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Study and Examination Regulations for the Doctoral Program of Study “Hohenheim Graduate School of Life Sciences” (HGL) of the Agricultural and Natural Sciences Faculties at the University of Hohenheim

from 7 May 2025

On 2 April 2025, the University of Hohenheim Senate passed the following Regulations based on § 38(2) sentence 5 in conjunction with § 32(3), § 36(1) and § 19(1) sentence 2 no. 9, § 60(2) as well as § 38(5) of the State Higher Education Act (LHG) from 1 January 2005 (Law Gazette (Gesetzesblatt, GBl.) p. 1), in the version of Art. 1 of the Third Higher Education Amendment Act from 1 April 2014 (GBl. p. 99), last amended by the Fifth Act to Amend Regulations under Higher Education Law (5th HRÄG) from 12 November 2024 (GBl. no. 97) and the respective Doctoral Regulations for the Faculties of Agricultural Sciences, Natural Sciences, as well as Business, Economics and Social Sciences.

The President’s Office approved the enactment of these Regulations on 7 May 2025 pursuant to § 38(2) sentence 5 in conjunction with § 32(3) sentence 1 LHG.

Part I: General Provisions

§ 1 Scope of application, objectives, and responsibilities

- (1) These Study and Examination Regulations (SPO) regulate the admission requirements as well as the objectives, content, and sequence of the doctoral study program “Hohenheim Graduate School of Life Sciences” (HGL) with the research training groups established under its umbrella (see Special Part) on the basis of the Doctoral Regulations for the Faculties of Agricultural Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Business, Economics and Social Sciences (hereinafter referred to as Doctoral Regulations) in the currently valid version.
- (2) Further research training groups (as part of the DFG research training group, for example) may be established. The responsible Faculty Council decides on establishing and repealing research training groups following an application by the spokespersons of the research training groups. The faculty affiliation of the spokesperson determines which faculty is responsible. Further details can be found in the HGL concept.
- (3) The doctoral program is intended to provide structured support for preparing a doctoral thesis to obtain the faculty-specific degree “Doctor of Agricultural Sciences” (Dr. sc. agr.) or “Doctor of Natural Sciences” (Dr. rer. nat.) or “Doctor of Philosophy” (Ph. D.) and to impart in-depth specialist knowledge, skills, and methods at the current state of agricultural or natural science research, and scientific work.
- (4) Each research training group appoints a spokesperson. The spokesperson has the following responsibilities:
 - Admission of doctoral candidates into the research training group,
 - Decision on changes to the curriculum of the students,
 - Decision on recognition of coursework and examinations,

- Decision on failed examinations,
- Annual report to the HGL Board.

Decisions of the spokespersons are communicated in writing by the Graduate Academy to those affected. Reasons must be given for detrimental decisions and information about the students' legal rights must be included.

§ 2 Board of the Hohenheim Graduate School of Life Sciences [short: Board]

- (1) The Board comprises:
 - the members of the doctoral committee of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences in accordance with § 4 (1)(1) of the Doctoral Regulations,
 - the members of the doctoral committee of the Faculty of Natural Sciences in accordance with § 4 (1)(2) of the Doctoral Regulations.
- (2) The Board chair rotates every two years between the chairs of the faculties' doctoral committees. The deputy is the chairperson of the doctoral committee who is not the chairperson of the Board. The chair for the first term of office is held by the doctoral committee chair of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences. This term commences when the Study and Examination Regulations come into force.
- (3) The Board generally meets in private and at least once a year.
- (4) The Board is assigned the following tasks:
 - In particular, the Board ensures that the provisions of these Study and Examination Regulations are observed and makes decisions on examination matters.
 - It is the arbitration board for hardship cases.
 - The Board is responsible for making suggestions to the faculties regarding the reform of the Study and Examination Regulations and module descriptions. Changes are decided by the Faculty Councils of both faculties.
 - The chair of the committee reports regularly to the Dean's Offices of the faculties involved.
 - The chairperson undertakes the ongoing business of the Board. It is supported in this by the Graduate Academy.

The Board may delegate the completion of individual tasks to the chairperson.

- (5) The Graduate Academy will inform the person concerned in writing of the Board's decisions. Reasons must be given for detrimental decisions and information about the students' legal rights must be included.
- (6) The Procedural Order for Committees and Commissions at the University of Hohenheim is also applicable as amended.

§ 3 Maximum duration of participation in the doctoral study program

- (1) The maximum duration of participation in the doctoral study program (standard period of study) is the maximum duration of the doctoral project. The credit certificates must be submitted at the latest with the application for the opening of the doctoral examination process to the Graduate Academy. During the standard period of study, students are entitled to take examinations to complete the modules in accordance with § 4(3) and (4).

