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Doctoral regulations of Heidelberg University for the Faculty of Theology

of 22 September 2006

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I. General

Section 1 Doctorate

The Faculty of Theology of Heidelberg University confers the degree of "Doctor of theology" (Dr. theol.) for completion of a doctoral programme or as an honorary degree (D. theol.).

Section 2 Components of the doctorate

The doctorate consists of an academic treatise (dissertation) and a comprehensive oral examination by individual subjects (hereinafter referred to as "rigorosum"). The rigorosum may be replaced by an oral defence.

Section 3 Doctoral committee

- (1) The faculty board elects the doctoral committee for a one-year term. It is composed of the dean acting as the chair, the vice dean, and five professors, who must each represent one of the individual theological sub-disciplines. Additionally, the board elects substitute members for each of the professors.
- (2) Unless specified otherwise under these regulations, the doctoral committee decides upon all matters relating to doctorates. The doctoral committee decides by a majority of the members present; in the event of a tie, the chair has the casting vote.
- (3) For decisions relating to the acceptance or rejection of a dissertation, and to the overall mark, the following persons participate in the vote of the doctoral committee:
 - the evaluators pursuant to section 8 subsection 3
 - all professors, lecturers and associate professors who have their primary occupation at Heidelberg University and work in the subject area the dissertation has been assigned to.

Section 4 Admission requirements

- (1) In order to be admitted to the doctoral programme, candidates must provide one of the following qualifications:
 - 1.1 a Magister degree in theology or
 - 1.2 a degree from a faculty of theology or evangelical regional church in the German language area or
 - 1.3 a certificate stating that the candidate passed the state secondary school examination or the Magister or master's degree examination with theology as the main subject or
 - 1.4 a master's degree in theological research awarded by the Faculty of Theology of Heidelberg University or
 - 1.5 an academic degree examination in theology at a university or a recognised higher education institution in a non-German-speaking country that may be

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recognised as comparable to the degrees set forth under 1.2.

2. Hebrew, Greek and Latin language skills as required by the faculty examination rules and regulations;
 3. membership in a Protestant church or a church that belongs to the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation or World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Exemptions for members of other Christian churches require the consent of the extended faculty board with a two-thirds majority of members holding a doctorate.
- (2) Applicants as per subsection 1 clause 1.5 must prove that their German language skills meet the admission requirements of Heidelberg University. The Latin language requirement may be waived for applicants who submit a substantiated request and are able to prove that they have comparable knowledge of a non-European classical language.
- (3) Applicants who have already obtained the degree of Dr. theol. may not be admitted.

Section 5 Acceptance of doctoral candidates

- (1) Candidates who meet the requirements set forth under section 4, and intend to write a dissertation may apply to the faculty (doctoral committee) for admission to the doctoral programme; the intended dissertation subject must be stated in the application.

The application must contain:

1. the intended theme of the dissertation
 2. a letter of intent by a professor or associate professor to supervise the candidate in accordance with section 6.
 3. proof of a degree pursuant to section 4 subsection 1 clauses 1.1 to 1.5
- (2) Admission may be denied if
1. the candidate does not meet the requirements for admission to the doctoral programme,
 2. the intended dissertation subject is manifestly unsuitable or does not fall within the faculty's scope of responsibility,
 3. the candidate failed more than one previous attempt to obtain a doctorate,
 4. reasons exist which would justify revocation of an academic degree or if an academic degree has been revoked.
- (3) If the candidate does not fulfil one or more of the admission requirements under section 4, conditional admission may be granted.
- (4) Decisions concerning the acceptance of doctoral candidates are made by the chair of the doctoral committee. Rejections require the agreement of the doctoral committee. Applicants will be notified of the decision in writing. The reasons for rejection must be given along with instructions for appeal.

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- (5) Upon admitting a doctoral student, the faculty undertakes to support the doctoral candidate in his or her dissertation work, and to examine the final academic dissertation with the theme already provided

The candidate must enrol at the university unless he or she is already a member of the university by virtue of an employment contract or if enrolment would conflict with another employment position. Registered doctoral candidates have the same rights and obligations as students.

As a rule, the doctoral project should be completed within three years. The maximum time allowed is five years.

Section 6 Academic guidance for doctoral candidates

- (1) In principle, the professors at the Faculty of Theology are obligated to supervise doctoral dissertations within the limits imposed by their tasks related to research, teaching, and academic self-government.
- (2) The doctoral committee assigns a supervisor to each candidate. Candidates can nominate a professor or associate professor as their supervisor vis-à-vis the doctoral committee. The doctoral committee shall appoint the nominee only if he or she agrees to supervise the candidate, and if he or she confirms that the dissertation schedule presented by the candidate gives reason to expect that the purpose of the doctorate will likely be met.
- (3) If requested by the candidate, the doctoral committee will try to enlist a professor or
- (4) to serve as the supervisor.
- (5) The candidate and his or her supervisor conclude an agreement stating the dissertation topic, the duration of the doctorate, and most notably a dissertation schedule, which will generally span three years. The progress of the dissertation project shall be evaluated regularly.
- (6) The faculty board can set down guidelines for doctorates.

