

Rules of procedure for the Doctoral Convention of Heidelberg University

The Doctoral Students Convention of Heidelberg University has adopted the following rules of procedure at its constitutive assembly on 26th November 2015 according to the Higher Education Act of the state of Baden-Württemberg section 38 paragraph 7 sentence 4. It was last amended on 25th November 2020.

[The following translation is only for the purpose of information and has no legally binding character.]

§1 – Self-conception and tasks of the Doctoral Convention

- (1) The Doctoral Convention considers itself the central forum and representation of all doctoral candidates of Heidelberg University.
- (2) It represents the interests of the doctoral candidates of all fields of study and all types of study. Its task is the representation of the doctoral candidates at Heidelberg University, concerning their legal and social status, their type of study, their financial situation as well as further related topics. In particular, the Doctoral Convention makes recommendations upon doctoral regulations.
- (3) The Doctoral Convention respects subject-specific scientific cultures as well as the freedom of research and protects both actively.
- (4) As a convention at university-level, it promotes the interdisciplinary and international networking of the doctoral students and their exchange.
- (5) The Doctoral Convention considers itself an intermediary between the boards of the University, other institutions that are important for the interests of doctoral students, and the doctoral students and pursues a constructive cooperation with these boards. The same applies to the cooperation with conventions of other universities.

§2 – Clause of gender equality

All designations of persons, offices and functions within these present rules of procedure apply to all genders and sexes.

§3 – Definitions and assignments

- (1) A doctoral student of Heidelberg University is a person, who has been accepted as a doctoral student by a faculty's doctoral examination board of Heidelberg University.
- (2) The Doctoral Convention is the association of all doctoral candidates of Heidelberg University.
- (3) Within the framework of the Doctoral Convention, each faculty of Heidelberg University is assigned to one of four fields of study.
 - (a) The Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Modern Languages and the Faculty of Theology are assigned to the field of study "humanities".
 - (b) The Faculty of Biosciences, and the Medical Faculties of Heidelberg and Mannheim are assigned to the field of study "life sciences".
 - (c) The Faculty of Chemistry and Geoscience, the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Sciences and the Faculty of Physics and Astronomy are assigned to the field of study "natural sciences".
 - (d) The Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Behavioural and Cultural Studies and the Faculty of Law are assigned to the field of study "social sciences".
- (4) These rules of procedure distinguish between three types of studies within the framework of the Doctoral Convention. It is possible that a doctoral student can be assigned to more than one type of study.
 - (a) A "doctoral candidate with a qualifying position" is a doctoral candidate, who is employed by an institution of Heidelberg University or an external scientific institution and who fills a qualifying position, within which he is working on a dissertation.
 - (b) A "doctoral candidate within the framework of a graduate program" is a doctoral candidate, who is a member of a graduate school or of a comparable institution and who is working on a dissertation within a structured doctoral program.
 - (c) A "doctoral candidate within an individual doctorate" is a doctoral candidate, who is working on a dissertation under individual guidance without any structured doctoral programme.
- (5) Institutions of the Doctoral Convention are (a) the executive committee and (b) the working groups.

§4 – Executive committee

- (1) The executive committee consists of eleven members. It comprises of two representatives of each field of study (according to §3(3)) and one representative of each type of study (according to §3(4)). Within one field of study the two members of the executive committee belong to different faculties, if this is possible according to the candidatures.
- (2) The tasks of the executive committee are in particular:

- (a) The representation of the doctoral students according to its formation.
 - (b) Decision-making and implementation in the name of the Doctoral Convention concerning current and permanent tasks.
 - (c) The making of recommendations in the name of the Doctoral Convention.
 - (d) Communication with other institutions and boards of the university as well as to external institutions in case these are entrusted with tasks that concern doctoral students.
 - (e) Confirmation of working groups of the Doctoral Convention as well as initiation of working groups in case of faculty-specific issues.
 - (f) Realization of the annual general assembly as well as the regular meetings.
- (3) The Executive Committee has a quorum when the majority is present. If the Executive does not have a quorum, for urgent cases it may convoke an exceptional meeting within one week, at which the Executive Committee has a quorum independent of the number of members present. The members of the executive committee have equal rights and take their decision by simple majority. If there is equality of votes, the decision is taken by the vote of the speaker (elected according to §4(4)) counts.
- (4) The members of the executive committee elect a speaker and a deputy speaker among its members. In each case the person obtaining the largest number of votes is elected. If there is equality of votes, a run-off election is held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. If the run-off election does not yield a result, the decision is taken by drawing lots.
- (5) The executive committee holds meetings periodically. The meetings of the executive committee have to be announced to all members at least two days before the meeting including a preliminary agenda. The agenda is set at the beginning of the meeting.
- (6) The executive committee nominates the candidates for the Council of Graduate Studies and the Extended Directorate of the Graduate Academy, preferably among the members of the executive committee. The number of candidates is determined in accordance with the valid rules of procedure of these two boards.
- (7) The members of the executive committee elect among its members a representative for the issues of international doctoral students.
- (8) Resignations from the executive committee have to be announced subjected to a notice period of four weeks. If a member of the executive committee completes his dissertation, his appointment in the executive committee expires as well. In these cases open seats shall be offered according to §5 (6) to the subsequent candidate of the last general assembly who has obtained at least one vote.
- (9) The executive committee is responsible to communicate its decisions and the voting results of the general assembly to the institutions and boards of Heidelberg University.

§5 – Election of the executive committee

- (1) The members of the executive committee are elected by all present persons entitled to vote at the general assembly. The responsibility for organizing and holding the election in execution resides with the executive committee in charge. Counting of the vote may not be done by the candidates for this election.
- (2) Each member of the executive committee is elected for a period of one year. Five reelections are possible. The office period of one year also applies to all tasks among the executive committee according to §4(4) to (7) unless the constitutions of the administrative bodies don't say otherwise.
- (3) By election, the Doctoral Convention mandates the executive committee to speak and to take decisions in the name of the Doctoral Convention.
- (4) Each doctoral student of Heidelberg University holds the passive voting right for the seats of the executive committee he himself correlates with [according to his field of study and his type of study]. Running for candidacy for several seats are possible, multiple elections not. If a person candidates for multiple seats and he is the only candidate for one of the seats, his candidature is automatically reduced to the seat he is the only candidate for. If a candidate wins multiple seats, he is elected for the seat that he received more votes relatively to the total sum of votes for the respective list of candidates. A call for candidature has to be performed by the executive committee in charge six weeks before the appointed date of the general assembly. Candidatures have to be announced to the executive committee two weeks before the general assembly.
- (5) Every doctoral student (according to §3(1)) holds active voting rights for the field of study and the type of study (according to §3(3) and §3(4)) he belongs to. If a doctoral student identifies with more than one field of study or to more than one type of study, the choice which field of study or type of study to vote for remains with the doctoral student. Each doctoral candidate is entitled to vote for his field of study, for which he can cast up to two votes, and for his type of study, for which he can cast one vote. For each candidate, only one vote can be casted.
- (6) Concerning the seats of the types of study, the candidate who receives the most votes for the respective type is elected. If a candidate received no single vote, he can't be elected. Concerning the seats of the fields of study the two candidates who receive most votes are elected. If both winning candidates of one field of study belong to the same faculty, and if there are candidates who received votes and belong to other faculties within this field of study, the second seat goes to the candidate, who doesn't belong to the faculty of the candidate with the most part of the votes and received the second most number of votes.
- (7) In case of a voting tie, the decision between the two equal candidates is made by drawing lots. The procedure of drawing lots remains with a member of the general assembly who is not a member of the executive committee and who is elected by the general assembly with simple majority.

- (8) The right to vote at the general assembly is proved either by the document verifying the acceptance as a doctoral student by a faculty of Heidelberg University or by a document of enrolment as doctoral student at Heidelberg University. Alternatively, the right to vote can be provided by comparing the name (first and last name) with the database of the Doctoral Students' Office of the University of Heidelberg, which is carried out by members of the current executive committee.
- (9) If the executive committee permanently consists of less than seven members, the remaining executive committee has to convene an extraordinary general assembly within the time limit given in §5(4) and §6 a to hold new elections for the executive committee.
- (10) A deselection of the complete executive committee can be requested by the submission of 500 signatures from doctoral students together with the nomination of at least seven candidates according to §5(4). In this case the executive committee has to summon an exceptional general assembly according to the time limits in §5(4) and §6 a to hold new elections for the executive committee.
- (11) In order to ensure a continuous working flow of the Doctoral Convention, an Advisory Council may be established supporting the following executive committee for three months. The Advisory Council consists of three representatives which are elected by the former executive committee among its members. The members of the Advisory Council are to be involved in the work of the executive committee but have neither a function of representation nor a voting right.
- (12) In exceptional situations, in particular when holding a plenary assembly as a video conference in accordance with § 6 a, the election of the executive committee may be carried out using a suitable digital system.

