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**Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation  
to Earn a Doctoral Degree in Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim**

as at 27 June 2013

(Bulletin of the President's Office (Amtliche Bekanntmachungen des Rektorats)  
No. 17/2013 of 10 July 2013)

1st amendment as at 6 June 2016

(Bulletin of the President's Office (Amtliche Bekanntmachungen des Rektorats)  
No. 16/2016 of 10 June 2016)

The present version is a non-official version including the aforementioned amendments. Only the version in the Bulletin of the President's Office is legally binding.

**Section 1 - Type of Doctorate**

- (1) The School of Social Sciences awards the degree of the Doctor of Social Sciences (Dr. rer. soc.) based on the successful completion of a doctoral program and a doctoral examination.
- (2) Fields of study are:
  - Political Science
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
- (3) In case a doctoral candidate aspires to obtain a doctoral degree in cooperation with a foreign higher education institution, either a framework agreement or an individual cooperation agreement shall be signed with the respective institution. The Presidents of both higher education institutions need to sign the agreement. The doctoral committee shall approve the agreement. For doctoral students of the Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and Behavioral Sciences (CDSS) the selection and examination committee shall give its approval. The agreement shall include the detailed regulations of the common doctoral process. The agreement shall consider the established Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation as well as the study regulations of the relevant doctoral programs at both higher education institutions.

**Section 2 - Purpose and Content of the Doctoral Program and the Doctoral Examination**

- (1) The doctoral examination always marks the completion of the doctoral program. The doctoral program provides students with the most recent knowledge regarding the scientific research and research methods of their field of study and serves to prove that the doctoral student is able to pursue independent research. During the

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doctoral program the candidate proves his or her ability to define new research topics and work on them implementing appropriate research methods.

- (2) The doctoral examination comprises a written and an oral examination. The doctoral dissertation is the written examination. The oral examination is the oral defense.
- (3) The doctoral dissertation serves to prove the doctoral candidate's ability to independently pursue scientific research. In the dissertation, the doctoral candidate shall convey new scientific findings in the form of a monograph or an article-based dissertation. The latter type of dissertation may include manuscripts of the doctoral candidate that are destined for publication. However, this type of dissertation also requires a coherent general concept that supports the research topic.
- (4) The oral defense shall prove the doctoral candidate's ability to engage in scholarly discourse. In the oral defense, the doctoral candidate presents the essential findings of his or her dissertation and defends them in a colloquium with the members of the examination committee. During the oral defense, the doctoral candidate shall discuss the methods and findings of his or her work, their scientific significance as well as related issues of the field of study in a scientifically sound manner.

**Section 3 - Doctoral Committee**

- (1) The doctoral committee makes decisions in the doctoral process, unless, according to the Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation, the dean or the examination committee is in charge.
- (2) It is composed of full professors, honorary professors, junior professors, managers of junior research groups who hold a doctoral degree, senior academic staff members (Privatdozenten) and auxiliary professors (außerplanmäßige Professoren) of the School of Social Sciences. In case a member of the doctoral committee resigns from his position at the School of Social Sciences, he or she may remain in the positions listed in these Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation for up to three more years. Senior academic staff members (Privatdozenten), who work part-time and less than fifty percent of their work time for the University of Mannheim, as well as the Council of Doctoral Candidates at the School of Social Sciences, may advise in the decision-making processes. The dean or a representative designated by him or her chairs the doctoral committee.
- (3) The committee has a quorum, if at least fifty percent of the members who are eligible to vote are present. Its meetings are not open to the public.
- (4) Decisions require a simple majority of votes of the present members. In the event of a tie, the vote of the chair shall decide the matter.
- (5) The meetings of the doctoral committee are minuted. The minutes will include the exact wording of the decisions.
- (6) The discussions as well as the respective documents are subject to confidentiality.

