

Regulations of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering

Governing Doctoral Studies

Originally Published August 7, 2008,

Now Issued in Their Seventh Revised Version

Dated April 18, 2023,

Published as a Complete Version

Please note: This publication is an English translation. Only the German original of these regulations as published in the Official Announcements of RWTH Aachen University (“Amtliche Bekanntmachungen”) is legally binding.

Based on § 2 (4) and § 67 (3) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz; HG) in the version of the announcement dated September 16, 2014 (Law and Official Gazette of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 547), most recently amended by Article 1 of the Act on Membership of University Hospitals in the Employers’ Association of North Rhine-Westphalia dated June 30, 2022 (GV. NRW p. 780b), RWTH Aachen University (RWTH) has issued the following Regulations Governing Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering:

Contents

I General

- § 1 Right to Award Doctorates
- § 2 Doctoral Committee
- § 3 Doctoral Commission
- § 4 Reviewers
- § 5 Dissertation
- § 6 Grading of the Doctoral Examination
- § 7 Doctoral Degree Requirements

II Admission to Doctoral Studies

- § 8 General Admission Requirements for Graduates From German Universities
- § 9 Admission to Doctoral Studies Based on a Degree Awarded by an International University
- § 10 Center for Doctoral Studies
- § 11 Application for Assessment of the Admission Requirements
- § 11a Data Collection, Processing, and Transfer

III Doctoral Examination Process

- § 12 Application for Admission to the Doctoral Examination
- § 13 Initiation of the Doctoral Examination Process
- § 14 Examination of the Dissertation
- § 15 Revision of the Dissertation
- § 16 Oral Examination
- § 17 Publication of the Dissertation
- § 17a Joint Doctorate
- § 18 Doctoral Certificate and Doctoral Supplement
- § 19 Honorary Doctorate and Renewal of the Doctoral Certificate
- § 20 Revocation of the Doctoral Degree
- § 21 Viewing of Examination Records
- § 22 Entry Into Force

I General

§ 1

Right to Award Doctorates

- (1) The Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of RWTH Aachen University has the right to award doctorates.
- (2) The doctorate establishes the candidate's ability to undertake independent academic work that exceeds the general objective of the degree program. The ability is determined based on a thesis (dissertation) of high quality demonstrating an advancement of the state of scientific knowledge and an oral examination (defense). The doctoral degree is awarded upon successful completion of the doctoral studies.
- (3) The Faculty of Mechanical Engineering awards the degree of Doktorin/Doktor der Ingenieurwissenschaften (Dr.-Ing.) [Doctor of Engineering Sciences] and Doktorin/Doktor der Naturwissenschaften (Dr. rer. nat.) [Doctor of Natural Sciences].

§ 2

Doctoral Committee

- (1) The Faculty forms a doctoral committee. All members of the Faculty Council are on the committee. The chairperson of the doctoral committee is the dean or their representative. All university professors of the Faculty in the sense of § 35 HG may participate in the meetings of the doctoral committee in an advisory role. Adjunct professors, honorary professors, or Privatdozenten (private lecturers) of the Faculty may take part in the doctoral committee meetings in an advisory role if doctoral examination processes will be discussed in which they were involved as members of the doctoral commission.
- (2) The doctoral committee shall perform the following tasks:
 - a) determining the doctoral requirements and deciding on admission to doctoral studies in accordance with § 8 through 11,
 - b) admission to the doctoral examination process in accordance with § 12,
 - c) initiating or not initiating the doctoral examination process in accordance with § 13,
 - d) deciding on special cases during doctoral examination processes and appeals against decisions made by the doctoral commission.

The doctoral committee may delegate the ongoing affairs to its chair; this does not apply to decisions in appeal proceedings.

- (3) The doctoral committee meetings are not public. Committee members are sworn to secrecy.
- (4) The doctoral committee makes decisions with a simple majority. In the event of a tie, the chairperson's vote shall decide the matter. The doctoral committee has a quorum when more than half of its members with voting rights as well as representatives of more than half of the groups with voting rights, and at least a number of members corresponding to the number of Faculty Council members, including the chairperson, are present. A record shall be kept of the doctoral committee meetings.
- (5) The doctoral committee's chairperson shall inform the candidate about any decisions relating to them by a written notification that includes information on legal remedies.

