

STUDY REGULATIONS FOR THE DOCTORATE IN NEUROSCIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF GENEVA AND LAUSANNE

Article 1: General points

- 1.1. In accordance with the framework agreement of March 28, 2000 between the University of Geneva (hereafter: "UNIGE") and the University of Lausanne (hereafter: "UNIL") concerning the creation of joint doctoral programs, UNIGE and UNIL jointly award a Doctorate (PhD) in Neuroscience.
- 1.2. The faculties concerned are:
 - The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Geneva,
 - The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (hereafter: "FPSE") of the University of Geneva,
 - The Faculty of Sciences of the University of Geneva,
 - The Faculty of Biology and Medicine (hereafter: "FBM") of the University of Lausanne,
 - The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (hereafter: "SSP") of the University of Lausanne.
- 1.3. The doctoral training is a program of advanced studies.
- 1.4. A given partner institution of the doctoral program may withdraw after informing the other partners one academic year in advance and presenting a plan for the support of currently enrolled doctoral candidates in the institution concerned that guarantees the support of the candidates until they graduate and have obtained a PhD in Neuroscience.

Article 2: Organization

- 2.1. The training is placed under the responsibility of a Scientific Committee of the neuroscience doctoral program (hereafter: "Scientific Committee").
- 2.2. The Scientific Committee is composed of one to three faculty members from each faculty that participates in the doctoral program.
For UNIGE, the members of the Scientific Committee are proposed by the management committee of the Neuroscience Center and appointed by the College of Professors of the faculties concerned. For UNIL, the members of the Scientific Committee are proposed by the departments associated with the program and appointed by the relevant Faculty Councils. In addition, one doctoral student from each of the partner institutions is appointed in accordance with paragraph 4.
- 2.3. Faculty members of the Scientific Committee are appointed for two years; the term is renewable.

- 2.4. The members representing the doctoral students are appointed each year during the annual meeting of the neuroscience doctoral program. The term is one year, renewable twice.
- 2.5. The Scientific Committee appoints from among its members one local director per partner institution who is responsible for management of the doctoral program at UNIGE and at UNIL, respectively. The directors co-chair the Scientific Committee.
- 2.6. The overall management of the doctoral program is carried out by a board that is composed of the two co-directors and a coordinator who is administratively attached to one of the partner institutions. This office oversees the programming of courses, the organization of exams, the annual neuroscience meeting, the registration, and follow-up of the doctoral students' files in accordance with the objectives defined by the Scientific Committee.
- 2.7. The Scientific Committee has the following competencies in particular: it validates the budget and creates the study regulations and study plan for the doctoral program. The Scientific Committee decides on admissions and equivalences. It validates the directives of the doctoral program and decides on particular cases. It issues recommendations on doctoral students' appeals.
- 2.8. The Scientific Committee represents the entities associated with the neuroscience training.

Article 3: Registration and Admission

- 3.1. PhD candidates must first meet the formal registration requirements of UNIGE or UNIL, depending on the university where their thesis director is appointed.
- 3.2. In addition, candidates must meet the following three cumulative admission requirements:
 - i. Academic title: Candidates must hold a university master's degree (Master) issued by the UNIGE or UNIL faculties that participate in the doctoral program, or a title deemed equivalent. The Scientific Committee decides on the equivalence of the titles and may make admission to the doctoral program conditional on additional training (co-requisites) to be completed during the doctoral program. These co-requisites correspond to a maximum of 30 ECTS credits. The ECTS credits of the co-requisites must be acquired before the intermediate evaluation (Art. 7.4), else the candidate risks elimination from the program.
 - ii. Thesis directors: Doctoral candidates must have a thesis director (Art. 4 and 5) who formally commits to supervise the candidate and have defined the area of research in agreement with the thesis director.
 - iii. Admission file: This includes a CV and copies of the candidate's university degrees, the title and description of the research project, the thesis attestation containing details of the engagement in terms of resources that are necessary for the candidate's work.
- 3.3. Candidates register with the faculty to which their thesis director is affiliated and must meet the admission requirements of this faculty. The procedure is completed with the UNIGE Admissions Service or the UNIL Admission and Inscription Service.

- 3.4. Admission is based on the candidate's file. The evaluation of the file may be completed by an interview of the candidate with the Scientific Committee and/or by providing additional documents.
- 3.5. The admission to the doctoral program in neuroscience is decided by the Scientific Committee.
- 3.6. The admitted candidates are liable to tuition and fees set by the university in which they are registered.

