

General Regulations for Doctoral Studies (Allgemeine Promotionsordnung, A-PO)

General Regulations for Doctoral Studies for obtaining the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil. or PhD) with the subject specialization of art or design based on the Offenbach model at the Offenbach University of Art and Design, dated July 1, 2021.

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Section 1: Doctoral degree and purpose of the doctorate

- (1) The Offenbach University of Art and Design awards the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the two subject areas “Art” or “Design”. For a purely theoretical doctorate, reference is made to the theory doctorate regulations of the Offenbach University of Art and Design dated July 1, 2021.

- (2) The doctorate is proof of a specific academic qualification in the field of art or design.
This proof is provided by:
 - Successful completion of the dissertation work
The dissertation consists of an art or design project (one third) and an academic paper relating to the art or design project (two thirds).
 - Presentation and oral defense of the dissertation
 - Publication of the academic paper and a public presentation of the art or design work

- (3) The doctoral program is conducted jointly by the Departments of Art and Design. The aim is to promote interdisciplinary and interdepartmental research.

Section 2: General provisions on the doctoral procedure

The doctoral procedure is carried out in the following order:

- Registration of the candidate for the dissertation
- Initiation of the doctoral examination procedure
- Assessment of the academic art or design work
- Acceptance of the dissertation
- Presentation and oral defense
- Evaluation of the doctoral performance
- Publication of the dissertation
- Submission of the deposit copies
- Conferral of the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Section 3 – Authority to supervise, supervision

- (1) Supervision of the theoretical part shall be carried out by full professors or junior professors who represent a theoretical-academic field of teaching at the HfG. Also eligible shall be professors in a design or artistic field of teaching at the HfG with a doctorate in an engineering or technical discipline. A PhD in practice is not sufficient. Emeritus or retired professors of such teaching areas are also eligible, whereby the initial supervision must begin within three years of the supervisor leaving office. Supervision of the practical part may be carried out by full professors and junior professors who represent an art/design field of teaching at the HfG.
- (2) If necessary, a second supervisor shall be chosen from the group of persons stipulated in (1). If essential methodological or factual aspects of the dissertation concern a subject area that is not represented at the university, a second supervisor can be appointed in the form of an external specialist with a PhD or qualified as a junior professor for the theoretical part, or an external designer or artist for the practical part. Second supervisors shall always be consulted in coordination with the primary supervisor.
- (3) The supervisor shall hold regular feedback meetings (at least once a year) with the doctoral candidate about the progress of the doctoral project. In addition, the supervisor shall ensure that the doctoral candidate presents preliminary research results at least once during the doctoral period at the university (e.g. in the context of the interdisciplinary colloquium for the doctoral candidates of the university).
- (4) If a doctoral candidate has to interrupt his/her work on the doctorate, he/she is requested to inform the supervisor and the Doctoral Committee immediately and to explain the reasons for the interruption, indicating a time frame for the interruption wherever possible. The Doctoral Committee shall decide on the request. There is no general right to interruption of the doctoral studies.

Section 4: Acceptance as a doctoral candidate and suitability assessment procedure

- (1) Applications for acceptance as a doctoral candidate are to be addressed to the chair of the doctoral committee. The Doctoral Committee will assess the applications in an initial meeting and agree on a preliminary selection of candidates to be recommended for acceptance. The preselected candidates are invited to a personal discussion of

their project in the presence of the Doctoral Committee and the proposed supervisors. The supervisors decide whether and which doctoral projects they will supervise. The Doctoral Committee then decides whether or not to accept the applicant.

- (2) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate can only be refused if reasons are given. By accepting the applicant as a doctoral candidate, the Doctoral Committee guarantees the dissertation will be assessed at a later date. The decision on acceptance as a doctoral candidate shall be communicated to the applicant in writing.
- (3) The condition for acceptance as a doctoral candidate is, as a rule, previous acquisition of an academic degree carrying the title Diplom, Magister Artium, or Master of Arts, or a state examination in an academic or an art/design course of study, as evidenced by the certificate of a German state or state-recognized university or art college or a correspondingly equivalent certificate. Study programs that are subject to the same framework examination regulations of the HRK/KMK (German Rectors' Conference and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder) are valid as study programs in the field of the dissertation and as correspondingly equivalent study programs. The Doctoral Committee shall rule on equivalence, including in the case of such certificates in which the field of the dissertation is not identical with the subject or subjects of the completed degree, or in the case of foreign certificates. In the case of foreign certificates, the equivalence agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Rectors' Conference must be observed.
- (4) Where the candidate holds an exclusively academic degree, experience and skills in an art/design field should be demonstrated – unless the degree is a purely theoretical doctorate. The candidate must prove his/her abilities by furnishing documentation on independent art/design works. The Doctoral Committee shall evaluate the candidate's skills in the field of art or design.
- (5) Where the candidate holds a degree that is exclusively art/design-based, academic abilities must be demonstrated. The ability to work academically must be proven with certificates in corresponding courses, or is deemed to have been provided upon the submission of any academic publications.