§ 3 Doctoral Commission

- (1) A doctoral commission is formed to carry out the doctoral examination process. It includes the reviewers and other members, totaling a minimum of four and a maximum of nine individuals in accordance with paragraphs 2 through 4.
- (2) The doctoral committee appoints at least two and at the most seven other members. The members should be university professors in the sense of § 35 HG, professors relieved of teaching duties or retired, adjunct professors, honorary professors, private lecturers (Privatdozenten), or junior professors from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. For interdisciplinary dissertations, at least one representative of another faculty or university must be included as a member for the topic that is not covered by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The dean of the other faculty is to be informed.
- (3) Every university professor of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in the sense of § 35 HG can be nominated as a member of the doctoral commission by the doctoral committee at their request. This request must be submitted no later than the appeal deadline in accordance with § 14 (2). The final members of the doctoral commission must be appointed before the decision on the acceptance of the dissertation is made.
- (4) The doctoral committee shall appoint the chairperson of the doctoral commission. This individual may not be the reviewer. Junior professors, adjunct professors, and honorary professors may not be appointed as chairperson. University professors in the sense of §35 HG from the same institution as the supervisor may also not be appointed as chairperson of the doctoral commission during the doctoral examination process.
- (5) All members of the doctoral commission shall have voting rights. The doctoral commission makes decisions with a simple majority. In the event of a tie, the chairperson's vote shall decide the matter.
- (6) If a member appointed to the doctoral commission is not able to carry out the doctoral examination process (e.g. due to illness), the doctoral committee shall select a replacement member. Members can only withdraw from the doctoral commission for good reasons. The doctoral committee is to be informed of these reasons immediately and evidence to substantiate them is to be provided.

§ 4 Reviewers

- (1) The doctoral committee shall appoint at least two reviewers for the examination of the dissertation, usually from the group of university professors in the sense of § 35 HG, professors relieved of teaching duties or retired, adjunct professors, honorary professors, or private lecturers (Privatdozenten) at RWTH Aachen University, a German or international university, or a research institute. Private lecturers (Privatdozenten) may generally only be appointed as reviewers if at least two years have passed since their habilitation. Junior professors may only be appointed as reviewers after receiving two positive interim evaluations.
- (2) At least one of the reviewers must be a university professor of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in the sense of § 35 HG. If a reviewer of a non-university research institution is on leave and none of the other reviewers is a university professor of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in the sense of § 35 HG, at least one further member of the doctoral commission in the sense of § 3 (2) must be principally employed at RWTH and also be a member of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.
- (3) One of the reviewers must be the supervisor of the dissertation in accordance with § 5 (5). If the supervisor does not hold the doctoral degree that is being pursued with the doctorate, the other reviewer in the doctoral examination process should have the doctoral degree that is being pursued by the candidate.
- (4) Within the scope of a partnership with RWTH Aachen University, a professor from a university of applied sciences can also be appointed as a reviewer. In accordance with § 36 (1) No. 4 HG the reviewer must have completed a habilitation (postdoctoral teaching qualification) or an equivalent scientific qualification. The doctoral committee shall determine whether this requirement has been met. If professors at a university of applied sciences take on the role of a reviewer, an additional reviewer from the group of university professors is to be appointed in accordance with paragraph 2. In this case, the university professor at the university of applied sciences shall be appointed as the third reviewer. As part of this joint supervision, the scope and content of the studies that are considered suitable preparation for the doctorate are to be determined for the doctoral candidate together with the supervisor of the university of applied sciences, in accordance with § 67 (4) Sentence 1 No. 2 HG.
- (5) On request and following a formal assessment by the doctoral committee, heads of research groups with an ERC Grant and/or of an Emmy-Noether Group who work at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering or on a superior research project with the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering are appointed as reviewers. If the head of the research group leaves, the chair holder shall be responsible for the supervision unless another individual is subsequently authorized to supervise the doctoral candidate. In this case, the supervision agreement is also to be signed by the chair holder.