Article 4: Thesis direction et co-direction

- 4.1. The thesis work is carried out under the direction of a thesis director holding a professorial rank or a stable position as "Maître d'enseignement et de recherche" (MER). Assistant professors, as well as MERs without a stable position, may direct a thesis, provided that a co-director is appointed who holds a full or associate professor position. In addition, this must comply with the rules that are in place at the Faculty where the doctoral student registers. Any person holding a doctorate in medicine or science, whether a member of a partner institution of the doctoral program or not, may be admitted as co-director as long as it can be shown that his or her supervisory role constitutes a specific added value with regard to the PhD candidate's field of research.
- 4.2. The thesis director and, if a co-director is appointed, the thesis co-director must be approved by the Scientific Committee based on the candidate's admission file. Unless an exemption is granted by a competent authority within the faculty where the doctoral student is registered, or, if the authority is missing, by the Scientific Committee, a thesis director cannot be accepted if he or she is within three years of retirement.
- 4.3. If the thesis work is carried out outside the partner institutions of the doctoral program, a thesis director must be appointed from within one of the partnering faculties of the doctoral program.
- 4.4. The thesis directors and co-directors are responsible for supervising the PhD candidates to ensure proper progress of their thesis projects. They ensure that a thesis is completed in accordance with the regulations of the neuroscience doctoral program and ensure that administrative procedures are followed. The directors also check the progress of the thesis work. If the progress of the work is insufficient, a director has the obligation to inform the Scientific Committee and the student's thesis advisory committee (Thesis advisory committee, hereafter "TAC"; see Art. 7.2).

Article 5: Changes in thesis direction or thesis subject

In principle, the Scientific Committee may authorize a PhD candidate to change his/her thesis director or the thesis subject during the first year of training. In the event of a change of thesis director, the formalities required by the faculty of enrollment must be completed, if any.

Article 6: Study duration and structure

- 6.1. In principle, the Doctorate in neuroscience has a minimum duration of 6 semesters, and a maximum of 10 semesters. PhD candidates must be enrolled at UNIGE or UNIL for the entire duration of the training.
- 6.2. Exceptions to the maximum study duration may be granted by a competent authority of the faculty where the PhD candidate is enrolled or, if applicable, by the Dean of the Faculty of enrollment, upon recommendation by the Scientific Committee and the TAC (Art. 7.2), and on basis of a motivated request from the PhD candidate, but always in accordance with the directives in force at the specific partner institution.
- 6.3. The doctoral training includes following events proposed by the doctoral program, an original research project and the writing and defense of a doctoral thesis.
- 6.4. The doctoral program consists of a theoretical and practical training, in the form of courses, workshops, seminars and other teaching modules deemed equivalent by the Scientific Committee. It corresponds to the acquisition of 18 to 20 ECTS credits, depending on the previous training of the PhD candidate. These credits must be obtained before the thesis manuscript can be submitted (Art. 8.5). The list of teaching events, courses and activities of the doctoral program and the credits attributed to them, as well as the precise modalities for obtaining these credits, are included in the study plan and additional guidelines of the doctoral program as established by the Scientific Committee and adopted by the competent bodies of the partner faculties.

Article 7: Thesis project and follow-up

- 7.1. Research project: The thesis project is carried out in a laboratory within one of the partner institutions or in an external institution, which can be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Scientific Committee. The PhD candidate's research project is defined and agreed upon by the candidate and the thesis director and is communicated to the Scientific Committee. Where applicable, the formalities required by the faculty of enrollment must also be completed.
- 7.2. Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC): The TAC (Art. 4.4) participates in the intermediate evaluation (Art. 7.4) as well as in the PhD exams (Art. 9) according to the modalities in force at the faculty of enrollment of the PhD candidate. In agreement with the candidate, the thesis director is responsible for constituting a TAC no later than 12 months after the admission of the PhD candidate into the doctoral program. The TAC consists of a president or a representative of the doctoral program (where appropriate at UNIGE), and at least two experts holding a doctoral degree, who are active in research and independent of the PhD candidate's thesis project, and at least one of whom is external to the thesis director's department. The Scientific Committee validates the composition of the TAC and designates the person who chairs it. This person is chosen from among the full or associate professors of the partner faculties of the Doctorate in Neuroscience. The thesis director and, if applicable, the thesis co-director participate in the TAC in a consulting role.

