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## **Regulations of the Doctoral Program «Biomedical Ethics and Law, Medical Track»**

(dated February 9, 2022)

*The Assembly of the Faculty of Medicine resolves as follows:*

### **A. Scope and Purpose**

#### **1. Scope**

These doctoral regulations govern the doctoral program "Biomedical Ethics and Law, Medical Track", which is offered as part of the joint program "Biomedical Ethics and Law" of the Faculty of Law (RWF) and the Faculty of Medicine (MeF) of the University of Zurich. These doctoral regulations concretize and supplement the Ordinance on Obtaining a Doctoral Degree of Doctor scientiarum medicarum (Dr. sc. med.) at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zurich (PromVO Dr. sc. med.).

The following provisions apply to doctoral candidates completing the program under the above-mentioned Ordinance.

#### **2. Purpose**

The doctoral program "Biomedical Ethics and Law, Medical Track" offers an advanced scientific qualification in the field of biomedical ethics, including relevant legal questions. In the curricular part, doctoral students deepen their knowledge of the foundations of biomedical ethics and of the current normative regulations and debates, and acquire the methodological knowledge they need for the writing of their dissertation. The doctoral program is internationally oriented and focusses on interdisciplinary research.

#### **3. Supplementary Provisions**

Supplementary provisions about the doctoral program are specified in the relevant fact sheets.

The Doctoral Program Commission "Biomedical Ethics and Law, Medical Track" (hereinafter: the Doctoral Program Commission) shall decide on questions that are not included in these Doctoral Regulations or in the PromVO Dr. sc. med.

### **B. Organization and Responsibility**

#### **4. Steering Committee "Biomedical Ethics and Law (BmEL)"**

The BmEL Steering Committee is composed by the members of the doctoral program commissions of the programs "Biomedical Ethics and Law, Medical Track" and "Biomedical



Ethics and Law, Law Track" of the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Law of the UZH, respectively. The chair of the Steering Committee BmEL and its deputy are held alternately by the chairs of the doctoral program committees of the two faculties for a period of two semesters. The chairperson manages the BmEL Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee deals in particular with the development of the joint teaching program and with the coordination of the curricular requirements and supports the efficient cooperation between both faculties involved.

## **5. Doctoral Program Commission**

The overall responsibility and management of the doctoral program lies with the Doctoral Program Commission appointed by the Faculty of Medicine.

The Commission is composed of at least the following three members:

- a. the Program Director (chair),
- b. the Program Coordinator,
- c. one additional member with relevant professional expertise.

Further persons may be appointed to the Commission. A deputy may be appointed for each member. The term of office is two years, and is renewable. The chair must be held by a member of the Faculty of Medicine. This member can only be represented by another member of the Faculty of Medicine.

The chairperson of the Doctoral Program Commission also chairs the Steering Committee every second year, alternating this position with the chairperson from the Law Track of the program.

The Doctoral Program Commission is overall responsible for the establishment and implementation of the doctoral program, and in particular of:

- a. these doctoral regulations,
- b. the curriculum in biomedical ethics,
- c. the individual study programs of the doctoral students.

The Doctoral Program Commission also serves as a selection committee, determines the selection criteria and evaluates the applications to the program. It also evaluates the financial eligibility of applicants.

## **6. Program Coordinator**

The Program Coordinator is responsible for the academic planning and implementation of the program, including block modules, exchange options and other organizational and content-related aspects of the program. In addition, the Program Coordinator acts as a contact person for students and ensures the flow of information between both faculties. He/she works closely with the Program Director.

## **7. Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee is responsible for planning, supervising and evaluating the content



and timing of the work leading to the doctoral degree. The composition of the Committee is usually determined at the end of the first semester at the latest.

According to § 9 PromVO Dr. sc. med., the Dissertation Committee consists of the following members:

- a. the supervisor of the dissertation, who must have at least a doctoral degree,
- b. a member with the right to confer the doctorate Dr. sc. med. according to § 11 PromVO Dr. sc. med.,
- c. one additional member, who must have at least a doctorate and preferably not be employed at UZH or at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich

The Committee is chaired by a member of the Faculty of Medicine.

At least half of the members must belong to the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zurich.

The composition of the Dissertation Committee is approved by the Doctoral Program Commission.

The doctoral candidate and the Dissertation Committee members sign an agreement on the process, the objectives and the framework conditions of the doctoral level within six months after the start of the doctoral program (according to § 5 para. 1 PromVO Dr. sc. med.).

The Dissertation Committee holds a meeting with the doctoral candidate within the first six months after the start of the doctorate, and thereafter once a year.