- (2) Protection periods to be granted as well as an extension of the processing time of the doctoral project in accordance with § 16(1) sentence 2 of the Doctoral Regulations are also automatically granted for the maximum duration of participation in the doctoral study program without a separate application.

§ 4 Structure and content of the doctoral study program

- (1) The doctoral study program is divided into a compulsory section (18 credits according to ECTS), which must be completed by all doctoral candidates doing their doctorate at HGL, and a research training group-specific section (12 credits according to ECTS), which only needs to be completed by the participants of the respective research training group in accordance with this Special Part.
- (2) The compulsory area of 18 credits is divided into an area A with a qualification program on key skills and an area B, which provides for active participation in at least one international conference and at least one HGL annual retreat. The structure of the doctoral study program is described in the HGL concept. An overview of the modules offered at the faculties involved in the HGL can be taken from the module catalog.
- (3) The 12-credit research training group-specific area is described in more detail for the respective research training group in the Special Part of these Regulations.
- (4) The modules to be taken are usually determined by the spokespersons of the research training groups in consultation with the supervisor as part of the admission to the respective research training group. The selection of modules made for admission can be changed during the course of study in consultation with the supervisors and the spokespersons of the research training groups. The Graduate Academy must be notified informally of any changes without delay.
- (5) Module examinations which have been failed can be repeated once. If this repeat option has been exhausted, the module examination has been definitively failed. For modules which have been failed, substitute work can be completed within the standard period of study after consultation and with the approval of the spokespersons of the research study group. (4) applies.

§ 5 Admission requirements

- (1) The following conditions must be met for admission to the doctoral study program:
 - Acceptance as a Doctoral Candidate in one of the participating faculties.
 - Enrolled as a doctoral student at the University of Hohenheim.
 - Further research training group-specific provisions in accordance with the Special Part of these SPO.
 - When the application is submitted, the mentor group must be already named in accordance with § 6 of the Doctoral Regulations.
- (2) Adoption into the doctoral study program takes place based on written application to the Graduate Academy using the form provided.
- (3) The spokespersons of the research study groups decide on admission.

§ 6 Loss of right to admission to an examination

- (1) The right of admission to an examination elapses if the credits according to § 4(3) and (4) are not passed within the standard period of study according to § 3 and/or the credit certificates are not

rendered within this period according to § 3(1). The right of admission to an examination does not elapse if the students are not culpable for the deadline having been exceeded or if the protection periods stated in § 7(5) and (6) have been used. If the right of admission to an examination elapses, the admission to the doctoral study program elapses. Acceptance as a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Agricultural or Natural Sciences in accordance with the Doctoral Regulations remains unaffected.

- (2) If the doctoral candidate withdraws the application for acceptance or if acceptance as a doctoral candidate is revoked by the faculty, the right to take examinations at the HGL expires.

§ 7 Missing an exam, withdrawal, cheating, and protection periods

- (1) An examination is evaluated with "fail" if the person to be examined misses a binding examination date without a valid reason or if the person withdraws from the examination without a valid reason after having started the examination. The same applies if a written examination is not completed within the scheduled time.
- (2) The reason asserted for the withdrawal or failure to appear must be reported to the Graduate Academy in writing without delay and must be made credible. In the event of illness of the person to be examined or a child or relative in need of care, a medical certificate is required and, in cases of doubt, a certificate from a doctor appointed by the university. Any existing examination results will be taken into account in this case.
- (3) If the person being examined attempts to influence the result of the examination by cheating or using unauthorized aids, the examination in question is deemed to have been failed. Anyone who disrupts the orderly progress of the examination may be excluded from continuing the examination by the respective examiner or invigilator; in this case, the examination in question is deemed to have been failed. In serious cases, the Board may exclude the candidate from taking further examinations.
- (4) The Graduate Academy will immediately inform the person concerned of the decisions in writing. Reasons must be given for detrimental decisions and information about the students' legal rights must be included. The parties concerned may request that the decisions pursuant to (3) sentences 1 and 2 be reviewed by the Board within a period of one month after receipt of the decision.
- (5) At the request of a female student to the Graduate Academy, the maternity protection periods as stipulated in the applicable law for the protection of working mothers (MSchG) must be taken into account accordingly. The required evidence shall be enclosed with the application. The maternity protection periods interrupt any time limit stated in these Examination Regulations; the duration of the maternity protection is not counted towards this time limit. Accordingly, the periods of parental leave in accordance with the currently applicable law must be taken into account upon application. The students must inform the Graduate Academy in writing at least four weeks before the date on which parental leave is to commence of the period for which parental leave will be taken, enclosing the necessary evidence.
- (6) Students with a child for whom they have custody and who lives in the same household are entitled to undertake individual pieces of coursework and examinations or repeat examinations after the standard period of study has expired in accordance with § 3 (hardship regulation). Following application by the students, the Board determines the extension to the time limits and informs the students of such immediately. The entitlement expires at the end of the semester in which the requirements specified in sentence 1 cease to apply. The students shall provide the

relevant proof. The same applies to students with relatives in need of care within the meaning of § 7(3) of the Home Care Leave Act and to students with disabilities or chronic illnesses. The application must be submitted informally to the Board. Suitable evidence must be enclosed.

