

Regulations of the Graduate School of the Department of Geosciences of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne

12/02/2021

On the basis of Art. 2 (4), and Art. 26 (3) of the Act on the Universities of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Higher Education Act - HG) in the version of the Act on the Future of Higher Education of 16/09/2014 (GV. NRW. S. 547), last amended by Article 10 of the Act for the consistent and solidary management of the COVID-19 pandemic in North Rhine-Westphalia and for the adaptation of state law with regard to the effects of a pandemic of 14/04/2020 (GV. NRW. S. 218b), the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne establishes a Graduate School pursuant to Art. 3 (1) of its doctoral regulations of 12/03/2020 (AM 8/2020) in the Department of Geosciences, gives it the name "Graduate School of Geosciences" and enacts the following regulations:

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§ 1

Legal status and tasks

(1) As a graduate school for all of the Geosciences, the Graduate School of Geosciences (hereinafter: GSGS) is a scientific institution of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne (hereinafter: MNF) under the Department of Geosciences.

(2) The GSGS shall assume the tasks of the Graduate Schools at the MNF pursuant to Art. 3 (2) of the MNF Doctoral Regulations for doctoral candidates in the doctoral subjects assigned to the Department of Geosciences.

(3) The GSGS promotes structured, research-based doctoral studies and supports scientific exchange within the Department and across departmental boundaries. Furthermore, it serves the quality assurance of the doctorate, among others through a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) according to § 12 (2), and the professional and interdisciplinary further qualification of its doctoral candidates.

§ 2

Membership

(1) Members of the GSGS are:

- a) the advisors of doctoral candidates (advisors) in the doctoral subjects of Geography, Geology and Mineralogy, Geophysics, Crystallography, and Meteorology, insofar as they are members of MNF,
- b) the doctoral candidates of the doctoral subjects assigned to the Department of Geosciences of MNF who have been admitted as doctoral candidates in accordance with Art. 5 (7) of the Doctoral Regulations and are supervised in the GSGS,
- c) the academic staff members who are mentors within the meaning of § 12 (2) of the current regulations, insofar as they are also members of the MNF.

(2) Other members may be admitted to the GSGS upon application. This applies in particular to the following persons:

- a) Persons intending to pursue doctoral studies require either a confirmation of supervision or a supporting statement in written or electronic form from an advisor (professor, *Privatdozentin* or *Privatdozent*) of the Department of Geosciences;
- b) academic staff members who are mentors within the meaning of § 12 (2) of the current regulations, insofar as they are also members of the MNF and professors and other persons to whom the Faculty has granted the right to supervise doctoral theses in accordance with the Doctoral Regulations and who supervise doctoral candidates of the Department;
- c) other persons, provided they can provide evidence of having completed a doctorate in a relevant subject.

The Steering Committee examines if the prerequisites according to (2) a) - c) are met and decides on admission.

(3) Membership of the GSGS ends:

- a) by written or electronic notice of resignation to the Steering Committee (§ 6),
- b) for doctoral candidates regularly upon completion of the doctorate (according to Art. 13 (1) Doctoral Regulations).
- c) The membership of further members with a doctorate according to (2) ends 5 years after admission as a member and can be extended upon application.
- d) If persons with the intention of obtaining a doctorate who are members pursuant to (2) have not become members pursuant to (1) b) after one year, their membership shall end. It can be extended upon application. The application for renewal of membership shall be accompanied either by a confirmation of supervision or a supporting statement in written or electronic form from an advisor (professor, *Privatdozentin* or *Privatdozent*) of the Department of Geosciences.

(4) In the event of an advisor transferring to another university or retiring, the membership of this advisor in the GSGS shall continue at his/her request until the completion of all doctoral procedures supervised by him/her at the University of Cologne and still in progress until their completion. The Steering Committee decides on exceptions.

§ 3

Rights and duties of members

(1) All members commit themselves to actively participate in the realization of the goals and tasks of the GSGS according to § 1 (3). For advisors, this means in particular the cooperation in and co-responsibility for the qualification programme of the Graduate School; for doctoral candidates in particular the participation in the GSGS qualification programme. All members are further required to ensure or enable a timely and swift doctoral process.