Section 7 Admission to examination procedure

- (1) The candidate must apply for admission to the examination procedure in writing.
- The application must be accompanied by:
- 1.1 a curriculum vitae complete with photograph
- 1.2 proof of at least two semesters of studies spent at the Heidelberg Faculty of Theology;

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- 1.3 the certifications pursuant to section 4 of these regulations and, if applicable, a request pursuant to section 4 subsection 1 clause 3 sentence 2, plus proof of any other certifications of academic, ecclesiastical or state examinations;
 - 1.4 at least three copies of the typewritten dissertation;
 - 1.5 an affidavit stating that the applicant is the sole author of the submitted dissertation, that he or she has not made use of any sources or resources apart from those indicated, and that he or she has not previously presented the dissertation to another faculty or used the dissertation in another exam;
 - 1.6 an affidavit stating that the applicant has not previously applied for admission to the final doctoral examination to obtain the degree Dr. theol. at another university;
 - 1.7 a police clearance certificate.
- (2) Exemptions from the requirement under subsection 1 clause 1.2 require the consent of the extended faculty board by a majority of members holding a doctorate.
 - (3) Candidates who have not applied for admission as a doctoral candidate or whose application was rejected may also apply for admission to the examination procedure.

Section 8 Doctoral dissertation

- (1) The dissertation must be a product of the candidate's own research in the field of theology. It must be suitable for publication or if already published, it must not have been published more than five years prior.
- (2) The dissertation is to be submitted in German or English. The doctoral committee may allow candidates to submit dissertations written in another language if language skills among the faculty's staff allow for the dissertation to be evaluated in this language.
- (3) Two professors, lecturers or associate professors belonging to the faculty are appointed as evaluators. The main evaluator is appointed in consultation with the candidate. One of the evaluators must have his or her primary occupation within his or her subject field at the university. The dissertation committee may appoint an additional evaluator from an external theological faculty for duly substantiated cases.
- (4) The evaluators submit their evaluations in writing. They either recommend that the dissertation be accepted, in which case they will recommend a mark, or that the dissertation be returned to the candidate for revision, or that the dissertation be rejected. As a rule, evaluations should be completed within 6 months.

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- (5) Before a negative decision is made, the candidate must obtain an opportunity to inspect the evaluations and comment on the matter. If the dissertation is rejected, a new dissertation may not be submitted before the lapse of one year after the rejection.
- (6) Before a mark is given for an accepted dissertation, the dissertation and the evaluations must be made available for inspection and written comment by all professors, lecturers and associate professors who belong to the faculty and have their primary occupation at Heidelberg University.
- (7) The decision as to whether the dissertation is to be accepted or rejected is made prior to the beginning of the rigorosum or the oral defence. A mark for the dissertation is to be awarded before or at the rigorosum or oral defence.
- (8) The dissertation evaluations must be made available to the candidate once all components of the doctorate are completed.

Section 9 Oral examination (rigorosum)

- (1) 1. If the dissertation is accepted, a date will be set for the oral examination.
2. The rigorosum covers the following subjects:
- Old Testament
 - New Testament
 - Church and dogma history
 - Systematic theology or religious and mission studies
 - Practical theology
3. The rigorosum is conducted in German. The candidate may nominate the examiners without any binding effect on the doctoral committee.
- (2) Two of the rigorosum subjects as set forth under section 9 subsection 1 clause 2 may be waived upon request by the candidate if he or she received a mark of "good" or better in his or her examination at the Faculty of Theology of Heidelberg University, any other German-speaking faculty of Protestant theology, a recognised equivalent international examination, the First Theological Examination at a German-speaking evangelical regional church or a Magister examination at the Faculty of Theology.
- (3) If the candidate chooses the option set forth under subsection 2, he or she is to specify which subjects are to be covered by the rigorosum.

The rigorosum is conducted by one examiner and in the presence of an observer. Der Prüfer bzw. die Prüferin. The examiner must be a professor of the examined subject. The observer must be a professor, university lecturer or associate professor.

- (4) The oral examination

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- for the subject of the dissertation (main subject) lasts about one hour
 - and about 30 minutes each for the other subjects (minor subjects).
- (5)
1. If the candidate fails the oral examination in the main subject or in half of the minor subjects, the entire rigorosum must be repeated.
 2. The candidate may request admission to a rigorosum retake, which can be granted no earlier than three months and no later than 18 months after the examination. Subsection 2 does not apply to retakes. Retakes are granted only once.
- (6)
1. If a candidate fails an oral examination as set forth under subsection 1 clause 2, he or she must retake the examination no earlier than three and no later than six months after the examination.
 2. If the candidate fails the retake, he or she fails the entire rigorosum. Subsection 6 clause 2 applies accordingly.

