

## Q&A Doctorate

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## A

### » What is the procedure for the doctorate?

1. Once you have finished writing your dissertation, have received approval from your doctoral supervisor and have sent us the completed dissertation once by e-mail for a form check, you can apply for admission to the examination phase.

2. As soon as all the necessary documents have been submitted to us and we have positively reviewed your application, we will now initiate the doctoral procedure. You will receive an e-mail from us confirming the initiation and your doctoral number. The dissertation then proceeds to the review phase.

3. Once we have received both reviews, your dissertation will be assessed by the doctoral committee. The committee usually meets every 2 weeks.

4. After assessment by the doctoral committee, there are 2 options:

- » Case 1: The doctoral committee asks you to make corrections. In this case, you will receive a letter by e-mail listing which corrections are required.
- » Case 2: The committee does not wish to make any changes. You will also receive a letter by e-mail asking you to inform us of an elective subject in which you would like to take your oral examination. You will find the possible elective subjects listed under the letter "W".

5. As soon as you have notified us of the elective subject, we will send you the admission to the oral examinations by e-mail. You will be informed of the examiners in this letter.

6. Once you have completed the oral examinations, we will receive the transcript with your examination results from the examiners.

7. You will receive permission to print from us. This will also tell you who your second reviewer was.

8. In order to take part in the doctoral award ceremony, a few documents must be submitted. These are listed in the permission to print.

9. As soon as you have submitted all the required documents, you will be invited to the doctoral award ceremony where you will be presented with your certificate by the current Dean.

10. From this date you are entitled to use your doctorate.

### » How should the abstract attached to the supervision agreement be structured?

First of all, you should make sure that the abstract is closely coordinated with your doctoral supervisor. Care will be taken to ensure that the research question is scientifically significant. The doctoral committee will review the abstract before your admission to the qualification phase and, if necessary, send it back to you for clarifications or improvements. The abstract should not exceed 1-2 pages and must be structured, i.e. you should briefly describe the clinical/scientific

background and state of knowledge and derive relevant questions and objectives from this. A brief description of the methods to be used makes it easier for the doctoral committee to assess the expected requirements when preparing your dissertation. Make sure that it is clear that your proposed topic will “expand existing knowledge about the theory, course, diagnosis or therapy of a disease or basic medical research through new results”.

- » Who is my contact person for scientific problems?

If you have any problems, always ask your doctoral supervisor first, or your supervisor if necessary.

- » Who is my contact person in the event of problems with the doctoral supervisor and non-compliance with the supervision agreement?

If you encounter this problem, please contact our doctoral office. We will then get in touch with the doctoral committee.

- » What do I have to consider if I have studied abroad and have not been granted a German license to practice medicine?

If you did not study in Germany and therefore did not obtain a German state examination and/or a German license to practice medicine, your documents (diplomas etc.) must be checked for equivalence by the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs or the Central Office for Foreign Education (<https://www.kmk.org/kmk/information-in-english.html>). Please send us a short e-mail for this purpose. We will then send you the relevant documents.

ATTENTION: This must be done before you start your doctoral project. You should also make sure that the examination has been completed and a positive decision has been made before you arrive in Germany.

- » What needs to be considered when using generative AI models?

The university is currently developing its own guidelines for dealing with generative AI models. Until it is finalized, please refer to the current statement of the German Research Foundation (DFG) (link at the end of this paragraph). The statement serves as an orientation for the handling of generative models, the use of which requires certain binding framework conditions in order to ensure good scientific practice and the quality of scientific results. The models used and how they are handled must also be explained in the declaration of own contribution.

<http://www.dfg.de/resource/blob/289674/230921-stellungnahme-praesidium-ki-ai.pdf>

## B

- » How can I take a leave of absence for my doctoral thesis?

In order to be able to issue you with a leave of absence, you must have already been admitted to the qualification phase (supervision agreement) by the doctoral committee. Only then can you apply for a leave of absence. To do so, please submit the following PDF document by e-mail only:

1. An official letter (on letterhead/clinic sheet) from your doctoral supervisor requesting a leave of absence from studies for a defined period of time with signature. The letter must contain the following: The reason for the leave of absence and the period (semester) for which you are to be granted leave of absence. If you already have a matriculation number, please include this as well.