- 7.3. In case of serious incompatibility or other problems arising between the PhD candidate and the thesis director, the TAC can meet upon request by one of them or by a member of the TAC, hear the PhD candidate and the thesis director, and evaluate the situation. Any procedures and measures are decided on according to the terms and conditions in force at the faculty of enrollment of the PhD candidate.
- 7.4. Intermediate evaluation: During the intermediate evaluation, the PhD candidate presents the status of his/her work to the TAC. At the end of the evaluation session, the TAC, the thesis director and the PhD candidate agree on the continuation of the thesis work. The intermediate evaluation is a mandatory exam, which must be defended no earlier than 9 months and no later than 18 months after the PhD candidate's admission. This deadline may be adjusted, by exception, by the Scientific Committee if particular circumstances of the PhD candidate demand this. In addition, the Scientific Committee reserves the right to prepone or postpone this deadline if conditions justify so.
The possible evaluations of the interim evaluation are "sufficient" or "insufficient".
- 7.5. If the progress of the thesis project or/and the oral presentation of the PhD candidate are deemed insufficient, the PhD candidate can present him-/herself to a second and final intermediate evaluation. This second evaluation must take place between three and six months after the first one. An insufficient second intermediate evaluation will result in the elimination of the PhD candidate from the doctoral program.

Article 8: Thesis manuscript

- 8.1. Upon completion of the research project, the PhD candidate writes a thesis manuscript.
- 8.2. The thesis manuscript must:
- outline the state of research in the relevant field of science,
 - situate the thesis project in the context of current research,
 - explain all the approaches taken,
 - present the results, specifying the author's contribution to the advancement of research in the relevant field of science, and indicate the research perspectives that are opened by the project.
- 8.3. Unless an exception is authorized by the Scientific Committee, the thesis manuscript must be written in French or English. The language must be chosen in agreement with the thesis director. The manuscript must contain one abstract written in French and one in English.
- 8.4. The thesis manuscript may include one or more articles published in a scientific journal with an editorial policy. The modalities are described in the Guidelines for the PhD in Neuroscience.
- 8.5. The ECTS credits (Art. 6.4) of the doctoral program must be obtained before the thesis manuscript can be submitted.
- 8.6. A hard and/or an electronic copy of the thesis manuscript must be sent to the members of the jury. The chosen format depends on the jury member's preference. The deadlines and recipients of the thesis manuscript must follow the procedures defined by the University and the Faculty of enrollment (Art. 9).

Article 9: PhD exam

The PhD exam procedure consists of two parts: a private and a public defense of the thesis work. The exam is conducted in accordance with the rules that are in place at the university and faculty where the PhD candidate is enrolled. Documents will need to be submitted for the preparation of the exams as detailed in the following paragraphs.

A. Procedures at the University of Geneva

9.1. Private defense: No later than 3 weeks before the scheduled private defense date, the PhD candidate submits the thesis manuscript to the TAC. In the defense session, the TAC makes an assessment of the quality of the PhD candidate's personal contribution to the presented work as well as his/her knowledge. The possible evaluation outcomes are "sufficient" or "insufficient". In case of failure ("insufficient"), the candidate may organize a second private defense. The TAC may also suggest modifications to the thesis manuscript. Any changes must be completed before the public defense of the thesis. The private defense is held at least 6 weeks before the public defense.

9.2. Public defense of the thesis - Procedure: No later than 6 weeks before the scheduled public defense date, the PhD candidate submits to the Scientific Committee a proposal for the composition of the thesis jury as defined in Article 10 of the current regulations. After the Scientific Committee's approval of the thesis jury composition, but no later than 5 weeks prior to scheduled defense date, the PhD candidate submits his/her thesis manuscript to the director and, if applicable, to the co-director of the thesis and to the other members of the thesis jury for assessment.

No later than 6 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, the PhD candidate registers for the thesis defense at his/her faculty, providing the following information:

- i. date, time and place of the public defense
- ii. an electronic copy of the thesis manuscript
- iii. the exam protocol of the private defense
- iv. the composition of the thesis jury as defined in article 10, including the professional address of each member and his/her function
- v. a summary of the ECTS credits obtained in the doctoral program.

