

## Information on Writing the Doctoral Thesis

### PhD Doctoral Examination Procedure for the Faculty of Medicine University of Bonn

#### Font type and size, line spacing

Please note: When submitting the application for admission to the examination phase, the doctoral thesis must no longer be submitted to the Doctoral Office in printed form, but instead only in electronic form.

The doctoral thesis must be written using Arial font size 12, with a line spacing of 1.5 lines and justified alignment. Only main headings are to be written using font size 14, bold and left aligned. This does not apply to the main headings in the table of contents (please use font size 12 there).

#### Figures and tables

Please prepare legends for figures and tables as described above, but with a line spacing of 1.0, so that the legends stand out from the rest of the text. For the same reason, please also write Fig. and Tab. in bold (example: **Fig. 1:** Legend).

When producing figures and tables and the text they contain and image quality, remember that only high quality can be accepted and that the figures and tables must also be clearly legible in PDF document. If a figure or table must be included at right angles in the doctoral thesis, the legend must also be at right angles. The page number must be placed in the same orientation as the legend and the illustration.

#### Justified alignment

Justified alignment often creates large gaps in the text that you have to minimize with automatic or manual hyphenation. This hyphenation should not be done until the thesis is finished and no longer requires any changes. Experience has shown that automatic hyphenation is highly susceptible to errors and manual hyphenation should therefore always be preferred.

#### Margins

The right and left margins are 2.2 cm, the top margin is 3.2 cm and the bottom margin is 3.0 cm.

#### Page numbers

Page numbers are located at the top center of the page, 1.6 cm from the top edge, beginning with the table of contents (starting on page 3 if there is no dedication, or page 5 if there is a dedication).

#### Outer cover, pages 1 and 2

Please prepare using the sample. Leave the layout unchanged and only add the information for the doctoral student. Page numbers begin with the table of contents.

### **Dedication, lists (Table of Contents, List of abbreviations, References, Index, etc.), annexes**

If the doctoral thesis includes a dedication:

First page as in sample 1

Second page as in sample 2

Third page: Dedication

Fourth page: empty

Fifth page: Table of Contents

If the doctoral thesis does not include a dedication:

First page as in sample 1

Second page as in sample 2

Third page: Table of Contents

The list of abbreviations follows directly after the table of contents, where it must also be included with a page number. If you want to include acknowledgments, please put them at the end of your doctoral thesis, before the curriculum vitae.

### **Special characters**

Please always use superscript format for ® ©, that is: ®©

### **Units of measure**

Please ensure that a space is always included between the number and unit of measure: 10 %, 11 cm.

### **Decimal numbers**

When you take data from English sources, remember that the English and German formats for decimal numbers are different.

German: 16,79

English: 16.79

### **Length**

Doctoral theses should, as a rule, be no longer than 100 pages.

### **Specialized terms**

Specialized terms must be used correctly with respect to form and content, and defined if necessary. They must be written in an orthographically consistent manner in the doctoral thesis.

Compound (German-English) terms should be avoided.

### **Abbreviations**

Abbreviations must comply with normal international standards and must be explained.

### **Doctoral thesis**

A doctoral thesis must represent a considerable academic achievement and demonstrate the candidate's ability to perform independent research. The information below is intended to make it easier to write the doctoral thesis.

### **Title**

The title of the doctoral thesis should be memorable and briefly summarize the contents. Abbreviations should be avoided in the title. The title and title supplement (subtitle) should be distinguished on the title page not by punctuation marks but by different font sizes (main title 18, title supplement 16) and by starting the title supplement on a new line.

### First and second pages

Please use the sample to complete the first and second pages, leaving the layout unchanged. The year on the first page is the year of publication. Please be careful if you submit the thesis at the end of the year, but it will not be published until the following year. It takes around 80 days before the permission to print is issued after admission to the examination phase.

“Day of oral examination” field: Nothing should be entered in this field on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page when the application for the examination phase is submitted. The examination date will be entered by you at a later date before the dissertation is published. Please leave this field empty in your doctoral thesis when you submit your application for the examination phase.

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## Monograph

### Layout / Table of Contents

The doctoral thesis must be clearly and logically structured in accordance with standard practices for academic literature. *Please note the **requirements in the sample template which is available on the website.***

### Introduction

The introduction should briefly present relevant literature for the topic and lead up to the research question addressed in the thesis. The research question addressed in the thesis should be clearly formulated. It must satisfy academic standards and allow the author's own contribution to be clearly identified. If the doctoral thesis presents a literature review and analysis, reasons must be provided that demonstrate why this is of scientific value. If the doctoral thesis presents casuistry or collective casuistry, its scientific value must also be demonstrated. Simply describing the course of a disease is not sufficient.

### Material and methods

A clear description of the methods used must be provided.