- (6) In addition to the certificates (according to paragraphs 3 to 5), the application must include a motivation letter and the submission of a project outline of approximately ten A4 pages (should contain: project description, goal of the doctorate, methods, bibliography). A declaration is to be enclosed stating whether and, if so, by which professors the work on the theoretical and art/design part of the dissertation will be supervised.
- (7) Candidates shall only be entitled to have their dissertation supervised where there is available capacity within the faculty.

Section 5: Doctoral Committee

- (1) For the proper execution of the doctoral procedures, the two Departments shall form a joint Doctoral Committee.
- (2) The permanent members of the Doctoral Committee shall be professors from the theory departments of both faculties.

Furthermore, the Doctoral Committee shall also include the following members of the university, who are elected for three years by the Senate:

- One professor from the art/design fields of teaching (art) and one professor from the design fields (design)
 - One special-duties lecturer or one staff member from the art or design teaching areas
 - Two PhD students (one from art and one from design)
- (3) The members of the Doctoral Committee shall elect a professor from among their ranks to chair the committee for a period of three years. Re-election is permitted.
 - (4) The Doctoral Committee shall have a quorum if at least two thirds of the members are present, and a majority of the professors is guaranteed. Resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority of the members present. In the event of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.

- (5) The Doctoral Committee shall decide on the following matters:
- Acceptance of an applicant as a doctoral candidate
 - Initiation of the doctoral examination procedure
 - Appointment of experts
 - Acceptance of the dissertation on the basis of the assessments and, if applicable, the statements and evaluations
 - Appointment of the Examination Board
 - Completion of the doctoral procedure (determination of the final grade, conferral of the degree)

Section 6: Cooperative doctorate/bi-national doctorate

- (1) Cooperative doctorates can be carried out with the participation of another university or higher education institution. Where another university or higher education institution is involved, it must be ensured that the acceptance and admission requirements of the participating institutions are equivalent.
- (2) A joint doctoral procedure with a foreign university or higher education institution shall require an existing agreement on cross-border co-supervision or the conclusion of an individual cooperation agreement with a foreign university or higher education institution for the implementation of a binational doctoral program. The respective state law must be observed.
- (3) The applicant for a binational doctorate must fulfill both the acceptance requirements of the Offenbach University of Art and Design and the acceptance requirements of the participating university abroad.
- (4) The dissertation can be submitted by arrangement either to the Offenbach University of Art and Design or to the other university or higher education institution involved.
- (5) The dissertation shall be supervised by one academic and one art/design supervisor from the participating university or higher education institution.
- (6) In this case, the Examination Board shall consist of the examiners from the participating universities or higher education institutions.

- (7) If the dissertation is not accepted by one of the participating universities or higher education institutions, the joint doctoral procedure ends.
- (8) After successful completion of the doctoral procedure in joint supervision with a foreign university or higher education institution, a doctoral certificate signed by both institutions is issued in accordance with Annex 2. The binational format of the doctoral procedure and the name of the department in charge must be evident from the certificate.