No later than 3 weeks prior to the scheduled defense date, the thesis director must send the thesis report to the Dean of the Faculty of enrollment of the PhD candidate. The report must have been approved and signed by all members of the jury, and conclude that the thesis can be defended to the thesis jury. Any modifications to the thesis manuscript that are proposed by the jury must be completed before the defense.

9.3. Public defense of the thesis - Evaluation: During the defense, the thesis is evaluated by the jury, which assess the PhD candidate's scientific research, as well as the quality of the manuscript and of the oral presentation. The possible evaluation outcomes are "accepted" or "refused" in the Faculties of Medicine and Science, or are expressed by an average mark between 0 and 6 in the Faculty of Psychology and Education. The outcome "accepted" or a mark equal to or higher than 4 is necessary for the successful completion of the doctoral exam. In

case of failure, the candidate may organize a second and final public defense. A second failure is eliminatory.

B. Procedure at the University of Lausanne

9.4. Private defense: No later than 5 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the private defense “séance d’épreuve” (FBM) or the thesis colloquium (SSP), the PhD candidate submits to the Thesis Office of his/her faculty of enrollment:

- i. date, time, and place of the private defense
- ii. an electronic copy of the thesis manuscript
- iii. the composition of the thesis jury as defined in article 10, including the professional address of each member and his/her function
- iv. a summary of the ECTS credits obtained in the doctoral program.

No later than 5 weeks prior to the private defense, the PhD candidate sends to each member of the jury a copy of his/her thesis manuscript. With exception of the president, each member of the jury produces a report in which his/her opinion of the work is presented. These reports must be sent to the Thesis Office of the faculty of enrollment no later than one week before the private defense session (thesis colloquium). At the end of the defense, the thesis jury deliberates and provides its assessment of the thesis work according to the rules in force at the faculty of enrollment of the PhD candidate.

For PhD candidates enrolled at the FBM, the jury assigns a grade to the thesis manuscript, the quality of the candidate’s personal work, as well as the quality of his/her presentation and knowledge. This evaluation is expressed by three marks between 0 and 6. Each of the three scores must be equal to or greater than 4 to pass the private defense. In case of a score lower than 4, the PhD candidate must make the corrections and additions that are requested by the jury, and resubmit the manuscript for evaluation, respecting the deadline imposed by the jury.

For PhD candidates enrolled at the SSP, the jury may:

- i. accept the manuscript
- ii. accept the manuscript with some reworking
- iii. refuse the manuscript as is and schedule a second thesis colloquium within 6 months
- iv. reject the thesis.

In the event of failure, the candidate may organize a second and final thesis colloquium. A second failure is eliminatory. If the thesis jury requests changes to the thesis manuscript in a thesis colloquium that is otherwise successful, they must be made by the PhD candidate before the final version of the thesis manuscript is submitted (Art.14.1) and must be approved by the thesis director.

9.5. Public defense of the thesis: Upon successful completion of the private defense, the thesis director (at the FBM) or the Dean's Office (at the SSP) sets the date and place of the public defense in agreement with the thesis jury and the PhD candidate. The public thesis defense takes place at least 3 weeks and at most 6 months after the private defense session. The thesis jury decides whether the thesis defense was successful.

Article 10: Thesis jury

- 10.1. The thesis jury is composed of thesis director, if applicable the co-director and includes at least two experts independent of the PhD thesis work, who are holding a doctorate; at least one must be a professor or MER and at least one must be external to the PhD candidate's university of enrollment. For PhD candidates enrolled in the SSP, the jury will be completed by a member with a professorial rank if the thesis director and an expert both hold positions as MER. It is expected that the composition of the thesis jury will be at least partially the same as that of the "TAC" thesis committee (Art. 7. 2).
- 10.2. The jury president is appointed according to the rules in place at the faculty of enrollment. The other members of the jury are proposed by the thesis director and the PhD candidate no later than the thesis manuscript submission date. The composition of the thesis jury is validated by the Scientific Committee.