(2) The members of the GSGS may at any time submit proposals to the Steering Committee for activities to be carried out within the GSGS or to be supported by the GSGS.

(3) The members are obliged to comply with the rules of good scientific practice according to the "Regulations of the University of Cologne for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice and Dealing with Scientific Misconduct".

(4) All GSGS members have equal voting rights in the General Assembly.

§ 4

Duties of doctoral candidates

(1) Doctoral candidates must register in writing or electronically with the coordinator of the Graduate School according to Art. 5 (3) f) Doctoral Regulations before starting their membership.

(2) Within the first six months after registration in the GSGS according to (1), the doctoral candidate shall submit a written research plan to the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) according to § 12 (2). After submission of the research plan, the doctoral candidate shall give

an oral report to all members of the TAC within four weeks. This report is to be followed by a consultation meeting, which is to support further project development as well as recommendations for participation in continuing education events and conferences. The TAC meeting is to be minuted by the doctoral candidate. Part of the TAC meeting takes place without the advisor. During the consultation, a feedback form is to be completed by the members of the TAC, and signed by all participants. The doctoral candidate should submit it to the coordinator according to § 9. After this meeting, the doctoral candidates must submit a report on the progress of their work (progress report) to the TAC every nine months. The feedback forms from the respective subsequent TAC meetings, signed by all participants, are to be submitted by the doctoral candidate to the coordinator.

(3) At least once a year, the data deposited in the recording and administration software for doctoral candidates of the University must be updated by the doctoral candidates in the manner provided by the GSGS Steering Committee.

(4) Doctoral candidates are obliged to participate in the events of the GSGS induction module. These include a workshop on good scientific practice.

(5) Apart from attending scientific lectures, doctoral candidates shall participate in training courses on transferable skills, including, academic writing and presentation, university didactics, management skills, start-up/self-employment and languages.

(6) The GSGS organizes a doctoral symposium (GSGS Research Conference) at least once a year; the symposium may be held as an online event. All doctoral candidates of the GSGS are required to present their own research project once (preferably in the first year) at a Research Conference, usually by means of a poster. In addition, doctoral candidates may voluntarily contribute to the Research Conference.

(7) If doctoral studies are not completed after four years, separate consultations with the doctoral candidate and the advisor shall take place by a Steering Committee member.

§ 5

Organs

(1) The GSGS has the following organs:

1. Steering Committee (§ 6),
2. spokesperson (§ 8),
3. coordinator (§ 9),
4. General Assembly (§ 10).

§ 6

Steering Committee

(1) The GSGS Steering Committee consists of:

- a) three members from the group of advisors according to § 2 (1) a), representing different doctoral subjects assigned to the Department, with a voting weight of 2;
- b) one representative from the group of students who are members of the GSGS according to § 2 (1) b), with a voting weight of 1;
- c) two representatives from the group of academic staff who are members according to § 2 (1) b) or c), including one doctoral candidate, each with a voting weight of 2.
- d) The coordinator is a member in an advisory role.

(2) The term of office of the members of the Steering Committee according to (1) a) and c) is two years. The term of office of the students is be one year. Re-election is possible.

(3) The Steering Committee conducts the business of the GSGS. It is responsible for the use of the financial means of the GSGS and all tasks of the GSGS, as far as these regulations do not determine otherwise. It is responsible in particular for:

- a) the election of the spokesperson and the deputy spokesperson according to § 8,
- b) the appointment of a coordinator in accordance with § 9,
- c) decisions on the admission of members,
- d) the development of the qualification programme and its coordination and quality control in consultation with the Executive Board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with Art. 3 (3) of the Doctoral Regulations,
- e) recommendations for amendments to the GSGS Regulations to the MNF Graduate School in consultation with the Departmental Committee of the Department of Geosciences,
- f) coordinating cooperation with other institutions of the University of Cologne and the integration of non-university partners,
- g) the annual status report to the General Meeting and to the Executive Board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with Art. 3 (3) of the Doctoral Regulations,
- h) financial planning,
- i) the acquisition of third-party funding,
- j) public relations work,
- k) mediation in cases of conflict in accordance with § 14.