## **8. Dissertation Committee Meetings**

The doctoral candidate and the Dissertation Committee meet once a year to discuss the progress and the continuation of the dissertation.

On the occasion of the meeting, the doctoral candidate writes a report for the attention of the Dissertation Committee, which signs the report. Subsequently, the report and, if necessary, further agreed measures for the continuation of the scientific work are submitted by the doctoral candidate to the program coordination.

## **9. Supervisor of the Dissertation**

The supervisor provides academic guidance to the doctoral student in regular meetings adapted to the progress of the dissertation. Generally, the supervisor is selected within the first semester.

Depending on the research project, doctoral students can have two supervisors.

In the event of disagreement between the doctoral candidate and his or her supervisor, the Dissertation Committee and, if necessary, the Doctoral Program Commission will be consulted as mediators.



## **C. Admission to the Doctoral Program**

### **10. Admission Requirements**

Subject to the admission regulations of the PromVO Dr. sc. med., admission to the doctoral program is granted to applicants who have demonstrated academic excellence and a strong interest in biomedical ethics. Admission is possible with a medical or related master's degree. Medical students at the University of Zurich can also apply for provisional admission to the program.

Applicants must have demonstrated academic excellence (for example, in the form of academic credentials, awards, fellowships, or publications), show motivation and commitment to their research interests, and have a very good command of English.

Admission may be subject to conditions and/or requirements, for example the completion of an additional curricular component at a Swiss university or Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. ECTS credits earned at a foreign university must be approved by the Doctoral Program Commission.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the decision of the Doctoral Program Commission.

### **11. Provisional admission of Master's students in medicine**

The doctoral program may provisionally admit medical students while they are still pursuing their master's degree in medicine.

Medical students with an interest in biomedical ethics receive a general orientation about the doctoral program and the possibility of admission during the master's program early in their studies. During the third year of study, they can apply to the doctoral program.

Admission from the fourth year of study or after completing the Bachelor of Medicine is provisional. Definitive admission to the program takes place with the successful completion of the medical studies (Master's degree).

Students who have been provisionally admitted to the doctoral program can already take part of the courses offered during the master's studies and make a topic of biomedical ethics the subject of their master's thesis. After completion of the master's level, they can concentrate on the writing of their dissertation and the doctoral examination.

### **12. Application**

Applications must be submitted to the Doctoral Program Commission by the due date, enclosing the following documents:

- a. CV,
- b. academic diplomas and certificates,
- c. letter of motivation describing the applicant's interests in the field of biomedical ethics



and proposing specific research questions the applicant would like to address, reasons for applying, and future career plans,

- d. a short essay (max. 2 pages) about a possible research topic and a suitable methodological approach,
- e. two letters of recommendation referring to the applicant's qualifications and academic potential,
- f. proof of a financial plan for the doctoral student's living expenses over a period of at least three years,
- g. proof of English language skills of C1 level, according to the requirements of the University of Zurich. The above-mentioned tests are not required if the applicant can prove that he/she has already obtained an academic degree from an English-speaking university, or can prove a longer professional activity in an English-speaking country.

### **13. Admission**

The Doctoral Program Commission also fulfills the function of selecting candidates who apply through the Faculty of Medicine. It screens all applications that have been received on time. Applicants who are shortlisted are invited for an interview.

The decision regarding the admission is made on the basis of both the written application and the selection interview.

All applicants will be informed in writing about the Commission's decision.

## **D. Structure of the Doctoral Program**

### **14. Duration of the Doctoral Program**

The doctoral program usually lasts three years. Upon agreement, it can be completed on a part-time basis.

The maximum duration of the program is six years. The Doctoral Program Commission may authorize extensions in justified cases (cf. § 14 PromVO Dr. sc. med.).

### **15. Structure of the Doctoral Program**

The doctoral program requires:

- a. writing a dissertation in accordance with § 25 PromVO Dr. sc. med.,
- b. completing modules with a total of 12 ECTS credits (cf. § 13 para. 1.b PromVO Dr. sc. med.).

The dissertation should demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to carry out independent scientific work.



## **16. Curriculum**

The curriculum includes mandatory modules with a total of 12 ECTS credits.

Participation in the research colloquium is mandatory.

The module catalog is published in an appropriate manner.

The modules introduce the doctoral students to the foundations of biomedical ethics and familiarize them with the current problems of the discipline as well as with relevant research methods. The choice of elective modules must be discussed with the supervisor in advance.

The recognition and crediting of study achievements outside the doctoral program is governed by § 24 PromVO Dr. sc. med.