After checking the documents submitted, we will send you the leave of absence by e-mail as soon as possible. You can then use this to apply for leave of absence at the Registrar's Office. You will also need the "Beurlaubungsantrag" from the University of Bonn. You can download the template for this under the following link: <https://www.uni-bonn.de/de/studium/beratung-und-service/studierendensekretariat/beurlaubung>

Please note that the leave of absence is always limited to a maximum of one semester. If you need a leave of absence again, you can apply to us again as described above.

#### Deadlines for Application

##### **Winter Semester 2025/2026**

October 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

To be submitted to the Student Secretariat: by August 31, 2025

To be submitted to the Doctoral Office: from August 1, 2025

##### **Summer Semester 2026**

April 1 to September 30, 2026

To be submitted to the Student Secretariat: by February 28, 2026

To be submitted to the Doctoral Office: from February 1, 2026

#### » How many supervision agreements can I submit to the doctoral office?

There may only ever be one supervision agreement. Unless it is a supervision agreement for the Dr. med. and additionally a supervision agreement for the Dr. med. dent. Please note that you must first terminate the contract (supervision agreement) with the Faculty of Medicine if you change your supervision relationship to another university. This must be done by mutual agreement with the doctoral supervisor.

#### » I would like to terminate my supervision agreement - how can I do this?

If you wish to terminate your supervision agreement, we require the application for termination of the supervision agreement to be completed in full. You can either send it to us as a PDF document by e-mail or send us the original by post. Please use the corresponding form on our homepage.

#### » I would like to extend my supervision agreement - how do I do that?

If you find that the end date specified in the childcare agreement cannot be met or has already passed, you must apply for an extension. Please use the appropriate form on our homepage for this purpose. Please ensure that your supervision agreement is active during the entire

qualification phase. Otherwise we will not be able to issue you with a doctoral certificate or admit you to the examination phase, for example.

## **D**

### » How long should my dissertation be?

There are no binding regulations regarding the length of a dissertation. You should determine this in close consultation with your doctoral supervisor. In general, the maximum length of a monograph is 100 pages. Explicit regulations apply to a dissertation for publication, which can be found on our homepage. There are also explicit regulations for the monograph with regard to structure and formatting, which you can also view on our homepage. Please adhere strictly to these guidelines.

### » When can I use the doctorate title?

The doctoral candidate receives the right to use a doctoral title upon receipt of the doctoral certificate (§ 14 para. 2 PromO).

### » I would like to change my doctoral supervisor - how does that work?

If there has been a change of doctoral supervisor, we require the completed application form to take over the supervision agreement. You can either submit the original form to us by post or leave it in our letterbox. Please use the corresponding form on our homepage.

### » My doctoral supervisor is leaving the faculty/is no longer a habilitated member of the Faculty of Medicine Bonn - what now?

Your doctoral supervisor can continue to supervise you for up to two years after your departure. If a longer period is necessary, this can be requested from the doctoral committee. If this is not approved, a change of doctoral supervisor must be applied for.

### » I have finished my dissertation - what now?

Once you have completed your dissertation, you will next need confirmation from your doctoral supervisor that it is ready for printing. You can then submit the dissertation to the doctoral office with the relevant documents from the checklist. Discuss three possible second reviewers with your doctoral supervisor, but they must not come from the same institute/clinic. Likewise, there must be no close cooperation documented by publications. Furthermore, one of the reviewers must be a full-time professor for life at the Faculty of Medicine. However, before you finally submit the dissertation, we recommend that you send us the dissertation once by e-mail for a form check. You can read about the further procedure under the letter "A".

### » I receive support from a technical assistant. I plan and analyze the experiments, and we take turns conducting the experiments, as they run over several days. To what extent can I use data in the monograph that was not collected exclusively by me?

If you receive technical help, but are able to instruct them and carry out the experiments yourself, handle this in the same way as in a publication. Here you name the helping hands in the acknowledgements.