(4) Upon application, the Steering Committee shall decide on the granting of scholarships as well as material and travel funds. In these decisions, the doctoral candidate representatives do not vote in the Steering Committee. Applications by doctoral candidates may be rejected if the obligations under § 4 and § 12 (3) have not been fulfilled.

(5) The Steering Committee may grant exceptions from the duties of doctoral candidates according to § 4 upon a joint written or electronic request of the doctoral candidate and the advisor, if there are valid reasons. Cogent reasons are cases of hardship in which compliance with the duties would cause a disproportionate delay in the doctorate.

(6) The Steering Committee may establish subcommittees to which the responsibilities listed in (1) c) - k) can be delegated until revoked.

(7) As a rule, the Steering Committee meets twice a year. Steering Committee meetings are convened by the spokesperson in writing or electronically with at least seven days' notice; the agenda shall be sent to all members of the Steering Committee no later than seven days before the meeting. The spokesperson chairs the meetings.

(8) The GSGS Steering Committee constitutes a quorum if, after proper invitation, half of the voting members are present or represented and the advisors constitute the majority. If a quorum cannot be reached at an invitation, a quorum shall be present at the next meeting to be convened, irrespective of the number of persons present, if special reference was made to this fact in the invitation.

(9) The members of the Steering Committee may agree to adopt resolutions by e-mail circulation. Such a procedure is only permissible if discussion at a meeting is not (or no longer) necessary and no Steering Committee member objects.

§ 7

Election of the Steering Committee members

(1) The members of the Steering Committee in accordance with § 6 (1) a) - c) and one deputy each shall be elected (and, if necessary, voted out of office) separately by group at the General Assembly.

(2) If a member of the Steering Committee resigns before the end of his or her term of office, the deputy shall take office until the end of the term of office. If the deputy also resigns, the Steering Committee shall immediately convene the General Assembly by posting a notice of 14 days in order to elect a successor.

(3) A member may be voted out of office if at least half of the voting members vote in favour. With the deselection, a substitute member of the Steering Committee must be elected without delay.

§ 8

Spokesperson

(1) The members of the Steering Committee pursuant to § 6 (1) a) elect a spokesperson and a deputy spokesperson from among their number for a term of two years. Re-election is permissible.

(2) The spokesperson heads the GSGS and represent its interests both within and outside the University, in particular on the Board of the MNF Graduate Schools pursuant to Art. 3 (3) of the Doctoral Regulations together with the coordinator.

(3) If the spokesperson is prevented from attending, he or she shall be represented by the deputy spokesperson.

§ 9

Coordinator

(1) The Steering Committee appoints a doctoral research associate as GSGS coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for the administrative tasks of the GSGS.

(2) The tasks of the coordinator include in particular

a) the information and consultation of the members,

b) financial administration,

c) the administration of the achievement of the doctoral candidates within the framework of the GSGS,

d) representing the GSGS on the Board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with Art. 3 (3) of the Doctoral Regulations,

e) implementing public relations activities in accordance with the decisions of the Steering Committee,

f) supporting the process of applications for admission to doctoral studies in accordance with Art. 4 of the Doctoral Regulations in consultation with the Doctoral Office at MNF,

g) issuing attestations and the certificate pursuant to § 13.

§ 10

General Assembly

(1) The General Assembly serves in particular to provide regular information to all members of the Graduate School. The spokesperson chairs the meeting and presides over it. The general meeting elects the members of the Steering Committee from among its members, separated by groups.

(2) The General Assembly is held at least once a year. It is convened by the spokesperson with a notice period of at least 14 days; the agenda is announced by notice at least 7 days before the meeting.

(3) The General Assembly must be convened within six weeks upon request of at least half of the voting members of the GSGS. The request to be addressed to the speaker must contain a proposal for an agenda.