## **17. Doctorate and further Work at a Clinic or Institute**

Total working time within the scope of the doctoral position, which does not directly serve the dissertation, may comprise a maximum of 20% of the working time of the doctoral position. Examples are: clinical activities, teaching or administrative activities. A separate employment or independent activity, e.g. in a clinic, does not fall under this regulation.

## **18. Participation in Teaching**

Doctoral candidates are expected to spend a total of between 100 and 200 hours in teaching spread over the three years of their doctorate. Course assistance in the courses offered within the framework of this doctoral program and the supervision of a maximum of two master's theses (each with a maximum of 50 hours) can be credited to the teaching activities. Other forms of teaching such as lectures, tutorials, or talks may also be credited. Doctoral candidates working in patient care or otherwise in the institute or clinic may be exempted from teaching obligations upon presentation of proof.

## **E. Completion of the Doctoral Program**

### **19. Graduation Requirements**

The successful completion of the doctoral program requires:

- a. completion of the research project and preparation of a dissertation. The dissertation is usually a cumulative dissertation that combines several original articles, with at least one publication with first authorship published or accepted for publication in an internationally recognized scientific journal for the respective field. First authorship may be shared and the dissertation should include a minimum of three publications. Cumulative dissertations should include an introduction and a conclusion. The Doctoral Program Commission is responsible for determining special requirements for cumulative dissertations (such as number and scope of publications). The dissertation can also take the form of a monograph.



- b. the successful completion of the compulsory modules (at least 12 ECTS credits),
- c. the successful doctoral examination.

## **20. Initiation of the Registration for Graduation**

The Doctoral Program Commission recommends the completion of the dissertation in its last meeting. The registration for the doctoral degree is initiated by submitting the dissertation to the members of the Doctoral Program Commission and to the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Medicine (examination registration; together with the presentation of the acquired ECTS credits and the documented teaching performance during the doctorate).

The doctoral thesis and the expert opinions obtained according to § 27 of the PromVO Dr. sc. med. and thus the admission to the doctoral examination are confirmed by the Doctoral Program Commission. The Chairperson of the Doctoral Program Commission sends a written statement of acceptance to the Faculty of Medicine within 2 weeks after the doctoral exam.

## **21. Doctoral Defense and Final Presentation**

The Dissertation Committee sets the date for the doctoral defense with the doctoral candidate.

The examination board consists of the members of the Dissertation Committee and, when possible, one additional Faculty Member. In principle, substitution is possible. However, at least one member with the right to confer doctoral degrees must be present at the doctoral examination. The Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee chairs the doctoral examination.

The doctoral exam covers the subject area of the dissertation. It consists of a non-public presentation and discussion of the dissertation between the doctoral student and the Dissertation Committee, and a public presentation of the dissertation's results by the doctoral student, including a public discussion. Passing the non-public part of the exam is a prerequisite for admission to the public presentation of the dissertation.

The Dissertation Committee members decide about the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation. The exam is graded on a "pass" or "fail" basis (according to § 31, para. 5 PromVO Dr. sc. med.).

## **22. Title**

The title of Dr. sc. med. is awarded by the Faculty of Medicine at the request of the chairperson of the Dissertation Committee. The English translation is PhD (cf. § 32 Para. 1 PromVO Dr. sc. med.). The title is only awarded after the mandatory copies of the dissertation have been submitted and the handing over of the Diploma (cf. §§ 33 in conjunction with 32 (2) PromVO Dr. sc. med.).



### **23. Enrollment and Fees**

According to § 41 of the Ordinance on Admission to Studies at the University of Zurich (VZS), doctoral candidates must be enrolled for the entire duration of their studies until their graduation. The fees are invoiced by the Student Administration Office of the University of Zurich.

### **24. Confidentiality**

An important aspect of the doctoral program is the exchange of scientific data and results between the different institutes of the participating universities. Such results are to be treated as strictly confidential by all participants and may not be passed on to persons outside the doctoral program as long as the results are not published by the author. Doctoral candidates may not use scientific results to the detriment of the University of Zurich or any other university; in particular, they may not impair the intellectual property rights of the University of Zurich or any other university by premature publication or other premature disclosure of results.

### **F. Final provisions**

#### **25. Entry into Force**

These doctoral program regulations shall enter into force on February 10, 2022.

The Doctoral Regulations of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zurich dated 28 January 2009 shall apply to doctoral theses who submitted their dissertations before the date of entry into force of the present Regulations.

The requirements established in Article 18 only apply to doctoral students admitted to the doctoral program from the spring semester 2022 onwards.