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**Section 4 - Requirements for Pursuing a Doctorate**

- (1) As a rule, a doctoral candidate can only be accepted if he or she has completed the final examination of
  - a) a master's program or
  - b) a degree course according to section 38 subsection 3(1) numbers 2 and 3 of the Act on Higher Education of the Land of Baden-Württemberg in the relevant field of study with a minimum grade of "good" ("gut"). In justified cases, the doctoral committee may waive the last requirement upon written application from the applicant.
- (2) Degrees obtained from official or officially recognized higher education institutions and public universities of cooperative education (Berufsakademien) of the Federal Republic of Germany or degrees obtained at foreign official or officially recognized higher education institutions will be recognized provided that the competences acquired are not significantly different from the requirements. All necessary information regarding the recognition of degrees needs to be provided by the applicant. The doctoral committee decides on the recognition.
- (3) Outstanding graduates of a bachelor's program or a state examination in the relevant field of study that do not fulfill the requirements stated under (1) may be admitted to the doctoral program of the CDSS. The same applies to qualified graduates of a university of applied sciences, a public university of cooperative education (Berufsakademie) or of the Notarakademie Baden-Württemberg.

**Section 5 - Application for Admission as a Doctoral Candidate**

- (1) The application for admission as a doctoral candidate shall be submitted in writing to the dean of the school.
- (2) The application shall include:

Students of the CDSS need to provide the official notification of admission to the doctoral program as well as the written agreement on the supervision of the dissertation concluded with the future supervisors. All other applicants shall

  - a) indicate the field of study,
  - b) the working title of the planned doctoral dissertation,
  - c) the names of the main supervisor and the second supervisor according to section 8 and the written agreement on the supervision of the dissertation,
  - d) provide the degree certificate of the degree required to undertake the doctoral program according to section 4. The original certificate needs to be submitted in German or in English or as a notarized translation in German or in English.
  - e) provide a signed copy of their CV and their academic vita. In the document, all completed and uncompleted exams and especially earlier, unsuccessful attempts to obtain a doctoral degree shall be listed.

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**Section 6 - Admission as a Doctoral Candidate, Revocation of Admission**

- (1) If the requirements of sections 4 and 5 are met and there are no reasons to decline admission according to section 7, the doctoral committee accepts the applicant to the list of doctoral candidates of the school. The applicant receives an official notification on the acceptance to the list. According to the Act on Higher Education of the Land of Baden-Württemberg and the relevant statutes of the University of Mannheim, the official notification allows him or her to enroll and to use all facilities of the university.
- (2) The admission as a doctoral candidate obliges the candidate to provide his or her supervisors with an extensive report on the progress of the doctoral dissertation after one year. The main supervisor shall inform the dean of the timely receipt of the report and the progress of the dissertation. In case the doctoral candidate misses the deadline, an extension of three months is granted. In case the doctoral candidate misses the deadline again, the dean may grant a final extension upon reasoned application. Doctoral students of the CDSS fulfill this requirement as soon as their dissertation proposal has been accepted.
- (3) Admission as a doctoral candidate will be rescinded by the doctoral committee, if the last deadline according to section 6 subsection 2 has been missed, or after three years at the latest, provided that the candidate did not submit a report, confirmed by both advisors, on the progress of the doctoral dissertation and its projected completion. As a rule, the doctorate shall be completed after no more than six years.

**Section 7 - Rejection as a Doctoral Candidate**

- (1) The doctoral committee may deny the admission of an applicant, if the topic of the dissertation is not appropriate or originates from a field of study that is not sufficiently represented at the school.
- (2) Moreover, the application for admission can be denied on the grounds of reasons that would legally justify the revocation of the doctoral degree.

**Section 8 - Supervision of the Dissertation Project**

- (1) Two supervisors assume the supervision of the dissertation project. One of them assumes the role of the main supervisor and the second one serves as an additional contact person or second supervisor. The supervisors receive the report on the status of the dissertation from the doctoral candidate and meet with him or her on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the dissertation and to give advice.
- (2) The supervisors shall be professors, honorary professors, junior professors or managers of junior research groups who hold a doctoral degree, senior academic staff members (Privatdozenten), auxiliary professors (außerplanmäßige Professoren) or professors emeriti. In case the supervisors belong to a foreign higher education institution they need to hold a similar position. The main supervisor shall belong to the School of Social Sciences of the University of Mannheim. The doctoral com-

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mittee may admit a supervisor from an institution that cooperates with the school or the CDSS in research or teaching as a main supervisor. Both supervisors will be officially appointed by the dean when the applicant is accepted to the list of doctoral candidates of the school. For students of the CDSS, the supervisors will be officially appointed by the dean in accordance with the selection and examination committee of the CDSS after the Dissertation Proposal has been accepted.