(4) The General Assembly may submit motions to the Steering Committee for the further development of the qualification programme according to § 12. It may give recommendations and opinions on fundamental matters of the GSGS, including the dissolution of the GSGS, to the Departmental Committee.

(5) The General Assembly may establish committees.

(6) The General Assembly of the GSGS shall constitute a quorum if, after due summons, half of all voting members are present. Voting right cannot be transferred. The meeting of the members is considered as quorum, as long as its lack of resolution is not determined on request of a present member. The request must be made at the latest before the start of a vote. If a quorum cannot be established on request, a quorum shall exist at the next meeting to be convened, irrespective of the number of members present, if this case was specifically referred to in the invitation.

§ 11

Procedural principles

(1) Resolutions of the organs of the GSGS are passed with the majority of the votes cast (simple majority). Abstentions are considered as votes not cast. In the event of a tie, a motion is rejected. On request of at least one member, secret voting must take place.

(2) The results of meetings of the organs of the GSGS are minuted. The minutes are made accessible to all members at the latest with the invitation to the next meeting. The minutes are considered as accepted, if they are not contradicted within 14 days after receipt.

(3) In all other respects, the rules of procedure of the University of Cologne apply.

§ 12

Qualification programme

(1) The GSGS offers a qualification programme oriented towards its objectives defined in § 1 (3). If a doctoral candidate participates in a further doctoral programme (e.g. a project-specific programme), the rules of the further programme shall have priority. Dual membership is possible.

(2) The supervision of the doctoral candidates within the GSGS is carried out by an individually composed Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC). In addition to the advisor as defined in Art. 14 of the Doctoral Regulations, this committee includes one or more mentors with a doctoral degree who are determined by the doctoral candidate and the advisor. The mentors may also be members or affiliates of another university, higher education institution or non-university research institution in Germany or abroad, regardless of whether they hold the right to confer doctoral degrees. At least one mentor must not be dependent on the advisor under employment law and should not be part of the advisor's working group. The coordinator according to § 9 shall be informed of the names of the respective mentors by the doctoral candidates in writing or electronically after all parties involved have given their written or electronic consent. The composition of the TAC may change in the course of the project for subject-related or non-subject-related reasons by mutual agreement of the parties involved. The coordinator shall be informed of any changes by the doctoral candidates.

(3) A Graduate School supervision agreement will be concluded between the doctoral candidate and the members of the TAC at the latest at the first consultation meeting according to § 4 (2).

§ 13

Attestation and Certificate

(1) After successful registration according to § 4 (1), the doctoral candidates receive an attestation in the sense of Art. 5 (3) f) Doctoral Regulations. The date of issue shall be deemed the date of registration.

(2) Before applying for admission to the doctoral examinations, the doctoral candidates shall receive an attestation of participation in compulsory and elective courses of the Graduate School within the meaning of Art. 6 (3) h) Doctoral Regulations.

(3) After successful completion of the doctorate, the doctoral candidates receive a certificate of the GSGS, provided that they have fulfilled the obligations according to § 4 of these regulations. The Steering Committee shall decide on exceptions. The certificate attests to the achievements made within the framework of the qualification programme.

(4) All attestations and the certificate are issued by the coordinator.

§ 14

Conflicts

(1) Conflicts within the GSGS shall be settled amicably with the mediation of the Steering Committee. If this does not succeed, one of the parties involved may first request mediation by the Board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with Art. 3 (3) of the Doctoral Regulations and, if necessary, subsequently by the ombudsperson in accordance with Art. 15 of the Doctoral Regulations.

§ 15

Final provisions and effective date

(1) Additions or amendments to these regulations require the approval of the Departmental Committee of the Department of Geosciences at the University of Cologne.

(2) These regulations shall enter into force on the day following their publication in the Official Notices of the University of Cologne.

Issued on the basis of the resolution of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of 19/11/2020, and after examination of the legality by the Rectorate of the University of Cologne of 12/01/2021.

Signed by Prof Dr Sandro Jahn, Director of the Department of Geosciences,

signed by Prof Dr Ir Paul H.M. van Loosdrecht, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

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