If the doctoral thesis is part of a larger project by a working group, the contributions by other researchers must be identified. The scientific objective (comparison with own control group, comparison with results in the literature, review of diagnostic or prognostic criteria, etc.) must be clearly formulated for studies of medical records, especially retrospective studies.

### Results

The results of one's own research must be presented clearly and precisely, supplemented by tables and figures, if necessary. Tables and figures must have explanatory legends and be sequentially numbered. Tables and figures with their accompanying legends should be self-explanatory when considered on their own, separated from the text as a whole. They should be descriptive in nature and should not be shortened to the length of a typical heading. When reproducing halftone or color images (e.g. morphological images), original photographs or comparable top quality images must be used in all copies of the doctoral thesis. Quantitative studies must use appropriate statistical analyses. The results of other researchers must be identified as such.

### Discussion

The discussion must critically discuss the results of your own research based on the research question and current academic literature. Conclusions should be drawn that show the value of the doctoral student's research based on publications by other authors and the research question formulated in the introduction.

### **Abstract**

The abstract briefly summarizes the entire work, from the research question to conclusions, and must be understandable when considered on its own. It should be no longer than one page, if possible, and in no case longer than two pages.

### **List of figures**

All of the figures (Fig., title, page number) are listed here.

### **List of tables**

All of the tables are listed here.

### **References**

See the information in the “References” section.

### **Statement on own contribution (and the use of AI tools)**

Please be sure to follow the specific instructions for this chapter in the template. You can download the outline template from the website under the heading “Monograph.” In this chapter, you must clearly explain what your personal academic achievements were and what contributions, if any, came from others. If you use AI tools or generative models when writing your thesis, please note the following [„Statement by the Executive Committee of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft \(DFG, German Research Foundation\) on the Influence of Generative Models of Text and Image Creation on Science and the Humanities and on the DFG’s Funding Activities.”](#) If you use AI in your dissertation, you must confirm that your dissertation complies with the regulations set out in the DFG statement. The statement serves as a guide for dealing with generative models. The use of these generative models requires certain binding framework conditions in order to ensure good scientific practice and the quality of scientific results.

### **Acknowledgments**

If needed, your acknowledgments are included here. If you do not want to include acknowledgments, skip this section and continue with your curriculum vitae.

### **Curriculum vitae**

The curriculum vitae should provide a short, concise description (around 1–2 pages) of your professional career in table form. Parent or sibling careers should not be included. The curriculum vitae is also not dated.

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## **Publicationbased Thesis**

*Reviews in general (and Systematic Reviews without Meta-analyses) do not meet the requirements from § 6 of the Doctoral Degree Regulations. These publications **will not** be considered as original publication for the publication-based thesis.*

### **Layout / Table of Contents**

The doctoral thesis must be clearly and logically structured in accordance with standard practices for academic literature. *Please note the requirements in the Doctoral Examination Regulations and the **sample templates (website)**.*

### **Form for declaring personal contribution to publications**

Please fill out the corresponding form entitled “Statement own share”. The form is available for download on the PhD website under “publicationbased thesis”. Please submit a completed and signed version separately with the other required documents as part of your application for the examination phase (see checklist). For information on specifying your own contribution and external contributions in the dissertation itself, please refer to point 5 in the list below.

The publication doctoral thesis must have the following layout in accordance with the sample template on the website:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction and aims with references
3. Publications
4. Discussion with references
5. Statement on own contribution

Please be sure to follow the specific instructions for this chapter in the template. You can download the outline template from the website under the heading “Monograph.” In this chapter, you must clearly explain what your personal academic achievements were and what contributions, if any, came from others. If you use AI tools or generative models when writing your thesis, please note the following [„Statement by the Executive Committee of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft \(DFG, German Research Foundation\) on the Influence of Generative Models of Text and Image Creation on Science and the Humanities and on the DFG’s Funding Activities](#). If you use AI in your dissertation, you must confirm that your dissertation complies with the regulations set out in the DFG statement. The statement serves as a guide for dealing with generative models. The use of these generative models requires certain binding framework conditions in order to ensure good scientific practice and the quality of scientific results.

6. Acknowledgments
7. Statement
8. Curriculum vitae

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## References

The references section is in alphabetical order without numbering.

Particular attention must be paid to formatting the author information in the text and references section carefully in accordance with our instructions with respect to periods, commas, spaces, semicolons, etc.

- Use round brackets in the text, no brackets in the references section
- Use justified alignment in the reference section
- Write complete page numbers, that is: 12–16, **not:** 12–6
- No period at the end of sources in the references section.
- Do not use periods when abbreviating journal titles

1. Only works that are mentioned in the text are cited. Unpublished observations, personal communications and brochures from companies, etc. cannot be cited. They can be mentioned in the text in brackets.

