PhD Study Regulations

pursuant to the Regulations for the Degree of PhD
12.5.2017
The doctoral studies are structured in two parts: extension of studies in basic or clinical sciences, organization of individual research and study activities ultimately leading to the writing of the doctoral thesis.

Study and research activities include:

- Attending doctoral courses, seminars and symposiums organized by the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences or other institutes affiliated to USI;
- Writing a doctoral thesis in one of the official languages of Switzerland or in English in agreement with the Thesis Director.

Each doctoral student, prior to consigning the doctoral thesis, shall earn a minimum of 15 ECTS through doctoral courses (s. Art. 3 and 4. of the present Regulations)

The attendance to doctoral courses and the related acknowledge -ment of ECTS is possible only after the formal admission to the PhD program in accordance with Art. 8 of the PhD Regulations approved on May 12th 2017 by the University Council.

The Faculty or its affiliated institutes organize for its doctoral students a series of courses generally in English language, structured as follows:

a. Common courses (General skills)
b. Intracurricular courses (Specific skills)

1 The terms of masculine gender used in these regulations always refer also to the corresponding feminine term.
The following definition regarding ECTS applies in general:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Seminars / Conferences / Courses</td>
<td>PhD Students are required to participate in at least 20 of the 30 seminars during the 3 years (10 seminars per year = 1 ECTS). In general 1 whole day course = 0.5 ECTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>National / International Seminars</td>
<td>Conferences duration: a whole day count as 0.5 ECTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal Club</td>
<td>Presenting and discussing at least two relevant papers (2 presentations incl. preparation and discussion = 1 ECTS). Max. 3 ECTS from journal club for entire PhD program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presenting in National / International</td>
<td>Of at least 2 days. The courses and relevant ECTS shall be approved in advance by the Thesis Director (doctoral courses organized by other institutes affiliated to USI or other Universities). In general 2 days = 1 ECTS if not already defined</td>
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<tr>
<td>National / International courses</td>
<td>For doctoral students at 2nd or 3rd year (ECTS shall be defined in advance by the Thesis Director)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>If deemed necessary, by the end of the first year the Thesis Director may suggest an exam to evaluate the basic knowledge acquired by the PhD Student. In general 4 ECTS for passed exam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online courses</td>
<td>Online courses offered by official universities or similar institutes which award ECTS are valid, if approved upfront by the GSC. Online courses are usually approved if complementary to existing USI and/or Swiss courses. A maximum of 5 of the PhD ECTS can be done with online courses.</td>
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</table>

In order to achieve a minimum of 5 ECTS each doctoral student, in agreement with the Thesis Director, may choose between the courses indicated in Annex 1 (General Skills).

Courses must be chosen within the first year of doctorate. Modifications in itinere are possible in agreement with the Thesis Director.

The choice of the courses is based on the level of preparation previously acquired by the doctoral student, in relation to the selected program and to the specific subject in which the doctoral student will conduct her/his research.

ECTS will be defined with the Thesis Director in agreement with the Graduate Studies Committee.

In order to achieve a minimum of 10 ECTS each doctoral student, in agreement with the Thesis Director, may choose between the courses indicated in Annex 2 (Specific Skills).

In order to achieve a minimum of 15 ECTS shall be acquired by attending General skills courses for an amount of 5 ECTS and Specific skills courses for an amount of 10 ECTS.

Each course exam given at the Faculty, if passed, awards the relative ECTS. To pass each course exam, doctoral students are expected to attend at least 85% of classes, in addition to passing the final exam, as appropriate. The evaluation is: Pass / Not Pass. If not passed, the exam can be repeated.
1. External doctoral students shall attend the same courses and acquire the same number of ECTS as internal doctoral students.

2. It is however possible, under specific circumstances, to request a waiver for paragraph 1 and ask to attend doctoral courses organized by other Faculties or Universities to acquire the remaining ECTS. The request duly motivated shall be issued by the doctoral student in agreement with the Thesis Director within the first year from enrolment.

1. It is possible to earn ECTS by attending doctoral courses organized by other Universities or institutes affiliated to USI. In order for the ECTS to be acknowledged, the doctoral student shall submit the certificate for participation. The certificate must indicate the number of ECTS conferred and/or the number class hours.