- (6) If both reviewers work at the same institution, an additional reviewer or another member in accordance with § 3 (2) who does not belong to this institution will be appointed to the doctoral commission.

§ 5 Dissertation

- (1) The candidate is required to submit an academic thesis (dissertation) in electronic form that they have written independently in German or English. Upon request, the doctoral committee may also permit a dissertation to be written in another language. In this case, the doctoral committee may request a certified translation of the binding text. The doctoral committee shall decide whether to permit a dissertation written in another language once the request has been submitted.
- (2) A substantial part of the dissertation must relate to the scientific fields of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.
- (3) Cumulative dissertations are not permitted. Work submitted for previous qualifications may not be used for the dissertation. Work that has already been published may, however, be used in the dissertation but this must be indicated as such. The type of authorship participation must also be indicated. The work must have appeared in a publication recognized by the respective academic community. Excerpts from prior publications are permitted. They are to be agreed with the supervisor and must be communicated to the doctoral committee.
- (4) Publications that have arisen in the context of the doctorate must always be published with the affiliation "RWTH Aachen University".
- (5) The dissertation must have been produced under academic guidance from a university professor in the sense of § 35 HG, a professor relieved of teaching duties or retired, an adjunct professor, an honorary professor, a private lecturer (Privatdozent), or a junior professor who has received a positive interim evaluation from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. They are required to ensure appropriate academic supervision during the doctoral examination process. The willingness to accept this responsibility is usually confirmed by entering into a supervision agreement according to the valid version of the RWTH Aachen University template.

§ 6 Grading of the Doctoral Examination

- (1) If the dissertation is rejected or if the candidate fails the repeat oral examination (§ 16 (7)), the dean shall inform the candidate that they have not passed the doctoral examination, stating the reasons for this and providing information on legal remedies.
- (2) If the doctoral examination is not passed, the dissertation cannot be presented again for the purposes of a doctorate.
- (3) The candidate shall only be given one final attempt and no earlier than one year after the rejection has been announced.
- (4) If the candidate passes the oral examination, they pass the doctoral examination.
- (5) The doctoral commission shall determine an overall grade of the doctoral examination as
"with distinction" (summa cum laude),

"very good"	(magna cum laude),
"good"	(cum laude), or
"sufficient"	(rite).

Instead of an overall grade, separate grades can be given for the dissertation and the oral examination.

- (6) The candidate must be informed of the result within 14 days. The evaluation of the dissertation and the oral examination is to be completed no later than six months following the presentation of the dissertation.

§ 7 Doctoral Degree Requirements

Doctoral degree requirements within the meaning of these regulations are:

- a) the dissertation,
- b) the oral examination (defense),
- c) the publication of the dissertation.

Once these doctoral degree requirements have been met, the doctorate can be declared completed by issuing a doctoral certificate.

II Admission to Doctoral Studies

§ 8 General Admission Requirements for Graduates From German Universities

- (1) The doctoral examination process can commence if the candidate has obtained
- a) a degree after relevant university studies with a standard study period of at least eight semesters for which a degree other than "Bachelor" is awarded, or
 - b) a degree after relevant university studies with a standard study period of at least six semesters and subsequent adequate courses in the doctoral subjects that prepare the candidates for the doctorate, or
 - c) a Master's degree within the meaning of § 61 (2) Sentence 2 HG,
- and can demonstrate their suitability to undertake the independent scientific work necessary for a doctorate through their academic work and achievements.
- (2) The studies that are considered adequate according to paragraph 1 b) usually last four semesters and include a final thesis. The doctoral committee shall determine the courses, the number and type of qualifications with the candidate and their supervisor. The foundational subjects of the Bachelor's in mechanical engineering are to be taken into account.
- (3) The prerequisite for the doctorate in engineering (Dr.-Ing.) is the Diplom degree in engineering [Diplom-Ingenieur] or a completed Master's degree within the meaning of § 61 (2) Sentence 2 HG in an engineering subject or completion of an engineering degree program in accordance