Section 10 Oral defence

- (1) Candidates who fulfil the requirements under section 9 subsection 2 may request that the oral examination be conducted as an oral defence in German language.
- (2) The oral defence examines
 - theses provided by the candidate in his or her request, which must pertain to the theological subjects as set forth under section 9 subsection 1 clause 2, and
 - theses formulated by the doctoral committee, which pertain to the dissertation subject.
- (3) The duration of each of the components of the oral defence shall not exceed one hour.
- (4) All professors, university lecturers and associate professors belonging to the faculty may partake in the oral defence and the assessment consultations.
- (5) If the candidate fails the oral defence, the oral examination may be retaken as a rigorosum as set forth under section 9 subsection 6 clause 2.

Section 11 Public attendance of the oral examination

So far as space limitations allow, doctoral candidates enrolled in the doctoral programme of the faculty may attend doctoral oral examinations as spectators. Spectators are not allowed while the result of the oral examination is debated and announced. The public must be excluded upon the candidate's request or if necessitated by good cause.

Section 12 Assessment

(1) The following distinctions are awarded for individual components of the doctorate and the doctorate as a whole:

- for outstanding performance: summa cum laude
- for very good performance: magna cum laude
- for good performance: cum laude
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- The examination is passed as "rite" if no distinction is awarded.

The aforementioned ratings are assigned to the following marks:

- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| summa cum laude: | 1, |
| magna cum laude: | 2, |
| cum laude: | 3, and |
| rite: | 4. |

(2) The mark for the oral examination is calculated as follows, depending on the type of examination:

- the average between the marks for each of the individual subjects covered by the rigorosum, whereas the main subject is weighted double,
- or the average between the two components of the oral defence.

(3) The overall mark awarded for the doctorate is the average of the respective grades for the dissertation and the oral examination. The dissertation grade is weighted double whereas the oral defence is weighted regularly. An average of 1-1.49 earns summa cum laude as the overall mark, an average of 1.5-2.49 earns magna cum laude as the overall mark. Other averages are rounded up or down accordingly.

Section 13 Publication of the dissertation

(1) The doctorate is conferred once the candidate furnishes proof that the accepted dissertation has been published, and submits three copies of the published work.

(2) Dissertations may be published by choosing one of the following options:

- distribution through a commercial publishing house, if proof of a print-run of at least 150 copies can be provided; three copies are to be provided to the university library, or
- submission of 55 photographic-print copies or 25 microfiche copies to the library of Heidelberg University or
- four complete and firmly-bound original copies on durable, wood- and acid-free

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paper plus a digital copy whose data format and carrier has been agreed with the university library. The candidate transfers to the university library and the German National Library (DNB) in Frankfurt/Leipzig the right to publish the digital copy in data networks.

Section 14 Conferral of the degree Dr. theol.

The doctorate is conferred by the handing over of the doctoral certificate, which is written in Latin and signed by the dean. The right to use the title of "Doctor" is acquired only upon receipt of the doctoral certificate.

Section 15 Honorary doctorates

- (1) The Faculty of Theology awards the honorary degree of Doctor theologiae (D. theol.) in recognition of outstanding academic achievements.
- (2) The conferral of an honorary doctorate requires a written proposal by at least two professors or faculty board members holding a habilitation.
- (3) The proposal is accepted if at least three quarters of faculty board members holding a doctorate cast an affirmative vote. The decision requires the approval of the Senate.
- (4) The honorary doctorate and the title of D. theol. are conferred by the handing over of a doctoral certificate, which is written in Latin and signed by the dean.

III. Final provisions

Section 16 Revocation of admission; nullification of doctoral results

- (1) If, prior to the handing over of the doctoral certificate, it emerges that the candidate met one of the conditions of admission through deception, or essential conditions of admission were mistakenly taken to have been satisfied, the doctoral committee may upon request revoke the admission of a doctoral candidate. The same applies if facts become known that would justify revocation of a doctoral degree under state law.
- (2) If, before the doctoral certificate is handed over, it emerges that the candidate used deception in order to meet one of the requirements for the doctorate, the doctoral committee may nullify either this particular result or all prior results. In severe cases the committee may revoke admission to the doctoral programme.
- (3) The candidate concerned must be heard before a decision is reached. The decision must be substantiated and served to him or her with instructions for appeal.

Section 17 Revocation of doctoral degree

- (1) Revocation of doctoral degrees is governed by state law. If state law does not specify otherwise, the professors, university lecturers and associate professors who belong to the faculty board are to administer revocation of doctoral degrees. The decision requires the approval of the majority of the aforementioned members
- (2) The candidate concerned must be heard before a decision is reached. The decision must be substantiated and served to him or her with instructions for appeal.

Section 18 Entry into force, transitory provisions

- (1) These doctoral regulations become effective upon their publication in the Rector's Bulletin (Mitteilungsblatt des Rektors). They simultaneously supersede the doctoral regulations dated 28 November 1998 ["Wissenschaft und Kunst" (Science and Art) dated 14 February 1989, page 46], last amended on 20 September 2000 ["Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst" (Science, Research and Art) dated 22 December 2000, page 1238].
- (2) Candidates who took up a doctoral programme prior to these doctoral regulations becoming effective, may upon request continue the doctorate according to the previous doctoral regulations, provided that these provisions are not in conflict with the Act on Higher Education of the Land of Baden-Württemberg (LHG).

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