## E

### » Do I need an ethics vote?

With the amendment to the Professional Code for Physicians in North Rhine from July 23, 2025, and the revised version of § 15(1), exclusively retrospective epidemiological research projects are now also subject to mandatory consultation with the Ethics Committee. Further information and details on the procedure can be found at the following link: <https://ethik.meb.uni-bonn.de/sonstige-klinische-studie/retrospektive-auswertung-von-daten/>

In relevant supervision agreements, the presence or acquisition of an ethics vote must therefore always be confirmed going forward. All retrospective research projects that were submitted to the Ethics Committee by July 22, 2025, in order to confirm that there was no consultation obligation under § 15 of the Professional Code, will continue to be handled under the "previous regulations." In such cases, it is not necessary to obtain retroactive consultation. In the case of retrospective research projects that began before July 23, 2025 but have not yet been completed, an application should be submitted to the Ethics Committee to request a review of whether the project constitutes research requiring consultation, or whether a certificate can be issued under the "previous regulations" stating that no consultation obligation existed at the time the project was initiated. For this purpose, please use the application platform ethikPool (<https://ethikpool.ethikkommission-bonn.de/app/>), where you can select the category "Other Clinical Research Projects" and then choose the option "Retrospective Data Analysis." If you have any questions, please contact the Ethics Committee: <https://ethik.meb.uni-bonn.de/>

Please ensure that the above information is taken into account and that from now on, all dissertations involving retrospective analyses explicitly include a statement on the ethical classification of the project and whether an ethics vote is available. Let me know if you'd like a version adapted for official international communication, such as for a university or funding body.

### » Who issues an ethics vote?

Please submit applications for an ethics vote to the Ethics Committee. The committee will process applications submitted by members of our faculty. If an ethics vote is required for work that takes place outside the UKB but is supervised by members of our faculty, please fill out the form "Application for the Ethics Committee of the Medical Faculty of the University of Bonn (Dr. med. & Dr. med. dent.) to take over the consultation of the following doctoral project", which you can find on our homepage.

### » Is shared first authorship permissible for a published dissertation?

The doctoral candidate must be listed as the first author in the published work. Shared first authorship is equivalent, provided that it is ensured that the authors with equal rights are not working on the same doctoral thesis. A corresponding written certificate must be submitted. In addition, a written statement on the doctoral candidate's own work must be prepared. Please use the corresponding form on our homepage for this purpose.

### » Can a shared first authorship be used by my supervisor for his/her habilitation and by me for my doctorate?

In the case of shared first authorship, the publication can be used for both the doctorate and the habilitation by one of the two equal authors. The doctoral application must be accompanied by a letter setting out the doctoral candidate's own contribution and distinguishing it from that of the habilitation candidate.

» I would like to apply for an embargo. How can I do that?

An embargo for the online publication of the dissertation must be applied for via the doctoral office. The application can be made informally by e-mail and must be submitted together with the doctoral supervisor. Please always put your doctoral supervisor in CC. According to § 13 para. 6 of the current doctoral degree regulations, an embargo of up to two years for documents accessible via the Internet can be requested in writing (by e-mail) from the Doctoral Office without giving reasons.

Note on delayed publication

The University and State Library (ULB) can only delay publication of the dissertation once all files and metadata required for publication have been submitted in full. As soon as these are complete and only the release by the ULB is pending, the obligation to publish is considered fulfilled. In this case, the doctoral procedure can be formally completed - regardless of the expiry of the embargo period.

Extension of the embargo period

If an extension of the already granted embargo period is desired, a reasoned application must be submitted to the responsible doctoral committee at least eight weeks before the deadline expires. After a positive decision, the University and State Library will be informed of the new duration of the embargo period by the Doctoral Office.

**F**

» Which certificate of good conduct must be applied for?

Please apply for a private certificate of good conduct, not an official certificate of good conduct. This will then be sent directly to you personally.

» When do I have to apply for and submit the certificate of good conduct?

The certificate of good conduct must be enclosed with the application for admission to the examination phase.

**G**

» Should or must I use gender-inclusive language in my dissertation?

In principle, gendering is important and makes sense. There are no legally binding specifications from the official side. We recommend the use of neutral formulations wherever possible (e.g. medical staff, nursing staff, carers). Alternatives are the use of asterisks (patients) or the naming of genders (male and female patients).



## L

- » Who has to attend the course "Scientific work"?