with paragraph 1 letter b). Holders of a degree in mathematics or natural sciences pursuant to paragraph 1 a) to c) may be admitted to doctoral studies leading to a Dr.- Ing. degree if it is established before the doctoral examination process is initiated that the dissertation is relevant to the engineering sciences and the candidate has sufficient knowledge of engineering. In justified exceptional cases, this also applies to holders of another professional qualification from a university in another subject.

- (4) The prerequisite for the doctorate in science (Dr.rer.nat.) is a mathematical/scientific degree in accordance with paragraph 1 letters a) through c). Holders of an engineering degree in accordance with paragraph 1 letters a) through c) can be admitted to doctoral studies to obtain the Dr.rer.nat. title if the doctoral committee determines before the doctoral examination process is initiated that the dissertation is relevant to the field of mathematics or the natural sciences and the candidate has sufficient knowledge of mathematics or the natural sciences. In justified exceptional cases, this also applies to holders of another professional qualification from a university in another subject.
- (5) In cases of doubt, the dean will decide if the degree already obtained can be considered as pertaining to an engineering (paragraph 3) or mathematics/science discipline (paragraph 4). If the degree cannot be assigned to either of these disciplines, the dean shall suggest that the doctoral committee reject the application for admission to doctoral studies.
- (6) Degrees in the following courses of study can be classified within the discipline of engineering:
 - Mechanical Engineering
 - Process Engineering
 - Electrical Engineering
 - Engineering Management: Mechanical Engineering
 - Engineering Management: Electrical Engineering
 - Teacher Training in Machine Technology and Textile Engineering
 - Civil Engineering
 - Computational Engineering Science
 - Simulation Sciences
 - Automation Technology
- (7) Degrees in the following courses can be classified as a mathematics/science degree:
 - Physics
 - Computer Science
 - Mathematics
 - Chemistry
 - Materials Science
- (8) To determine the engineering or mathematical/scientific relevance in accordance with paragraph 3 sentence 2 and paragraph 4 sentence 2, the supervisor shall conduct a special review that answers the following questions:
 - What is the provisional topic of the dissertation?
 - What subject-specific expertise does the candidate demonstrate with regard to the topic of the dissertation that justifies a doctorate for the Dr.-Ing./Dr.rer.nat. title?

- What mathematical/scientific or engineering methodology will the candidate apply?
 - In which area of research of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering will the dissertation be based? Why is it appropriate for the candidate to pursue the doctorate at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (or more appropriate than at another faculty)?
 - What additional requirements in accordance with § 11 (3) Sentence 2 may be necessary?
- (9) If a candidate proves that they have exceptional scientific achievements, the doctoral committee may admit the candidate to the doctoral examination process at the request of three professors of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering with a majority of two thirds of its voting members in accordance with the provisions of § 49 (11) HG.

§ 9

Admission to Doctoral Studies Based on a Degree Awarded by a University Outside Germany

- (1) A general requirement for admission to doctoral studies is a professional qualification or another final examination to complete a relevant scientific course with a standard period of study of at least eight semesters including an academic final thesis integrated into the course if the degree was awarded by a university outside Germany and
- a) is to be considered equivalent to corresponding degrees that are awarded at German universities based on intergovernmental agreements,
 - b) is to be considered a general requirement for admission to doctoral studies based on evaluations of the Central Office for Foreign Education at the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education (ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister) of the federal states or the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz),
 - c) is to be considered equivalent to a relevant degree that can be awarded at RWTH Aachen University based on agreements with partner universities outside of Germany by RWTH Aachen University.

Within the scope of admission to doctoral studies based on a degree awarded by an international university, the doctoral committee may impose additional requirements that are related to the scientific field that is to be addressed in the dissertation.