- (3) In case a supervisor is not able to supervise a dissertation project until its completion, the dean appoints a new supervisor based on suggestions from the doctoral candidate and, if applicable, in accordance with the selection and examination committee of the CDSS.

**Section 9 - Admission to the Doctoral Process**

- (1) The doctoral candidate shall submit a written request to obtain a doctoral degree to the dean. The request shall include:
  - a) The doctoral dissertation in German or English, printed in sextuplicate, one electronic version and a written statement of the doctoral candidate confirming that both versions are identical. Doctoral students of the CDSS shall write their dissertation in English. The copies submitted become property of the university.
  - b) A declaration on the type of dissertation (monograph or article-based dissertation).
  - c) In case the doctoral candidate presents joint work in an article-based dissertation, the candidate shall include a written declaration naming the contents of the dissertation he or she worked on independently. Moreover, the candidate shall include a statement in German from his or her co-authors that confirms the declaration.
  - d) Proof of successful completion of a doctoral program corresponding to the doctoral dissertation and equivalent to at least 30 ECTS credits. Successful completion of the doctoral program at the CDSS or equivalent coursework shall serve as proof. The dean decides if coursework can be recognized as equivalent based on guidelines adopted by the dean's office. The doctoral candidates shall be informed of those guidelines in writing when admitted to the list of doctoral candidates. If the doctoral candidate did not complete a doctoral program, an admission examination according to section 10 shall be taken.
  - e) A signed declaration in lieu of oath with the following wording:

"Declaration in lieu of oath according to section 9 subsection 1(e) of the Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation to Earn a Doctoral Degree in Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim.

    1. I hereby affirm that the presented doctoral dissertation with the title ..... is my own work.

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2. I did not seek unauthorized assistance of a third party and I have employed no other sources or means except the ones listed. I clearly marked any quotations derived from the works of others.
3. I did not yet present this doctoral dissertation or parts of it at any other higher education institution in Germany or abroad.
4. I hereby confirm the accuracy of the affirmation above.
5. I am aware of the significance of this affirmation and the legal ramifications in case of untrue or incomplete statements.

I affirm in lieu of oath that the statements above are to the best of my knowledge true and complete."

This affirmation shall be submitted in German and enclosed with the request to obtain a doctoral degree.

- f) A signed declaration of consent stating that the dissertation may be stored, sent or processed electronically exclusively for plagiarism checking purposes.
- (2) The request to obtain a doctoral degree may be withdrawn, provided the oral defense has not yet been scheduled and the dissertation has not been rejected.
- (3) The dean checks the request and decides on the admission.
- (4) The request may be denied if the requirements according to subsection 1 are not fulfilled; it may also be denied based on facts that would justify the revocation of the doctoral degree under the laws of the Land of Baden-Württemberg.

**Section 10 - Admissions Examination**

- (1) The admissions examination may be taken in the second year after the acceptance to the list of doctoral candidates and must be completed successfully prior to admission to the doctoral process. In case the doctoral candidate fails the admissions examination, he or she may retake it once after three months after the first results have been published and no later than 12 months after their publication. The doctoral candidate fails and the doctoral process is terminated, if he or she misses this deadline or fails the admission examination repeatedly.
- (2) The duration of the admissions examination is 60 minutes. It serves to prove substantial knowledge in the field of study. It comprises the successful defense of scientific theses that are not part of the dissertation topic. The doctoral candidate introduces two theses and develops a scientific argument that will then be open for discussion. About 30 minutes shall be allotted for each thesis. The examination process shall be recorded in minutes. The examination will be assessed "passed" or "failed". The examination will not be graded.
- (3) Upon registration for the admissions examination the candidate shall submit a brief written argument for each thesis. The arguments shall allow for a classification of the theses within the broader scientific context, explain why the theses are worthy of discussion and determine the direction of the discussion. The date of the admis-

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sions examination is set no later than one month prior to the examination. It is determined by the dean in agreement with everyone involved.