§6 – General assembly

- (1) Summoning a general assembly
 - (a) Once a year the executive committee in charge summons a regular general assembly of all doctoral candidates. The invitation has to be sent two weeks in advance and has to include the applications and the agenda of the assembly. The tasks of the regular general assembly are the election of a new executive committee and, if needed, the amendment of the rules of procedure. The general assembly is led by the speaker of the executive committee in charge and is open to the public. The general assembly takes its decisions by simple majority.
 - (b) For important matters an exceptional general assembly can be summoned. The task of an exceptional general assembly is the amendment of the rules of procedure. Invitation, moderation and decision making are analogous to the regular general assembly.

- (2) The executive committee reports to the regular general assembly on last year's activities and is discharged by the general assembly.
- (3) The regular and exceptional general assembly has to be recorded. The record has to be signed by the chairman of the general assembly and by the recorder. The record is published on the website of the convention. The provisions of data security have to be met.
- (4) The language of the regular and exceptional general assembly is German and/or English, as circumstances require. Important documents (invitations, the rules of procedure and records) of the Doctoral Convention have to be provided in German and in English.

§ 6 a General Assembly in the form of a video conference

- (1) In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible, proportionate or admissible to hold a face-to-face meeting, a plenary assembly may be held by a videoconference. The decision to hold such a form of conference is made by the executive committee. Prior registration of the participants for such a plenary meeting shall be made; the executive committee will determine the details.
- (2) The selection of a suitable system for the video conference as well as a suitable transmission format for consultation documents is in the responsibility of the executive committee in compliance with other legal requirements. The chairperson of the meeting must make the necessary presettings in the system in accordance with the respective state of the art, which ensure the use and technical functionality in conformity with data protection regulations. The system for the video conference must not cause any additional costs for the individual participants - apart from the use of suitable hardware and an internet connection. The chosen form of the conference must enable the committee to reach a joint decision that is essentially comparable to a face-to-face meeting. If necessary, an additional system can be used to conduct elections and votes in parallel. Appropriate technical, personal and financial measures must be taken to ensure that the election or vote can take place without any possibility of manipulation and while maintaining the secrecy of the ballot.
- (3) Unless otherwise provided in this paragraph, the other provisions of the Rules of Procedure shall apply accordingly to video conferences.
- (4) The calling of a video conference shall also be made by stating the dial-in data; the dial-in data must be provided at the latest on the working day preceding the video conference. The chairperson of the meeting shall inform the eligible persons about the system requirements for participation and operation in good time to enable them to take the necessary measures on their part. The invitation and, if applicable, consultation documents will be transmitted exclusively electronically.

(5) Upon successful establishment of the connection to the selected system, the participating person is deemed to be present. A connection is considered successful if the chairperson of the meeting can establish the identity beyond doubt, the person participating can follow the course of the meeting in sound and vision and can communicate with the other participants. Anyone who has registered for the plenary meeting but cannot establish an uninterrupted connection and does not complain to the chairperson is also considered to be present.

(6) At the beginning of the meeting, the chairperson checks the identity of those present and their actual ability to participate. A recording of the meeting is not permitted.

(7) If the transmission of the meeting is interrupted for technical reasons, the management of the meeting shall determine an appropriate interruption of the meeting so that the participants can reconnect to the system. If this is not possible, the chairperson of the session shall decide whether to continue the session or to interrupt it prematurely and reconnect to the system at a later date, if necessary using a different system.

(8) Before a vote is taken, the chairperson must ensure that the prerequisites for the participation of all participants are still met. Voting must be conducted in such a way that the result of the vote can be determined beyond doubt and that inadmissible multiple votes and votes by non-voting participants are excluded.

(9) If votes or elections are to be conducted by secret ballot, the resolution must be adopted by a suitable electronic procedure. The election of the executive committee is usually opened during the general meeting, in case of technical problems at the latest 24 hours after the end of the meeting. Voting is then to be made possible over a period of 72 hours. The election result is then added to the minutes of the general meeting and published together with the minutes.