- (2) If the degree does not meet the general admission requirements within the meaning of paragraph 1, the candidate may be admitted to doctoral studies if they have a degree after completing relevant university studies with a standard study period of at least six semesters and subsequent adequate courses in the doctoral subjects that prepare the candidate for the doctorate in accordance with § 8 (1) letter b).

§ 10

Center for Doctoral Studies (CDS)

In addition to the general admission requirements, every candidate can complete a doctoral program at the Center for Doctoral Studies. This is intended to encourage the candidate's scientific independence and allow them to acquire key academic qualifications.

§ 11

Application for Assessment of the Admission Requirements

- (1) Every candidate who intends to undertake doctoral studies at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering shall submit an application for assessment of the admission requirements. This application shall be submitted within the second year of the doctoral phase (after completing the preparatory phase) at the latest. The application is not the same as the application for admission to the doctoral examination in accordance with § 12.
- (2) The application in paragraph 1 shall be submitted in writing to the doctoral committee of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The application form shall specify the intended topic of the dissertation and include a declaration that the candidate agrees with these regulations. The following is to be submitted together with the completed application form (current version on the homepage of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering):
 - a) a completed and signed supervision agreement in which the doctoral candidate and the supervisor undertake to adhere to the Guidelines and Procedure Principles for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at RWTH dated March 28, 2000, in the valid version (published in the official announcements of RWTH Aachen University);
 - b) evidence showing that the admission requirements have been met in accordance with §§ 8, 9; a certified copy of certificates and documents are to be submitted. Documents issued by RWTH can also be submitted as uncertified originals for the assessment. Certified translations of certificates not issued in German are to be included upon request.
 - c) overview of the scientific career in the form of a signed CV;
 - d) fully completed questionnaire for doctoral candidate statistics
 - e) if necessary, a special review according to § 8 (8).
- (3) The doctoral committee decides whether to accept or reject the doctoral candidate. Acceptance may be conditional on completing additional studies or examinations.
- (4) The candidate shall be notified of the acceptance immediately. They shall receive a written notification of rejection or conditional acceptance, including the reasons for this decision and information on legal remedies. The original certificates showing that the conditions have been successfully met are to be presented to the Dean's Office within three semesters.

§ 11a

Data Collection, Processing, and Transfer

In accordance with § 5 of the Act on Statistics for Higher Education (Hochschulstatistikgesetz – HSchStG), universities must collect personal data about those who have been admitted to doctoral studies in accordance with § 11 (3). The personal data of the doctoral candidates are automatically stored by the University and are processed by the IT Center as well as the Central University Administration in order to comply with legal requirements. The University will only transmit the data if this is necessary to comply with its legal duties or duties specified in its statutes. Data transfer to the Statistical Office of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (IT NRW) concerns the data collection characteristics in accordance with § 3 (1), § 4, and § 5 (2) HSchStG.

III Doctoral Examination Process

§ 12

Application for Admission to the Doctoral Examination

- (1) The candidate's application for admission to the doctoral examination shall be submitted in writing to the doctoral committee of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The current form on the website of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering is to be used for this.
- (2) The application form must include:
 - a) the pursued doctoral title,
 - b) the title of the dissertation,
 - c) a Declaration of Academic Integrity stating that the candidate has independently completed the dissertation and has indicated any means of support used in the dissertation,
 - d) a written declaration that the candidate has acknowledged and complied with the Guidelines and Procedures for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice at RWTH Aachen University,
 - e) information on who was the main supervisor of the dissertation,
 - f) in case the dissertation was written at an institution outside RWTH Aachen University, a written declaration by the candidate that the publication of the dissertation does not violate any existing intellectual property rights.

- (3) The following documents are to be submitted with the application form:
- a) evidence of an application for a Certificate of Good Conduct from the Federal Central Register of document type O. Presentation of the Certificate of Good Conduct is not required if the candidate works at RWTH Aachen University as this was already presented upon beginning employment. This shall be reviewed in individual cases upon presentation of a relevant certificate to the HR Department;
 - b) an electronic copy of the dissertation according to § 5 (1) in line with the specifications of the current fact sheet;
 - c) a specimen electronic copy of any publications that are included as part of the dissertation;
 - d) an unsworn declaration on whether the candidate has submitted doctoral applications in the past, including the result, as well as the date, the awarding German or international university, the faculty, and the topic of the dissertation, if applicable.