- (4) The admissions examination is conducted by a commission comprising the two supervisors chaired by the dean. It is considered passed if all members of the commission decide it is passed in accordance with section 3(2).

### **Section 11 - Appointment of Evaluators**

- (1) At least two evaluators are appointed for the evaluation of the dissertation and at least one of them needs to be affiliated with the School of Social Sciences of the University of Mannheim.
- (2) The evaluators shall be professors, honorary professors, junior professors or managers of junior research groups who hold a doctoral degree, senior academic staff members (Privatdozenten), auxiliary professors (außerplanmäßige Professoren) or professors emeriti. In case the supervisors belong to a foreign higher education institution, they need to hold a similar position.
- (3) An additional evaluation is required in case the main supervisor of the dissertation has been appointed as evaluator.
- (4) A co-author of a text that is part of an article-based dissertation cannot be appointed as evaluator.

### **Section 12 - Examination Committee**

- (1) The doctoral examination will be conducted by an examination committee of at least three members.
- (2) The members of the examination committee shall be professors, honorary professors, junior professors or managers of junior research groups who hold a doctoral degree, senior academic staff (Privatdozenten), auxiliary professors (außerplanmäßige Professoren) or professors emeriti. In case the supervisors belong to a foreign higher education institution, they need to hold a similar position. As a rule, the supervisors as well as the evaluators of the dissertation shall be members of the examination committee. The majority of the members shall be full-time professors. Moreover, the majority of the members shall be affiliated with the School of Social Sciences of the University of Mannheim.
- (3) After the doctoral candidate has been admitted to the doctoral process, the dean appoints the members of the examination committee, its chair and if need be a vice chair. The dissertation supervisor cannot act as the chair of the examination committee.

### **Section 13 - Evaluation and Acceptance of the Dissertation**

- (1) The evaluators each shall submit written evaluations within two months. The evaluations need to comprise
  - a) a critical appraisal of the work,

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- b) a well founded recommendation for the acceptance or the rejection of the dissertation.
- c) in case acceptance is recommended, one of the following grades shall be proposed:
- |                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| excellent ("ausgezeichnet") | = | 0 |
| very good ("sehr gut")      | = | 1 |
| good ("gut")                | = | 2 |
| acceptable ("genügend")     | = | 3 |
- The grade "very good" = 1 may be downgraded by 0.3 by adding a minus (1-). The grades "good" = 2 and "acceptable" = 3 may be upgraded or downgraded by 0.3 by adding a plus or a minus (e.g. 2+ or 3-).
- d) If the evaluator recommends not to accept the dissertation, the grade is:
- |                                   |   |    |
|-----------------------------------|---|----|
| not acceptable ("nicht genügend") | = | 4. |
|-----------------------------------|---|----|
- (2) Once the evaluations are available, the dean gives all members of the doctoral committee the opportunity to read the dissertation and the evaluations within a designated period and make a statement. During lecture periods the dissertation can be viewed for two weeks, during semester breaks the viewing period is extended to four weeks.
- (3) The dissertation is considered accepted, if all evaluators support its acceptance and none of the members of the doctoral committee object to the recommendation in writing during the designated period. In case of a disagreement regarding the acceptance, the examination committee decides based on a majority of votes. To that end, the examination committee may appoint another evaluator. In the event of a tie, the vote of the chair of the examination committee shall decide the matter.
- (4) If the examination committee does not accept the dissertation, the doctoral candidate may present a new or an improved dissertation. If the dissertation is once again not accepted, the doctoral candidate has failed. He or she shall be informed of this in writing. All higher education institutions in Germany that have the right to confer doctoral degrees in the relevant field of study will be informed of the failure.

**Section 14 - Assessment of the Doctoral Dissertation**

- (1) The final assessment will be made following the acceptance of the dissertation. If the evaluators' grade proposals are not more than one grade apart, the arithmetic average of the proposals is the final grade. Only one decimal place will be taken into account.
- (2) If the evaluators' grade proposals are more than one grade apart, the examination committee will obtain another evaluation. In this case, the grade of the dissertation will be the arithmetic average of the grade proposals from all evaluations. Only one decimal place will be taken into account.
- (3) The grade "excellent" can only be given if all evaluations propose it.