Article 11: Unjustified absence, fraud and plagiarism

- 11.1. If a PhD candidate does not attend an evaluation (e.g., courses, intermediate evaluation), he/she is considered to have failed the evaluation unless the absence is justified. In particular, illness and accidents are considered justified absence. The PhD candidate must notify the Scientific Committee and the faculty of enrollment in written form immediately (with supporting documents), i.e., in principle within a maximum of 3 days following the non-attendance. The Scientific Committee decides whether the absence is justified.
- 11.2. In case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism and/or attempted fraud and/or plagiarism, in the context of the doctoral thesis and doctoral training, the Scientific Committee summons the PhD candidate to an initial interview where the candidate may consult all the documents in his/ her record. He/ she is heard by the Scientific Committee, a protocol of the session signed by all parties is created; a copy is provided to the PhD candidate and the original kept by the Scientific Committee. If suspicions persist following this hearing, the Scientific Committee will forward the record and copies of all documents to the PhD candidate's faculty of enrollment. The faculty will then apply the procedures in force within it and/or within the university of enrollment.
- 11.3. Any fraud, plagiarism, as well as attempted fraud or plagiarism will be followed by sanctions ranging, depending on the severity of the case, up to the elimination of the PhD candidate from doctoral studies and/or the university. In the absence of specific regulations, the sanctions may be according to the seriousness of the case: failure to pass the relevant assessment, permanent failure to pass the relevant assessment, elimination. The principle of proportionality must be respected.
- 11.4. Decisions are taken by competent authorities of the faculty and/or university of enrollment. In the absence of specific regulations, the Dean of the faculty of enrollment decides. He/she must have heard the candidate prior to any decision and the latter has the right to consult his file.

Article 12: Right to a diploma, issuance of the diploma

- 12.1. Obtaining the ECTS credits of the doctoral program, required before the submission of the thesis manuscript, and passing the intermediate evaluation and the PhD exam within the defined deadlines entitle the student to a Doctorate in Neuroscience from the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne.
- 12.2. The diploma is signed by the Rectors of the partner institutions and the Dean of the faculty of enrollment of the PhD candidate.

Article 13: Elimination

- 13.1. A PhD candidate is eliminated from the program in the event of:
 - i. Failure to obtain the credits for any co-requisites required at the time of admission to the doctoral program in accordance with art. 3 and within the prescribed time limits
 - ii. Final failure in the doctoral program
 - iii. Final failure of the intermediate evaluation
 - iv. Final failure of the private thesis defense
 - v. Final failure at the public thesis defense
 - vi. Two negative jury reports for the thesis manuscript
 - vii. Failure to meet the deadlines detailed in the present regulations
 - viii. Failure to complete the course of study within the maximum time limits stipulated in art. 6.1 and 6.2 and art. 7.4.
- 13.2. Cases of fraud, plagiarism, attempted fraud or plagiarism are subject to a separate procedure.
- 13.3. Eliminations are pronounced by the Dean of the faculty where the PhD candidate is enrolled, upon notice from the Scientific Committee.

Article 14: Publications

- 14.1. After receiving the imprimatur page, but no later than six months after the public defense, the PhD candidate files the required copies of the final version of the thesis manuscript (in hard copy and/or electronic format) in accordance with the guidelines of his/her university and/or faculty of enrollment.
- 14.2. The results of the thesis project are published in scientific journals or books. These publications may appear before or after the thesis defense.

Article 15: Appeal and objection procedures

- 15.1. Any decision taken in application of the present regulations may be subject to objection or appealed made to the authority that provided it, within 10 days or 30 days following the notification, depending on the regulations of the university or faculty of enrollment.
- 15.2. The procedures and regulations of the university or the faculty of enrollment, if applicable, must be considered.
- 15.3. If a member of the authority hearing the objection/appeal is one of the parties involved in the dispute, he/she must recuse him/herself. In this case, the quorum that may be required for the decision of the authority concerned is deemed to be reached without his/her presence.

Article 16: Entry into force and transitory provisions

- 16.1. The present study regulations for the Doctorate in Neuroscience of the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne come into force with effect from September 20, 2021.
- 16.2 From the moment they come into force the regulations apply to all new PhD candidates.
- 16.3 The current study regulations replace those that came into force on June 18, 2002, apart from the exception cited in paragraph 16.4 below.
- 16.4. PhD candidates who have started their doctoral studies before the date at which the present study regulations come into force remain subject to the study regulations that came into force on June 18, 2002.

Note: *This document is a translation of the “Règlement d'études du Doctorat en neurosciences des Universités de Genève et Lausanne”. This translation is provided for information purposes only and has no legal force. The French text remains authoritative.*