§ 13

Initiation of the Doctoral Examination Process

- (1) The doctoral committee initiates the doctoral examination process once a written application for its initiation and the documents to be submitted in accordance with § 12 have been received in full and the reviewers have declared that they are willing to provide an expert opinion. The process shall be initiated no later than in the second meeting of the doctoral committee after receipt of the application documents in full.
- (2) The reviewers and the doctoral commission are to be appointed upon initiation. The candidate shall be notified of the initiation immediately in writing.
- (3) If the doctoral application and the submitted documents do not meet the requirements, the doctoral examination process shall not be initiated. If the doctoral committee rejects the initiation of the doctoral examination process, the candidate shall be informed by the doctoral committee's chairperson immediately in writing, stating the reasons for this decision along with information on legal remedies.
- (4) An application to initiate the doctoral examination process that has been submitted to the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering can be withdrawn within three months of the announcement of the initiation of the doctoral examination process.

§ 14

Evaluation of the Dissertation

- (1) The reviewers examine the dissertation and report back to the faculty in separate expert opinions within three months. They can request that the dissertation be accepted, rejected, or revised, or not even considered if they deem the Faculty not to be the responsible authority. They must furthermore include the reasons justifying their recommendation. An expert opinion supporting the acceptance of the dissertation must include a recommended grade. If a reviewer is not able to prepare their expert opinion within four months, the doctoral committee may appoint another reviewer.
- (2) Once the expert opinions have been received, the dean shall present the dissertation and the expert opinions to the Faculty's professors in the sense of § 35 HG and the members of the Faculty Council who have a doctorate degree to allow them to make a statement or, if necessary, submit a written objection. They shall be available for review for a period of two weeks.

The objection period expires at the end of the second working day following the end of the review period.

- (3) If the reviewers unanimously recommend the acceptance of the dissertation and no objection has been made, the dean shall determine that the dissertation is accepted. If the reviewers unanimously recommend the rejection of the dissertation and no objection has been made, the dean shall determine that the dissertation is rejected.
- (4) If the reviewers disagree on the acceptance of the dissertation or at least one of the reviewers recommends that the dissertation be revised or not considered and an objection has been submitted within the deadline, the dean shall present the dissertation to the doctoral commission. The doctoral commission shall discuss the matter within a reasonable period of time. It can recommend consulting further reviewers. The doctoral commission recommends whether the dissertation is to be accepted, rejected, revised, or not to be considered. If the recommendation is made unanimously, the dean shall make the necessary determinations. Non-consideration does not mean that the dissertation has been rejected.
- (5) If a unanimous recommendation in accordance with paragraph 4 cannot be achieved, the dean shall present the dissertation together with the expert opinions, statements, and objections to the doctoral committee. Based on the recommendations, the committee shall make a decision immediately on the acceptance, rejection, or revision of the dissertation or non-consideration. Dissertation acceptance requires the submission of two supporting expert opinions.

§ 15

Revision of the Dissertation

- (1) In accordance with § 14 (4) and (5), the doctoral committee or the doctoral commission can ask the candidate to revise the dissertation once within a deadline. The conditions for the revision are to be put on record and are to be communicated. The deadline can only be extended once. If the deadline is exceeded, the doctoral committee or the doctoral commission shall inform the dean. The dean shall determine that the dissertation is rejected.
- (2) Once the dissertation has been revised within the deadline, it shall be reexamined in accordance with § 14. The expert opinion of the revised version must particularly address the question of whether the conditions in accordance with paragraph 1 have been adequately met. The revised version of the dissertation may only be rejected if conditions have not been adequately met or if there are strong scientific objections to sections that were rephrased or newly added to the dissertation during the revision that make rejecting the dissertation necessary.