2. Citations are arranged in alphabetical order based on the names of the authors. A uniform citation style must be used. It must include: the names of all authors of an article, including all initials; title of the publication; journal or book title, including publisher, if applicable; year of publication; volume; first and last pages of the publication (please use complete page numbers, e.g. 123–139, NOT: 123–39).

3. An author’s name is followed by an initial for the first name, or multiple initials if there are multiple first names, then a comma, the next author, etc. The last author is followed by a period and the full title of the publication.

4. For journal articles, the name of the journal follows, abbreviated according to World Medical Periodicals (e.g. named at regular intervals in “Current Contents” or available from various scientific publishers). The name of the journal is followed by the year of publication, a semicolon, the volume, a colon and, finally, the first and last pages of the article.

5. For book articles, the author names and title (same format as for journal articles) are followed by a period, "In:" and the editor name(s), formatted similar to the names of article authors. The last editor is followed by a comma, the abbreviation "ed." or "eds.", the book title, the place of publication, a colon, the publisher, a comma, the year of publication, a colon and the first and last pages of the article cited.

6. When citing an entire book, the authors and title are first shown as for a journal article. This is followed by the place of publication, a colon, the publisher, a comma and the year of publication.

7. If an author or group of authors appear with more than one publication in the same year of publication, to avoid confusion between the citations the year of publication is followed by a lowercase letter, beginning with a, corresponding to the order of publications, e.g. (1993 a), (1993 b), etc.

### Examples

Fischer K, Poschmann A. Erythrocytic ABH-receptors in leukemia. In: Götz H, Bücherl ES, eds. Applied Tumor Immunology. Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975: 185-194

Langlotz M. Lumbale Myelographie mit wasserlöslichen Kontrastmitteln. Stuttgart - New York: Thieme, 1980

Staab HJ, Hornung A, Anderer FA, Kieninger G. Klinische Bedeutung des zirkulierenden tumorassoziierten Antigens CA 19-9. Dtsch Med Wschr 1984; 109: 141-147

### **Internet citations**

Author of the webpage, year: title. path (date accessed: xx.xx.xxxx)

The author is usually the publisher of the website (e.g. Statistisches Bundesamt). If no year of publication is indicated on the webpage, the current year is used. The complete path ("URL") is shown instead of a place of publication. The access date must be shown because Internet webpages are updated from time to time or, in worse cases, no longer available.

### **Literature citations in the text**

The **recommended style for citations** is the **author-date style**.

Publications must be carefully cited for all referenced authors in all sections of the doctoral thesis, based on the following information.

Publications are cited using only the author name(s) followed by the year of publication. First names are not indicated.

If a publication has more than two authors, only the first author is named, followed by "et al." If there are two authors, both are named, separated by "and".

If multiple publications are cited at the same time, the citations are arranged in alphabetical order and citations with the same name are ordered based on the year of publication.

Literature citations are either integrated into full sentences (e.g. Staab et al. (1984) show that ...) or added in brackets at the end of a sentence (Fischer and Poschmann, 1975; Langlotz, 1980, Müller et al., 1990 a, 1990 b).

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## Further information

### Human or animal studies

If studies were conducted on human subjects, the doctoral thesis must include a statement that the studies were performed based on the revised World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and corresponding legal bases.

If animal studies were conducted, a statement about the approval for the experiment must be included.

### Ethics vote

The question of whether an ethics vote is required should be discussed with your doctoral supervisor and, in cases of doubt, the ethics committee should be consulted for advice. If a vote is needed and you have the vote when you submit your doctoral thesis to the Dean's Office, the corresponding reference number must be documented in the doctoral thesis, either in the introduction at the end of the research question ("This project was approved by the ethics committee under # xx.") or at the end of the Method section ("This methodology was approved by the Ethics Committee under reference no. xx.").

With the amendment to the professional code of conduct for doctors in North Rhine-Westphalia dated 23 July 2025 and the revision of Section 15 (1), exclusively retrospective epidemiological research projects are now also subject to consultation with the ethics committee. Further information on this and details on the procedure can be found at [this link](#).

We kindly ask you to take this into account.

### Formal check

Before submitting your dissertation **for the examination** and review **phase**, please contact the PhD Office directly for a formal check.

Afterwards, before submitting your final version of the dissertation to the library (only **after** passing the oral examination), please contact the University Library team.

Bonn University and State Library  
MNL Branch Library

Phone: +49 (0) 228 73-9533

Email: [bonndiss@ulb.uni-bonn.de](mailto:bonndiss@ulb.uni-bonn.de)

*After receiving the e-mail "Publication Permission", which will be sent by us **after** passing the oral examination, please proceed according to the information provided by the ULB and contact our colleagues from the library if you have any questions: <https://www.ulb.uni-bonn.de/de/forschen-lehren-publizieren/dissertation-publizieren>*