Attendance of the lecture is mandatory for all doctoral candidates of the Faculty of Medicine if you have submitted the supervision agreement to the doctoral office from October 9, 2017. The doctoral committee will decide on exceptions if, for example, evidence of attendance of an equivalent course at another university can be provided (certificate of attendance, content of the course, semester hours per week).

## M

- » Is the second reviewer also the examiner for the oral elective examination?

No, the second reviewer will not be the examiner for the oral elective examination. The elective examiner will be appointed separately by the doctoral committee.

- » Who makes the dates for the oral exams?

You make the appointments yourself. You can either contact the examiners by email or call the secretary's office.

- » Can the oral exams take place on different days?

Yes - the exams can either take place on one day or you can arrange appointments on different days.

- » Who appoints the examiner for the oral elective examination?

The examiner for the oral elective examination is appointed by the doctoral committee. (§ 9 para. 1 PromO 2017, § 9 para. 2 PromO 2021)

## P

- » How often does the graduation ceremony take place each year? Am I obliged to attend? Is the number of participants limited? What is the procedure?

The doctoral award ceremonies usually take place twice a year. The dates and deadlines can be found on our homepage. Doctoral candidates must receive the certificate in person. This handover takes place during the doctoral award ceremony and is mandatory. You may only call yourself Dr. med. / Dr. med. dent. after receiving the certificate. (§ 14 para. 2 PromO)

The Doctoral Committee will decide on exceptions to the awarding of certificates upon written application. If the application is approved, the doctoral certificate can be sent by registered mail. In exceptional cases, the certificate can also be handed over via consulates. The number of participants as well as the duration of the doctoral award ceremony depend on the number of graduating doctoral candidates. For this reason, we cannot provide binding information regarding the number of attendees or the exact schedule. As a rule, each doctoral candidate may be accompanied by two guests. The event is expected to last approximately two hours, so the ceremony will likely conclude around 12:00 PM.

» Do I have to enrol as a doctoral student?

§ Section 4 (3) PromO 2017: For doctoral candidates who have completed their university studies, the obligation to enrol for doctoral studies arises in accordance with Section 67 (5) HG. If you have submitted your supervision agreement to the doctoral office from October 9, 2017 and have already completed your studies at this time, you are required to enrol for a two-semester doctoral program.

§ Section 4 (4) PromO 2021: For doctoral candidates who have completed a university degree and who are not employed full-time at the University of Bonn or the University Hospital Bonn, the obligation to enrol for a two-semester doctoral program arises in accordance with Section 67 (5) HG. The doctoral committee decides on exceptions.

If you have submitted your supervision agreement to the Doctoral Office from December 17, 2021 and have already completed your studies at this time and are not working full-time at the University of Bonn or the University Hospital Bonn, you are required to enroll in a two-semester doctoral program.

» How can I register as a doctoral student?

In order to be able to issue you with a doctoral certificate, you must have already been admitted to the qualification phase (supervision agreement) by the doctoral committee. Only then can you apply for a doctoral certificate. For this purpose, please submit the following PDF documents by e-mail only:

1. The completed and signed form "Antrag auf Ausstellung einer Promotionsbestätigung" (please use the corresponding form on our homepage) including the proof mentioned therein.

After checking the documents submitted, we will send you the doctoral confirmation by e-mail as soon as possible. You can then use this to register as a doctoral student at the Registrar's Office. Please note that the doctoral confirmation is always limited to a maximum of one semester. If you need a new doctoral certificate, you can apply for it again. A short email including your matriculation number is sufficient.