§ 16 Oral Examination/Defense

- (1) Once the dissertation has been accepted, the dean will arrange an oral examination. It will be conducted by the doctoral commission in accordance with Paragraph 5.
- (2) The dean shall inform the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering's university professors in the sense of § 35 HG, the rector, the other deans, the members of the doctoral commission, and the members of the Faculty Council as well as the candidate of the time and place of the oral examination within a deadline of at least ten days. The time and place of the oral examination shall be announced on the department's notice boards.
- (3) The members of the doctoral committee have the right to take part in the oral examination as guests. Other guests are only permitted with the consent of the candidate if they are members of RWTH Aachen University who hold a doctorate. Doctoral candidates who have started working on a dissertation topic are to be admitted as audience members, unless the candidate objects to this.
- (4) Each candidate shall be examined individually. As a rule, the oral examination is conducted in German. The examination can also be conducted in English at the candidate's request.
- (5) The oral examination is conducted by at least three examiners; they must include the chairperson of the doctoral commission, the supervisor, and another reviewer. The oral examination consists of a presentation about a topic deviating from the dissertation lasting 45 minutes, as well as an examination discussion lasting at least 45 minutes that covers the dissertation as well as topics from the entire field to which the dissertation is related.
- (6) The doctoral commission shall decide on the result immediately after the oral examination.
- (7) If the candidate fails the oral examination, it may only be repeated once and only at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The candidate can enroll to repeat the examination no earlier than three months and no later than 18 months following the oral examination.

§ 17 Publication of the Dissertation

- (1) Once the candidate has passed the doctoral examination, they shall present the dissertation to the dean for approval.
- (2) The Faculty of Mechanical Engineering is entitled to request that the doctoral candidate
 - add a summary of their work of no more than one A5 page in English and one A5 page in German and transfer the right to the University to publish this summary or offer it to a publisher or a database, and
 - the title of the dissertation in German and English.
- (3) The doctoral candidate is required to make their dissertation available in an appropriate manner to the scientific community by way of copying and distribution. This requires them to submit a printed deposit copy and an electronic copy to the University Library, the data format and transfer of which is to be agreed with the University Library. In addition, an electronic version of the deposit copy must be submitted to the Faculty's Doctoral Office. An abstract in German and English is required for publication. The doctoral candidate shall transfer the right to publish the electronic version in data networks to the University Library,

the DNB (German National Library) in Frankfurt/Leipzig and, if applicable, the German Research Foundation's Special Collection Library and confirms that the electronic version corresponds with the accepted dissertation. The University Library shall check the delivered version to ensure it is legible and meets the specified requirements. The submission of files that do not meet the specified file format and data carrier requirements shall not be considered a publication.

The deposit copy and the electronic version must contain a dedicated title page according to the specifications of the current fact sheet. The valid version of the title page can be found on the fact sheet on the website of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering. The copies must be printed on age-resistant, wood-free, acid-free paper and permanently bound together. The electronic version must also be technically flawless. If it is determined that the copies do not meet these criteria, they shall be rejected. Rejected work shall be considered unpublished; the doctoral degree certificate shall therefore not be issued.

- (4) The dissertation is to be published no later than one year after the oral examination. In justified exceptional cases, the dean may extend the deadline. If the candidate misses the deadline, all rights acquired with the examination shall expire.

§ 17a Joint Doctorate

- (1) A doctoral examination process jointly supervised with an international university (partner university) requires entering into an individual cooperation contract for the performance and supervision of the doctoral project and evaluation and assessment of the doctoral degree requirements.
- (2) The individual partnership agreement may stipulate that the involved universities must be represented equally on the doctoral commission.
- (3) After the doctoral examination process has been successfully completed, the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering shall award an academic degree in accordance with § 1 (3) and the partner university an academic degree in accordance with its applicable regulations. The academic titles of these degrees may not be used concurrently.
- (4) All candidates are required to independently verify that they abide by the deadlines.

