supported, etc).

25. Progress Monitoring

During the Coursework Phase of Academic Master's Programs and Integrated PhD Programs, the Academic Advisor monitors the progress of each student. In order to make satisfactory progress in any given semester, students in the Coursework Phase must earn at least 20 ECTS credit points with an average grade of 3.0 or better. Any Graduate Student whose semester grade point average in any given semester is worse than 4.33 will automatically be suspended.

In all PhD Programs, after the presentation of the PhD Proposal, the Dissertation Committee monitors the progress of each Graduate Student. At the end of every academic year, the chairperson of the Dissertation Committee informs in writing the Steering Committee / Program Coordinator of the program, the Elected Dean and the Registrar whether the student has made appropriate progress. In the negative case, the Elected Dean and the Dissertation Committee decide, in consultation with the Steering Committee / Program Coordinator of the program, whether the student is allowed to continue his or her education at Jacobs University Bremen, and if so, under which additional conditions.

The Graduate Programs, or the individual Dissertation Committees, may require that their students write a progress report annually or every semester, or give a progress presentation, before deciding whether the progress was appropriate.

26. Deadlines for Completion of Degree Requirements

Students may complete the Degree Requirements at any time of the year. Upon successful completion of the requirements of an Academic Master's or PhD Degree, the student obtains a degree certificate.

27. Responsibility of 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. The entire Faculty of a Graduate Program (or a research field) shares the responsibility for the success of their Graduate Students.

28. Further Regulations

This document contains the following appendices:

- [Appendix A: Graduate Degrees Offered at Jacobs University Bremen](#)
- [Appendix B: Admission and Enrollment](#)
- [Appendix C: Administrative Details to Graduate study at Jacobs University Bremen](#)
- [Appendix D: Tuition and Finance for Graduate Study](#)
- [Appendix E: Granting of a doctorate honoris causa](#)

In addition, all Graduate Programs have documents about Academic Rules and Policies, which are specific to these Programs; these handle all matters not ruled by this document. For Graduate Students outside of Graduate Programs, a Faculty Committee from the respective field of study decides these matters.

29. Changing the Policy

Changes and modifications of the Graduate Policies and Appendices are decided upon by the Academic Board based on the recommendations of the Graduate Education Committee.

In cases in which policies need further interpretation or clarification, the binding decision will be taken by the Academic Board.