Deadlines for Application

**Winter Semester 2025/2026**

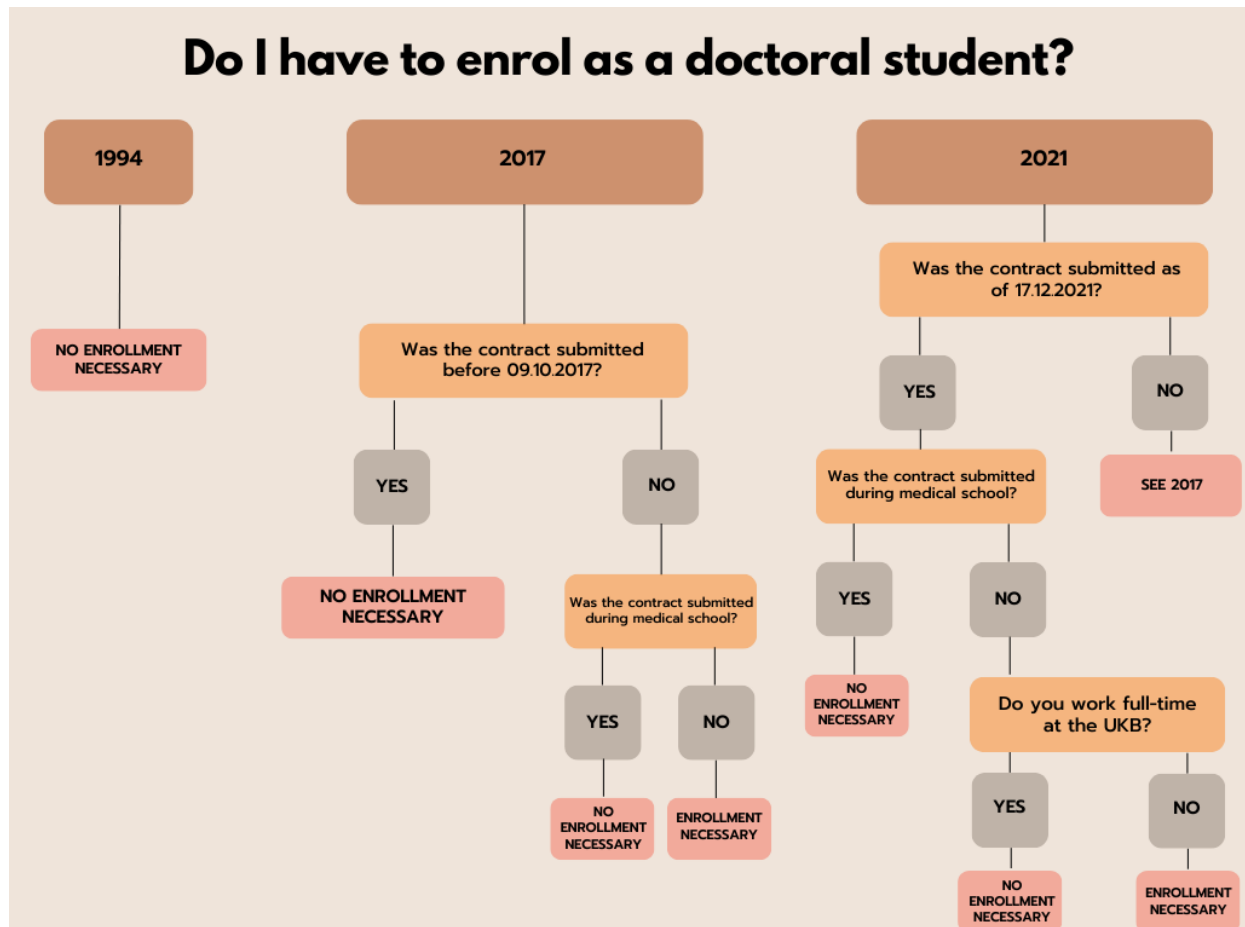
October 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

To be submitted to the Doctoral Office: August 19 to February 28, 2026

**Summer Semester 2026**

April 1 to September 30, 2026

To be submitted to the Doctoral Office: February 19 to August 31, 2026



» What is a published dissertation?

A publication dissertation is a German summary of a publication on which you have signed as first author or joint first author. This publication must have been accepted for printing by the editor. In the German abstract, you briefly describe the background to your work, the objectives, the methods used and the results obtained. You may refer to the publication. The discussion of the publication dissertation should critically examine your data based on current literature. Please note that the German summary must NOT be a translation of the publication, as this could be regarded as self-plagiarism (translation plagiarism) and could lead to your doctorate being revoked. You can find information on the form of the publication dissertation on our homepage.

» In the publication dissertation, I may also use (and cite) graphics that were used in the publication. What happens if the publication is delayed and I decide to publish a monograph? Is there a way to use the graphics/data from the dissertation in the publication so that it does not constitute plagiarism?