(10) The minutes must also contain the following information:

- the nature of the meeting (video conference),
- the system used,
- the presence as video participation,
- the reasons for conducting it as a video conference,
- the type of voting and other instructions from the session chairperson on how to conduct the

videoconference.

§7 – Regular meetings

- (1) The regular meetings take place at least one time, generally two times, per semester and are open to all doctoral students (according to sec. 3 para. 1). The task of the regular meetings is the management on current and permanent issues. Every doctoral student has the right to speak at regular meetings. Regular meetings are led by a member of the executive committee, who is elected by the executive committee among its members.
- (2) The executive committee decides on the dates of the regular meetings. The dates have to be announced by the executive committee at least four weeks in advance. Proposals to the agenda have to be communicated to the executive committee at least two weeks before the regular meeting. The executive committee develops the agenda and announces it one week before the date of the regular meeting.
- (3) At regular meetings members of the executive committee has the right to vote.
- (4) The regular meetings have to be recorded. The record has to be signed by the chairman and by the recorder. The record is published on the website of the convention. The provisions of data security have to be met.
- (5) The language of the regular meetings is German and/or English, as circumstances require.

§8 – Topical and faculty-related working groups

- (1) Topical working groups have the task to contribute to the work of the Doctoral Convention by working on issue-specific questions and by preparing recommendations and appropriate steps concerning these issues. Faculty-related working groups shape the work of the Doctoral Convention by preparing recommendations on doctoral regulations and other issues concerning a specific faculty.
- (2) Three or more doctoral students can establish a topical working group of the convention. Issue, task and aim of the working group have to be explicitly specified.
- (3) The working groups are confirmed as official working groups of the convention at a regular meeting.
- (4) According to its task to represent the doctoral students, the executive committee has to take the results of the working groups into account. For a decision against the recommendation of a topical working group, the majority of the members present has to consent; for a decision against the recommendation of a faculty-related working group, two thirds of the members present have to consent.

- (5) In the case of faculty-related issues (change of doctoral regulations or comparable issues) the executive committee is obliged to initiate a working group consisting of members of the concerned faculty by inviting all doctoral students of this faculty. If, in spite of this measure, a faculty-related working group can't be established, then its task remains to those members of the executive committee to whose field of study the faculty in question belongs to. The results of faculty-related working groups have to be notably considered by the executive committee.
- (6) A working group should permanently consist of at least three members. New and resigning members of a working group have to be notified to the executive committee.
- (7) Every working group elects among its members a speaker who functions as a contact person to the executive committee.
- (8) The working groups, their members and speakers have to be disclosed on the website of the convention together with contact information.
- (9) The reports on intermediate results of the working groups are to be put on the agenda of every regular meeting.
- (10) A working group is dissolved by the executive committee at a regular meeting if the aim of the working group is achieved, if gross violations of the issue and the aim of the working group emerge or if this aim isn't pursued on a permanent basis anymore.

§9 – Amendment of the rules of procedure

- (1) An amendment of the rules of procedure has to be adopted at a general assembly by a majority of all present persons entitled to vote.
- (2) The request for an amendment has to be filed to the executive committee in writing with a statement of reason.
- (3) The request for an amendment has to be announced together with the invitation to the general assembly.

§10 – Finances

- (1) According to §65 a (5) Higher Education Act, the Doctoral Convention uses the dues of the enrolled doctoral students for their purposes.
- (2) The dues are managed by the Student Body (VS) and assigned in coordination with the Doctoral Convention. The Finance Regulations of the VS are used to regulate the management of the funds of the doctoral students. The Doctoral Convention pays a financial contribution to the VS. This contribution covers the administration expenses of the VS as well as the services of the VS which can be made use of by doctoral candidates.

- (3) The Executive Committee appoints up to two doctoral students as finance commissars. They compile a budgetary plan and work together with the finance officer and budget commissioner of the Student Body.
- (4) Financial resolutions are passed by the executive committee of the Doctoral Convention by a simple majority. All doctoral students are entitled to apply.
- (5) In addition, financial resolutions may also be passed by the General Assembly by a simple majority. All doctoral students are entitled to apply.

§11 – Entry into force

- (1) The rules of procedure come into force by resolution of the general assembly.
- (2) The rules of procedure are published on the Homepage of the Doctoral Convention.