Section 7: Dissertation

- (1) The content of the dissertation shall be assigned to one of the two participating departments – art or design – or correspondingly to one of the two disciplines – Art and Media Studies or Design Studies. The dissertation shall be an independent work of scholarly merit that makes a significant contribution to the advancement of scholarly knowledge and also provides an independent work of art or design. The dissertation shall consist of an academic paper (two thirds) and an art/design project (one third). If the art/design project is not represented/reflected/documented in the academic/theoretical work, documentation of the art/design work must be provided. The academic paper and, if applicable, the documentation must be submitted in German or, with the prior consent of the Doctoral Committee given at the time of the decision on the doctoral candidate's acceptance, in a foreign language. The right to submit this application later remains unaffected. In the case of a dissertation in a foreign language, a summary of the academic paper as well as the documentation in German must be attached, which must be approved by the first examiner of the theoretical work. The dissertation is to be provided by the applicant with a list of all sources used and a declaration that he/she has written the work independently – aside from any help explicitly mentioned therein.
- (2) Work that has already served for examination purposes will not be accepted as a dissertation. Results of such examination papers may, however, be used for the dissertation, in which case the papers in question must be cited in the list of sources.
- (3) A jointly prepared theoretical-academic part shall not be permissible. If commissioned work is carried out by third parties for the practical part, this is permissible within the framework of the division of labor or cooperation that is sometimes essential for art or design production. Likewise, in conceptual works that require teamwork or cooperation,

the candidate's own authorship is to be defined and only this is to be evaluated. The candidate's own part as specified is to be decisive for the acceptance.

Section 8: Initiation of the doctoral examination procedure

- (1) The prerequisite for the initiation of the doctoral examination procedure shall be proof of fulfillment of the admission requirements and submission of the dissertation in three bound copies (academic work including documentation of the art or design project) and also electronically as a PDF document. The application must be sent in writing to the chair of the Doctoral Committee, whereby the following documents must be submitted:
 - Curriculum vitae with details of professional and educational background
 - Proof of eligibility requirements
 - Statements on whether the candidate has already completed or applied for a doctorate
 - List of scientific publications and art or design projects and exhibitions
- (2) A decision on the application to initiate the procedure shall be taken within four weeks of receipt.
- (3) The theses and the selected visual material will be sent to all members of the Doctoral Committee together with the invitation to the meeting at least 14 days before the meeting date.
- (4) The dissertation will be made available for inspection by the invited group of persons 14 days before the meeting.
- (5) The Doctoral Committee shall decide on the initiation of the procedure if the admission requirements are fulfilled.
- (6) If the procedure is not initiated, the applicant shall be informed of the decision in writing, with reasons given for the decision and instructions provided on how to appeal. In this case, a copy of the dissertation with the comments or minutes remains in the files of the doctoral committee. The dissertation can be withdrawn by the candidate before the first assessment is available, for which the request should be submitted in writing to the chair of the doctoral committee. The procedure shall then be dealt with as if no application was submitted to initiate the procedure.

Section 9: Assessment of the dissertation

- (1) Once the dissertation has been submitted, the Doctoral Committee appoints three examiners. The first assessment for the academic part is provided by the supervisor. The second examiner is appointed by the Doctoral Committee in consultation with the doctoral candidate. The assessment of the art/design part is provided by the supervisor. If a second supervisor has been selected for the art/design part, he or she will provide a further assessment.
- (2) The second examiner may be either a professor in the respective subject area or a scholar in the field who already has a doctorate and is qualified as a junior professor. If essential methodological or factual aspects of the dissertation concern a subject area that is not represented at the university, an external expert with a doctorate and lecturer qualification can also be appointed as a second examiner.
- (3) The assessments shall be completed within four months after receipt of the request for assessment and sent to the chair of the doctoral committee. The assessments for the theoretical part shall each contain a description of the topic of the dissertation, the approach (methodology), a classification of the dissertation within the current framework of the research on this topic, and a summarizing evaluation. In addition, the assessments shall state a grade (summa cum laude, magna cum laude, cum laude, rite, non rite).
- (4) If the examiners recommend acceptance of the dissertation, they may propose conditions for publication at the same time. However, such conditions may only concern the form of the dissertation and not any aspects of content.

Section 10: Acceptance of the dissertation

- (1) Once all the assessments have been submitted, the Doctoral Committee will decide on the acceptance of the dissertation within a period of six weeks. The lecture-free periods can interrupt this deadline.
- (2) The members of the Doctoral Committee shall be invited at least 14 days before the meeting.
- (3) The assessments will be made available for inspection by the invited group of persons 14 days before the meeting.