2. If the certificate fails to mention the number of ECTS, or if these do not comply with USI standards concerning the ECTS/class hours’ ratio, the following rules shall apply:
   - 1.5 ECTS for 14 class hours;
   - 3 ECTS maximum per week, regardless if total attendance exceeded 28 class hours.

1. The progress made in research is verified within the first year of working with the Thesis Director and the mentor.
2. During the first year doctoral students are required to present in oral and written form the activities carried out during the year. The report shall feature training activities (including any reported course assessments and number of gained ECTS), participation in scientific events and shall provide a description and the progress of the doctoral student’s research.
3. During the mid-term review the doctoral student is required to present the progress of his/her research, the results achieved, future goals and any publication.
4. The passing of the review is mandatory. Should the Thesis Director deem that the candidate’s progress in his research or his knowledge is unsatisfactory, the Graduate Studies Committee, after hearing both parties, shall present to the PhD student a list of conditions to be met, and impose a deadline. Alternatively, in serious cases, the Board will initiate the dismissal procedure described in Art. 13, Art. 14 of the PhD. Regulations approved by the University Council on May 12th 2017).

1. The doctoral student shall write the PhD thesis in one of the official languages of Switzerland or in English, in agreement with the Thesis Director.
2. The PhD thesis may take the form of a monograph or consist of a number of academic works, hereinafter “papers”, (cumulative thesis).
3. The form (monograph or cumulative) of the thesis is established by explicit agreement between the doctoral student and the Thesis Director. In particular, upon consignment of the thesis, the PhD student shall write the PhD thesis in one of the official languages of Switzerland or in English, in agreement with the Thesis Director.
4. The Board of Examiners meets on the day of the oral defence on one of the USI campuses or on one of its affiliated institutes. However, it is possible that one or both of the external professors participate to the oral defence via videoconference.

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1. Ex Art. 6 of the PhD Regulations approved by the University Council on May 12th 2017, the Board of Examiners includes at least four professors: the Thesis Director, a Faculty professor or a Group Leader of a research Institute affiliated at USI appointed by a Faculty professor and at least one external expert.

2. External Jury Professor can be a full professor, assistant professor, associate professor, titular, honorary or emeritus professor or also lecturer with extensive knowledge of the subject. Requirement for an external professor or lecturer to be appointment is to hold a PhD title. It is not necessary that the professor has the "habilitation".

3. The external professor or expert is a professor or expert who has not collaborated in any way in the research and the writing of the doctoral student’s thesis, and has no academic publication, working relationship or kinship with the same doctoral student. Also, a professor or lecturer that is part of an externally funded project in which the doctoral student is involved, cannot be appointed as external professor.

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3. The form (monograph or cumulative) of the thesis is established by explicit agreement between the doctoral student and the Thesis Director. In particular, upon consignment of the thesis, the PhD coordinator shall be informed on the form of the thesis.
4. The cumulative thesis shall contain single scientific papers (hereinafter referred to as “papers”). It shall include at least one accepted article and the doctoral student shall be first author, a comprehensive introductory chapter including a presentation of the topics covered in the various articles, a discussion of the relevant literature and also a concluding synthesis integrating the different results obtained.
1. In application of Art. 2.1 of the PhD Regulations the following majors are possible:
   - Immunology and Cell Biology
   - Cancer Biology
   - Neurosciences / Human Neurosciences
   - Cardiovascular /Human Cardiovascular
   - Drug Sciences
   - Public Health

2. Regulations of the affiliated University in agreement with the Graduate Studies Committee.
   In order for a doctoral student to conduct a PhD thesis in collaboration with another University, a cooperation contract must be signed by both universities determining all details regarding this particular cooperation. USI and its partner institutes have no
   - obligation to pay an additional salary. The following details must be
   - covered in the contract:
   - Enrollment date
   - Duration of cooperation
   - Fees (only payable at 1 university) / other financials (e.g. salary)
   - Main responsible
   How the working time will be divided between the 2 universities
   - Where the thesis will be defended and in which language, which university will be responsible for archiving / publication etc.
   - Which regulations the PhD program will follow
   - Insurance of the PhD student
   Diploma
   Official contact person (member of Faculty) of each University.

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Note
Art. 3 and art. 19 amended with ratification of the CdP of 10.02.2020.
PhD Study Regulations pursuant to the Regulations for the Degree of PhD 12.5.2017