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**Section 15 - Conduct, Acceptance and Assessment of the Oral Defense**

- (1) The oral defense is conducted by the chair of the examination committee. The members of the examination committee and the doctoral committee are authorized to ask questions and respond.
- (2) Following the acceptance of the dissertation, the dean sets the date for the oral defense. As a rule, this happens three weeks in advance of the date in question and in accordance with the members of the examination committee. As a rule, the oral defense is scheduled during lecture periods. The duration of the oral defense is at least 60 minutes and no longer than 90 minutes.
- (3) The period between handing in the dissertation and the oral defense shall be no longer than four months.
- (4) The oral defense is a public event unless important reasons or a request from the doctoral candidate suggest otherwise. The audience may not attend the consultation of the examiners or the announcement of the results.
- (5) The oral defense may be made in English upon application of the doctoral candidate and in accordance with all members from the examination committee. Doctoral candidates from the CDSS have to defend their dissertation in English.
- (6) The oral defense comprises the candidate's presentation of his or her essential research findings followed by an academic colloquium. The duration of the presentation should be 20 minutes.
- (7) The oral defense is accepted, if the majority of the examination committee approves its acceptance. In the event of a tie, the vote of the chair of the examination committee shall decide the matter.
- (8) If the examination committee does not accept the oral defense, the candidate may present himself or herself once again three months and no later than 12 months after the first defense. If the oral defense is once again not accepted, the doctoral candidate has failed.
- (9) If the oral defense is accepted, the examination committee decides on a grade according to section 13 subsection 1(c). The grade for the oral defense will be the arithmetic average of the grade proposals from all members of the examination committee. Only one decimal place will be taken into account.
- (10) The oral defense and the grading process shall be recorded in minutes that shall be signed by the members of the examination committee.
- (11) The chair of the examination committee shall inform the candidate of his or her grade as soon as the grading process is completed.

**Section 16 - Final Grade**

- (1) After the oral exam has been completed successfully, the chair of the examination committee determines the final grade. The grade is "excellent" (*summa cum laude*), if all evaluations propose this grade and the oral defense has been evaluated with a

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grade higher than 1.2. In all other cases the final grade is the arithmetic average of the grades for the dissertation and the oral defense. The dissertation grade is weighted double whereas the oral defense is weighted regularly. Only one decimal place will be taken into account. The grade is

in case of an average up to 1.5: very good (*magna cum laude*)

in case of an average from 1.6 to 2.5: good (*cum laude*)

in case of an average from 2.6 to 3.5: acceptable (*rite*).

- (2) Upon request, the doctoral candidate receives a confirmation stating the final grade of the successfully completed doctorate. The confirmation needs to feature a note stating that it does not yet entitle the candidate to officially hold a doctoral degree.

### **Section 17 - Printing**

- (1) The dissertation shall be published in the version that has been approved by the evaluators.
- (2) Altogether, 55 printed copies shall be given to the university library free of charge. The number of mandatory copies can be reduced to five, if
  - a) the dissertation is published by a publishing house
  - b) the dissertation is published in relevant scientific magazines or
  - c) the dissertation is published in electronic form, in a format that is approved by the university library and stored on a University of Mannheim server.
- (3) The mandatory copies shall be delivered within one year after the doctoral candidate has been informed of his or her grade. If the doctoral candidate fails to deliver the copies in time, he or she forfeits all rights acquired with the examination. The dean may extend the deadline upon reasoned request.
- (4) The cover page of the dissertation shall read "Inauguraldissertation zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines Doktors / einer Doktorin der Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Mannheim". If the dissertation has been written as part of the doctoral program of the CDSS, the cover page shall read "Inaugural dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Social Sciences in the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim". The back of the cover page shall read the name of the dean at the time of publication as well as the names of the supervisors and evaluators and the date of the oral defense. If the dissertation is published with a publishing company, the publication shall indicate that it is based on a dissertation at the University of Mannheim.