- (4) If the grades of the assessments for the theoretical part differ by two degrees or if at least two members of the Doctoral Committee object to the statements of an assessment, the Doctoral Committee may appoint another examiner.
- (5) Another assessment must be ordered if an assessment deems the dissertation a “fail”.
- (6) All persons authorized to examine doctoral dissertations at the university and the candidate him/herself shall have the right to inspect the assessments. For this purpose, the dissertation and the expert reports will be made available at the responsible Dean's Office for 14 days during the lecture period or for four weeks during the non-lecture period, which will be announced in a suitable manner by circular letter.
- (7) The Doctoral Committee shall decide on the acceptance of the dissertation based on the assessments. The work is rejected if two or more of the examiners rate the part assessed by them as “non rite”.
- (8) The candidate will be informed of a rejection in writing, with reasons given; in this case, he/she shall have the the right to inspect the examiners' assessments within one month of the notification of the decision. In case of rejection, the candidate has the option to repeat the dissertation. He/she has a deadline of two years to complete this. The period begins once the rejection of the dissertation is definitive.
- (9) Where a dissertation is rejected, a copy will remain in the examination files together with all the assessments.

Section 11: Examination Board

- (1) If the dissertation is accepted, the Doctoral Committee shall appoint an Examination Board to be responsible for the subsequent procedure, in particular carrying out the oral defense and the evaluation of the examination performance. The Examination Board shall determine an overall grade on the basis of the existing assessments and the candidate's performance in the oral defense. The Examination Board shall consist of three examiners and two additional full-time professors, one being a professor in the theoretical field and another in the art/design field.

- (2) The Examination Board shall appoint a professor from among its members to serve as its chair. The chair shall be a professor in the theoretical subjects. He/she must not be an examiner of the dissertation.

Section 12: Oral defense (viva)

- (1) The oral defense of the dissertation shall take place within six weeks of its acceptance and covers both the academic and the art/design part. The defense shall be announced to the university public, and the work will be publicly displayed in the university library 14 days before the relevant date.
- (2) The defense of the dissertation shall be open to members of the university.
- (3) At the beginning of the oral defense, the chair of the Examination Board shall introduce the candidate and his/her academic and art/design development and shall announce s/he has fulfilled the requirements for admission as well as the acceptance of the dissertation.
- (4) In the oral defense, the candidate shall explain the main results of his/her work in 30 minutes.
- (5) After the candidate's presentation, only the examiners and other members of the examination board shall have the right to ask the candidate questions for 30 minutes. Following that, the floor is open for 30 minutes for the university public to ask questions. The oral defense may extend to other questions and related areas of the subject, which relate factually and methodologically to the oral defense.
- (6) The duration of the oral defense shall not exceed one and a half hours. Immediately after the oral defense, the examination board will hold a closed meeting to decide on:
 - the passing or failing of the oral defense,
 - the grade for the oral defense. Each member of the examination board evaluates the defense. The defense has been passed if the majority of examination board members who are present evaluate the defense as at least "passed". If the candidate has passed the oral defense, the examination board will announce the overall grade. The candidate shall be informed of this immediately after the decision has been made.

- (7) A record of the oral defense is made with the following information:
- Place and time of the oral defense
 - Names of the candidate and the members of the examination board
 - Record of the oral defense process and explanations of the evaluation
 - Individual grades given by the examiners or assessors for the oral defense and the dissertation
 - Overall grade of the examination procedure
 - Signature of the chair of the Examination Board.
- (8) If the candidate fails the oral defense, it can be repeated during the course of one year but not earlier than two months later. If the candidate then fails again, the procedure shall be deemed to have ended unsuccessfully.

Section 13: Evaluation

- (1) The examination board shall calculate an overall grade for the doctoral performance. This is composed with a weighting of two thirds for the average of the grades given by the examiners for the dissertation, and one third for the grade given by the examination board for the oral defense.
- (2) The grade levels are: summa cum laude – excellent (0); magna cum laude – very good (1); cum laude – good (2); rite – pass (3); non rite – fail (4). If the grades of all assessments and the grade of the oral defense are “summa cum laude”, the overall grade “summa cum laude” (with distinction) is awarded.
- (3) The numbers are only to be taken as a basis for calculation and do not appear in the certificate. If the calculation of averages produces fractions, the grade shall be rounded, whereby the higher grade should be given for values up to and including 0.5 and the lower grade for values from 0.6, without prejudice to the regulation for the overall grade “summa cum laude”. For the calculation of the overall grade, only the first decimal place behind the comma should be taken into account; all other places shall be deleted without rounding up or down.
- (4) The doctoral candidate can only be awarded a doctorate if the dissertation and the oral defense have each been assessed with at least the grade “rite” (pass).