If you submit a German-language monograph, the graphics in the publication will be translated into English and thus modified. This is not considered plagiarism under the current interpretation.

- » I would like to do a doctorate with 2 publications - how do I structure my dissertation?

Several publications are then summarized in a publication dissertation if they fit together in terms of content. If this is the case, attach your two publications as an appendix (Publication 1, Publication 2) and describe them in the summary. If the contents are so far apart that this is not possible, the question is whether you should concentrate on one publication and integrate the second work into the CV. This could play a role in the grading.

- » As part of my doctoral thesis, previously published studies are to be summarized in the form of a meta-analysis. What do I have to consider?

Meta-analyses must follow the criteria and specifications of the "PRISMA Statement" and, if applicable, its extensions. The necessary information can be found on the "PRISMA" homepage (<http://prisma-statement.org/>) oder in entsprechenden Publikationen (etwa: Moher et al. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA Statement. Open Med. 2009; 3: e123-30; Rethlefsen et al. PRISMA-S: an extension to the PRISMA Statement for Reporting Literature Searches in Systematic Reviews. Syst Rev. 2021; 10: 39).

## S

- » Can I submit my dissertation before completing my studies?

Yes - you can initiate the assessment procedure once you have passed the 1st state examination. As soon as we have received the 3rd state examination, we can admit you to the oral examinations.

## T

- » Where can I find out which topics are still available for my dissertation?

There are three options here:

Option 1: You ask the medical student council.

Option 2: You contact the clinics / institutes directly where you are interested in writing a dissertation.

Option 3: Doctoral exchange (however, this offer is preferably aimed at applicants who have successfully completed Pre-SciMed): <https://www.scimed.uni-bonn.de/promotionsboerse>

- » I have a degree in veterinary medicine. Can I do a doctorate at the University of Bonn?

No - In order to be able to do a doctorate at the Faculty of Medicine, a degree in medicine (Dr. med.) or dentistry (Dr. med. dent.) is mandatory.

- » How long can the title of my dissertation be?

The title may not be longer than 150 characters including spaces.

## W

- » Which electives can I choose from for the oral exam?

A

Anesthesiology and Operative Intensive Care Medicine

Anatomy

B

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

C

Cardiac Surgery

Clinical Chemistry and Clinical Pharmacology

D

Dermatology and Allergology

Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology/Neuroradiology

Dental Prosthetics, Propaedeutics and Materials Science

E

Epileptology

Experimental Hematology and Transfusion Medicine

G

Gynecology

General, Visceral, Thoracic and Vascular Surgery

H

Human Genetics

Hygiene and Public Health

I

Internal Medicine

M

Medical Biometry, Informatics and Epidemiology

Medical Microbiology, Immunology and Parasitology

Molecular Medicine and Experimental Immunology

N

Neurosurgery

Neurodegenerative diseases and gerontopsychiatry

Neurology

Neuropathology

O

Orthopaedics and Trauma Surgery

Ophthalmology

Otorhinolaryngology  
Orthodontics  
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

P  
Periodontology, Tooth Preservation and Preventive Dentistry  
Pathology  
Pediatrics

R  
Reconstructive Neurobiology

U  
Urology and Paediatric Urology

- » Where can I look up the journal abbreviations after "World Medical Periodicals"?  
World Medical Periodicals" is an alphabetical list, first compiled in 1953 (L. T. Morton, Compiler. Prepared under the auspices of UNESCO and WHO. Geneva, WHO and UNESCO, 1953. xvi, 237 pp. 12s6d), in which medical and scientific journals are listed with official abbreviations. The abbreviations can also be found in the NLM catalog at <https://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog>  
Please search for the journal and note the "NLM Title Abbreviation"

## Z

- » Who appoints the second reviewer of my dissertation?  
Your doctoral supervisor must complete the form with 3 second reviewer suggestions before registering for the doctorate. Please use the corresponding form on our homepage. The choice of the second reviewer is regulated in § 8 para. 1 of the doctoral degree regulations. According to this, one of the reviewers must be a full-time professor at the Faculty of Medicine, must not come from the same institute/clinic and must be scientifically independent. The second reviewer is finally appointed by the doctoral committee.