### **Section 18 - Granting of Doctoral Degree**

- (1) After the mandatory copies are submitted according to section 17 subsection 2, the doctorate degree is granted with the handover of the doctoral degree certificate, consisting of two separate documents, the diploma and the certificate.

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- (2) The diploma is signed by the President of the University of Mannheim and the dean. It indicates the field of study, the final grade according to section 16 subsection 1 as well as the conferred degree according to section 1 subsection 1, and bears the date of the delivery of the mandatory copies.
- (3) The certificate contains details on the field of study, the final grade, the doctoral program, the doctoral dissertation, and the oral defense, in particular:
  1. details on the type of proof of the successful completion of the doctoral program,
  2. the title and grade of the doctoral dissertation as well as the name of the evaluator and
  3. the date and grade of the oral defense as well as the names of the members of the examination committee.

The certificate is signed by the dean and bears the date of the oral defense.

**Section 19 - Access to Documents**

- (1) For one year after the completion of the doctorate, the candidate or doctor respectively has the right to access the documents of his or her dissertation and examination process, including the evaluations.
- (2) Access will be granted upon written application from the chair of the doctoral committee. Time and place will be determined by the chair. There will be supervision.

**Section 19a - Ombudsman or woman**

In case of conflicts between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor, the parties may consult the respective ombudsman or woman. All details in regards to the appointment of ombudsmen and women are governed by the Statutes of the University of Mannheim on the Appointment of Ombudsmen and Women for Doctoral Candidates and their Supervisors (Satzung der Universität Mannheim zur Bestellung von Ombudspersonen für Promovierende und deren Betreuer/innen).

**Section 20 - Annulment and Revocation of Doctoral Degree**

- (1) The doctoral degree shall be annulled, if it becomes evident after the degree has been granted that the doctoral candidate cheated during the admission to the doctoral process or during one of the examinations.
- (2) If the candidate has already received the doctoral degree certificate, it shall be reclaimed. A procedure to revoke the doctoral degree shall be initiated in accordance with the applicable laws.

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**Section 21 - Renewal of the Doctoral Degree Certificate, Honorary Doctoral Degree**

- (1) In order to honor its graduates, the school can renew doctoral degree certificates on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the awarding of the doctorate. In the laudation, the school honors the academic and public achievements of the graduate.
- (2) The School of Social Sciences of the University of Mannheim awards the honorary doctoral degree in Social Sciences (Dr. rer. soc. h.c.). The honorary doctoral degree in Social Sciences may be awarded to people for outstanding achievements in research fields of the School of Social Sciences. Suggestions, including in-depth reasoning, shall be submitted to the dean. People holding a statutory office at the University of Mannheim or serving as an elected member of one of the statutory bodies of the University of Mannheim may submit a suggestion for an honorary doctoral degree to the dean. The honorary doctoral degree is awarded on the basis of unanimous decisions of the school council of the School of Social Sciences and the senate of the University of Mannheim. The dean awards the honorary doctoral degree. The honorary doctoral degree can be revoked on the grounds of reasons which, if known, would have prevented its conferment in the first place or on the grounds of reasons which have arisen after the conferment. Sentence 5 applies to the revocation of the honorary doctoral degree accordingly.

**Section 22 - Final Provisions**

- (1) These Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation become effective the day after their announcement in the Bulletin of the President's Office ("Bekanntmachungen des Rektorats"). At the same time, the Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation for a doctorate in the social sciences of 7 January 2003 and those for a doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) at the Center for Doctoral Studies in Social and Behavioral Sciences of the School of Social Sciences of 29 August 2007, last amended on 3 November 2010, cease to be effective.
- (2) In case the applicant was admitted to the list of doctoral candidates of the school or the CDSS before these Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation became effective, he or she may make a written request to continue the doctoral studies according to the former regulations. However, the doctoral committee needs to be formed according to section 3 of these Regulations and Procedures Governing the Doctoral Dissertation. The request shall be made to the dean.

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**Approved and issued:**  
Mannheim, 6 June 2016

Prof. Dr. Ernst-Ludwig von Thadden  
President