- (5) By way of a provisional certificate, the doctoral candidate shall receive a certificate containing the name of the department and the examination result. This certificate, signed and sealed by the Dean's Office, must be signed by the doctoral candidate. The doctoral candidate shall be informed of any requirements for the printing of the deposit copies and shall be granted access to the record of the oral defense on request.

Section 14: Publication of the dissertation

- (1) Permission to print must be obtained once the oral defense has been passed but before publication of the dissertation. This is granted by the chair of the Doctoral Committee after consultation with the supervisor. The prerequisite for this is that the version for publication must correspond to the peer-reviewed version in terms of content and that any conditions imposed are fulfilled. The revised version must be presented to an examiner upon request before it is reproduced.
- (2) The doctoral candidate must publish the dissertation, taking into account the requirements of the examination board. Publication shall take place within two years. The doctoral title may only be used after the doctoral certificate has been handed over and the thesis has been published.
- (3) The dissertation must be made accessible to the academic public in an appropriate manner. This is the case if, in addition to the copies required in accordance with section 7 para. 1, the author delivers free of charge to the university library:
- either
- a) five copies, if a commercial or academic publisher takes over the distribution via the book trade and a minimum circulation of 150 copies is proven. The work must be marked as a dissertation of the Offenbach University of Art and Design, or
 - b) five copies, if the publication is in a magazine, or
 - c) five copies on non-aging, wood-, and acid-free paper and with a durable binding as well as an electronic version, the data format and data carrier of which are to be coordinated with the university library if the doctoral candidate transfers the right to publish the electronic version in data networks to the university.
- (4) If the monograph is published as an eBook, the publisher must not use "digital rights management" (DRM): Following acquisition of a license, unrestricted and long-term access must be possible; no access restrictions (e.g. copy protection or only partial printing permission) may apply.

Section 15: Doctoral graduation, certification

- (1) The Doctoral Committee shall confirm the overall grade of the doctoral thesis, as long as there is no procedural error. After the candidate has submitted the deposit copies in the library of the Offenbach University of Art and Design to the chair of the doctoral committee, the graduation is completed with the presentation of the certificate to the candidate. Only from this point onwards is the candidate entitled to use the title of doctor.
- (2) The certificate shall be issued in triplicate and is dated on the day of the oral defense. It is signed by the executive board of the Offenbach University of Art and Design and – depending on the subject of the doctorate – by the Dean's Office for art or design, and it bears the seal of the Offenbach University of Art and Design. One copy remains with the examination documents.

Section 16: Access to files

The candidate must be granted access to the examination file upon written application to the chair of the doctoral committee.

Section 17: Appeals

- (1) All written decisions of the Doctoral Committee and the Examination Board shall be accompanied by instructions on how to appeal.
- (2) An appeal against decisions of the Doctoral Committee or the examination board can be filed with the University President. This will be presented to the Doctoral Committee for a decision.
- (3) The appeal must be filed within one month of receipt of the decision. A decision should be made within 30 days.
- (4) After exhaustion of avenues to seek a legal remedy, the candidate has the right to appeal to the administrative courts; he/she must be informed of this with instructions on how to appeal.

Section 18: Refusal or withdrawal of a doctoral degree

- (1) The award of the doctoral degree shall be refused or withdrawn if, during the doctoral phase or between the conclusion of the procedure and the issuing of the certificate, it is established that:
- (a) the candidate has acted fraudulently in the examination results or in his/her other academic work, or
 - (b) facts have become known which would have precluded the awarding of the academic degree.

The decision is made by the president following a hearing with the doctoral committee. The person concerned has the right to appeal to the administrative courts against the revocation.

- (2) Prior to the decision of the Doctoral Committee on the termination of the doctoral procedure or the withdrawal of the doctoral degree, the person concerned shall be given the opportunity to comment on the allegations. The withdrawal shall be in accordance with the statutory provisions. The Doctoral Committee shall issue the doctoral candidate with a decision which the candidate can appeal against.

Section 19: Date of validity

The present doctoral regulations shall come into force on the day after their publication on the homepage of the Offenbach University of Art and Design and with their posting on July 1, 2021.

Offenbach am Main, dated June 24, 2021



Prof. Bernd Kracke
President