§ 18

Doctoral Degree Certificate and Doctoral Supplement

- (1) After the dissertation has been published, a doctoral certificate is issued and signed personally by the rector and the dean. The doctoral degree certificate bears the date of submission of the deposit copies to the University Library. The reviewers who recommend acceptance of the dissertation are to be named on the doctoral certificate. The doctoral examination process is completed once the doctoral certificate has been issued. After receiving the doctoral certificate, the candidate has the right to carry the doctor title.
- (2) If the candidate has participated in courses through the Center for Doctoral Studies (CDS), they shall also receive a doctoral supplement documenting these achievements.

§ 19

Honorary Doctorate and Renewal of the Doctoral Certificate

- (1) Upon request by the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, the Senate may award the academic degree and title of an honorary doctor of engineering to individuals who show extraordinary personal, scientific, technical, or artistic performances in a field in which the University specializes. They may not be members or associates of RWTH Aachen University.
- (2) The Faculty may only submit honorary doctorate applications for the doctoral degrees that it is entitled to award. In preparation for this application, the Faculty should obtain at least two external expert opinions. The Faculty Council shall decide on the application to the Senate in two sessions. The application requires the support of two thirds of the members of the doctoral committee in attendance.
- (3) The rector awards the honorary doctorate by presenting a doctoral certificate that commends the merits of the honored individual.
- (4) Doctoral graduates of RWTH who are distinguished for their scientific or practical professional work may be honored with the renewal of the doctoral certificate after 25 or 50 years or on extraordinary occasions. The Faculty Council that represents the subject of the doctorate shall make the decision on awarding honorary doctorates.

§ 20

Revocation of the Doctoral Degree

- (1) The doctoral degree may be revoked
 - a) if it transpires that it was achieved on the basis of false statements regarding significant requirements for admission to doctoral studies,
 - b) if it transpires that it was achieved using deception regarding the doctoral degree requirements,
 - c) if academic misconduct has been determined in relation to the dissertation, or
 - d) if the doctoral graduate has been sentenced to at least one year in prison after being found guilty of a deliberate crime.

- (2) If circumstances come to light that would justify the revocation of the doctoral degree in accordance with paragraph 1, the doctoral graduate shall be consulted with regarding the accusations before the doctoral committee makes a decision. If an oral hearing is held, a record of the hearing is to be taken.
- (3) The doctoral committee shall communicate decisions detrimental to the doctoral candidate as well as the reasons for these decisions in writing and with information on legal remedies.
- (4) RWTH Aachen University shall inform all other German universities of the invalidity of the doctoral work or the revocation of the doctoral degree.
- (5) The provisions of paragraphs 2 through 4 shall apply accordingly to the revocation of the degree and the title of an honorary doctor.
- (6) Following a decision in accordance with paragraph 1, the doctoral certificate shall be revoked or invalidated in another way.

§ 21

Viewing of Exam Records

After completing the oral examination, the candidate may submit a request to view their examination records. The application shall be submitted within a month of the announcement of the examination results. The chairperson of the doctoral committee shall determine the place and time to view the records.

§ 22

Entry Into Force

These regulations shall be published in the official announcements of RWTH Aachen University and enter into force on the day after publication.

Issued based on the resolutions of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering dated April 26, 2018, June 12, 2018, February 22, 2022, and February 28, 2023.

It is pointed out that, in accordance with § 12 (5) NRW HG, any claims regarding a violation of procedural or formal requirements of the regulatory or other autonomous rights of the University may no longer be asserted after one year has elapsed since the official publication of this announcement unless:

- 1) the announcement has not been properly published,
- 2) the Rectorate has objected, prior to publication, to the decision of the committee adopting the regulations,
- 3) the University has been previously notified about the defect of form or of procedure in a complaint, specifying the infringed legal provision and the fact which gives rise to the defect, or
- 4) the legal consequence of the exclusion of complaints was not pointed out in the public announcement.

The Rector
of RWTH
Aachen University

Aachen, April 18, 2023

sgd. Rüdiger
Univ.-Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h. c. mult. Ulrich Rüdiger