§ 8 Certificate

- (1) Once the doctorate has been successfully concluded and the modules successfully completed, the students will receive a certificate stating that they participated in the doctoral studies. The certificate contains
 - first name, surname, as well as date of birth of the students,
 - the designation of the successfully completed coursework and examinations,
 - the credits on which the coursework and examinations are based,
 - the title of the dissertation.
- (2) The certificate is issued bilingually, in German and English.
- (3) The certificate is signed by the Deans of the Faculties of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Sciences. It bears the date of the oral doctoral examination.
- (4) The certificate for the cooperative research training group bears the logo of the University of Hohenheim and that of the cooperation partner. It is signed by the deans of the Faculties of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Sciences and a representative of the cooperation partner. It bears the date of the oral doctoral examination.

Part II: Final provisions

§ 10 Entry into force and transitional provisions

- (1) These Study and Examination Regulations enter into force on 1 October 2025. When the Study and Examination Regulations come into force, the doctoral studies can commence.
- (2) The Study and Examination Regulations for the "Natural Sciences" doctoral study program of the Faculty of Natural Sciences from 4 May 2022 (published in the University of Hohenheim's Official Communications from 6 July 2022, no. 1408) and the Study and Examination Regulations of the University of Hohenheim for the "Agricultural Sciences" doctoral study program (graduate class) of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences from 4 November 2011 (published in the University of Hohenheim's Official Communications no. 782), last amended by the Fourth Statute to change the Examination Regulations from 20 May 2015 (published in the University of Hohenheim's Official Communications no. 1056), remain valid for those doctoral candidates already accepted according to these codes. You can complete your doctoral studies as planned.
- (3) Doctoral candidates who are already enrolled in one of the existing doctoral programs of the Faculties of Agricultural Sciences or Natural Sciences can switch to the new doctoral program under the following conditions:
 1. Duration of studies: The regulations of these statutes apply to the maximum duration of study; the previous duration of study is fully credited.
 2. Module recognition: Modules which have already been successfully completed and passed can be recognized.
 3. Application procedure: The application for a change must be submitted in text form to the Graduate Academy. The application must list the modules to be recognized and the modules still to be completed. The credit certificates for modules to be recognized must be enclosed, as well as module descriptions for modules to be completed.
 4. Signatures: The application must be signed by the doctoral candidate and the respective mentor group.

5. Restrictions:

- i. A change to the new SPO is no longer possible after the doctoral procedure has commenced.
- ii. Doctoral candidates who receive a scholarship as part of their doctoral studies must independently check whether the conditions of the scholarship award are compatible with a change before submitting their application.

Stuttgart, dated 7 May 2025

signed,

Dr. Katrin Scheffer
Chancellor of the University of Hohenheim (deputizing for the President)

Special Part according to § 4(3) of the Study and Examination Regulations for the “Hohenheim Graduate School of Life Sciences” doctoral study program

Subject-specific provisions for the research training groups: **Open cohorts**

Objective of the research training group

The goals of the Open Cohort research training group are that graduates are able to:

- design, carry out, and publish interdisciplinary research projects independently by combining methods and theories from different subject areas;
- establish and actively maintain sustainable networks with other scientists within and outside their department, thereby promoting sustainable scientific exchange;
- communicate their research findings in a comprehensible and effective manner both to the scientific community through publications and conferences, as well as to the wider public;
- plan, organize, and carry out their research independently, observing ethical principles and always keeping the social relevance of their work in mind.

Specific admission conditions

- Acceptance as a Doctoral Candidate in one of the participating faculties.
- Enrolled as a doctoral student at the University of Hohenheim.
- When the application is submitted, the mentor group must be already named in accordance with § 6 of the Doctoral Regulations.

Modules

- (1) In the Open Cohort research training group, achievements from the research training group-specific area amounting to at least 12 credits must be completed in addition to the compulsory area provided for all doctoral candidates doing their doctorate at the HGL.
- (2) An overview of the modules offered at the faculties involved in the HGL can be found in the module catalog. In addition, upon application to the spokespersons of the research study group, students can also choose from the offerings of another German university, research and further education institution, or a foreign university.
- (3) Credits that cannot be awarded in accordance with ECTS or are less than 3 credits are combined in a so-called container module.