



Implementation of a Structured Doctoral Process for Obtaining a Doctoral Degree in Medicine (Dr. med.), Dental Medicine (Dr. med. dent.) or Human Biology (Dr. rer. biol. hum.)

Dear supervisors,

Beginning with the coming winter semester, on **October 1st, 2018**, the LMU Munich's Faculty of Medicine will be implementing a faculty-wide structured doctoral process for all doctoral research projects leading to a doctoral degree in medicine (Dr. med.), dental medicine (Dr. med. dent.) and human biology (Dr. rer. biol. hum.) – as of this point in time, it will only be possible to carry out a structured doctoral degree.

The structuring of the doctoral process aims to achieve an increase in quality especially for medical and dental dissertations and is based on demands by the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK), the Medizinischer Fakultätentag (MFT), German Research Foundation (DFG) and the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat). Simultaneously, we would like these degrees to be equivalent with other doctoral degrees, for example in terms of applying for third-party funding.

The implementation of these structured processes has a significant impact on you as (potential) supervisors of doctoral research projects and on the following pages, we would like to show what you need to be aware of in future.

In terms of the doctoral project:

(1) Supervision of doctoral projects

(a) Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)

In future, all doctoral candidates will be supervised by a **Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)** consisting of three members (analog to the habilitation process). The TAC must consist of habilitated members, whereas at least two of these must be active members of the Faculty of Medicine. If you as supervisor are not directly employed at an institution of the Faculty of Medicine, the other two members of the TAC must fulfil this criterion. One member of the TAC should be employed at a clinical institution of the Faculty of Medicine.

The three TAC members and the doctoral candidate determine a project, including goals, milestones, etc. and record this in a **target agreement**. The target agreement is signed by all parties and must be submitted to the Doctoral Office **within two months of successful registration** of the doctoral project.

The target agreement records:

- how the required training program of at least 60 hours is to be completed (see 1c) and
- that all parties will adhere to the rules of good scientific practice.

Furthermore, for the **doctoral degree in medicine and dental medicine**, the target agreement must state, when the candidate plans on completing the required **8 months of full-time research** or an equivalent performance (see 1b).

All changes to the target agreement must be recorded in a **target amendment**, which in turn must also be signed by all parties involved.

The doctoral candidate should meet with all TAC members in regular, need-based intervals, in order to discuss the progress of the doctoral project. These meetings must be protocolled accordingly (**interim evaluations**) and must also record potential changes to the original target agreement in respective **amendments**. The only mandatory interim evaluation must take place **the latest 12 months after the successful registration** of the doctoral project.

A **final evaluation** takes place before the doctoral candidate can submit his or her thesis.

The doctoral candidate must file all information (agreements, protocols, training program) in his or her **log book**.

Please also note, that doctoral candidates must submit potentially required **ethical clearance votes** during registration of their doctoral project.

(b) Full-time research

Doctoral candidates aiming for a doctoral degree in medicine (Dr. med.) or dental medicine (Dr. med. dent.) are required to complete at least **8 months of full-time research or carry out an equivalent performance**. This equivalent performance must be applied for and granted by the Doctoral Committee **before the target agreement is signed**. The respective research periods are recorded in the target agreement and in the log book.

Doctoral candidates aiming for a doctoral degree in human biology (Dr. rer. biol. hum.) are required to complete at least 2 years of research, as before.

(c) Training program

The required training program now accompanying all doctoral degrees consists of at least 60 hours (lessons of 45 minutes each). Of these, **at least 25 hours must be completed in interdisciplinary courses**, which include Good Scientific Practice, ethics, statistics and similar topics. **All doctoral candidates are required to attend the MMRS Lecture Series on these topics**. The scientific curriculum offered by MeCuM also covers many of these topics and can be attended, as well as courses offered by the Graduate Center or other institutions. Furthermore, **at least 35 hours must be completed in research project-related courses** (journal clubs, conferences, methodology courses, etc.). The courses do not necessarily have to take place at the Faculty of Medicine or the LMU – doctoral candidates can also attend external courses, as long as respective certificates of attendance are presented.

In addition to the required 60 hours training program, the doctoral candidate's TAC may also determine the attendance of further courses. These must also be recorded in the target agreement or target amendment.

The doctoral candidate is required to file and record all information on the TAC, the completed training program and completed research periods in his or her log book.

(2) Evaluation of the thesis

The thesis is evaluated independently by three people (Examination Committee). The Examination Committee consists of:

- the supervisor
- a further member from the TAC
- a third independent reviewer, who is **not** a member of the TAC and has not been involved in the doctoral project in any way

The Examination Committee is expanded by an additional fourth (also independent) member, should the supervisor grade the thesis with a "summa cum laude".

(3) Oral Defence (Disputation)

The oral defence for candidates wanting to obtain a Dr. med. or Dr. med. dent. within the structured doctoral process is no longer a group examination.

All doctoral candidates aiming for a Dr. med., Dr. med. dent. or Dr. rer. biol. hum. must complete an individual examination with a duration of 30 – 60 minutes and which includes a 10 – 15 minute presentation of the thesis.

In terms of you as supervisor:

Presentation of your scientific activities

In future, supervisors will be able to create a profile on the MMRS Online Platform and present their scientific foci and activities. As a faculty, this will enable us to create more transparency and potential doctoral candidates will be able to find potential supervisors and/or research projects at a glance. You will be able to give information on:

- your research foci,
- your research interests (not necessarily related to your foci),
- your current publications, and also
- potential information on supervised doctoral projects