

Regulations for doctoral studies at the Institute of Biogeochemistry and Pollutant Dynamics (IBP)¹

This document is provided to all PhD students at the beginning of the doctorate by the respective secretariat. It is also available at <https://www.usys.ethz.ch/en/doctorate/documents.html>

The regulations of the doctoral studies at IBP follow those of the ETH regulations (“Doktoratsverordnung”², “Ausführungsbestimmungen des Rektors zur Doktoratsverordnung”³) as well as the regulations of the Department Umweltsystemwissenschaften (“Detailbestimmungen zum individuellen Doktoratsstudium”^{4, 5}). Compare also <https://www.ethz.ch/de/doktorat.html> and <https://www.usys.ethz.ch/doktorat.html>.

The regulations are issued by the institute board (“Institutsleitung”, abbreviated IL).

1.1 Validity

The regulations apply to all internal and external PhD students whose thesis “*Supervisor (LeiterIn)*” according to the Doktoratsverordnung (Art. 6) is a member of IBP.

1.2 Supervisor and co-advisor

The professor designated to have primary responsibility for the PhD student is referred to as the supervisor (LeiterIn). He/she guarantees a continuous supervision and mentoring of the PhD student. The supervisor can be supported by a co-advisor (e.g., senior scientist, postdoc, other professor, etc.).

1.3 Doctoral Advisory Committee

A “*Doctoral Advisory Committee*” overviews the PhD student’s progress regarding scientific advance and organizational issues. The composition and duties of the committee are as follows:

- a. The committee includes a minimum of three persons. One is the supervising professor, optionally supported by a co-advisor. At least one member of the doctoral committee must be a professor or senior scientist from a different research group at ETH, Eawag, or another academic institution.
- b. The members of the doctoral advisory committee are to be appointed by the supervisor after discussion with the PhD student and reported to the Institute’s secretariat within the first 6 months of the PhD.
- c. The committee reviews the Research Plan (see 1.4) and meets for a “*Research Plan Presentation*” in month 7-9, and before it is submitted to the Department. In the research plan presentation, the PhD student typically presents the research plan (15-20 minutes) followed by an in-depth discussion and recommendations by the committee. Optionally, this can be open to the supervisor’s research group.
- d. The committee holds annual “*Progress Reviews*” with the PhD student after each completed project year until the PhD defense. In a progress review, the PhD student gives a 20-minute presentation followed by an in-depth discussion and recommendations by the committee.

¹ Version of 16.12.2016

² [SR 414.133.1](#)

³ [RSETHZ 340.311](#)

⁴ [Detailbestimmungen](#)

⁵ [Änderungen Detailbestimmungen](#)

The seminar and discussion should cover results achieved and further research plans. Optionally and upon mutual agreement, the seminar may be open to the supervisor's research group or a wider audience.

- e. The research plan presentation and all progress reviews are documented in a protocol to be prepared jointly by the PhD student and the supervisor/co-advisor. The format is free, but it should include a progress report, goals and time plan for the next year, changes of the research plan, and recommendations made by the committee. The final protocol is distributed to all members of the doctoral advisory committee.

1.4 Research Plan

The PhD student is responsible for the **"Research Plan"** (as defined in the overarching ETH regulations⁶). He/she defines and revises the draft research plan in consultation with the supervisor and co-advisor (if applicable) during the first 5 months of the project. Within the first 5 months, it should be submitted to the doctoral advisory committee, which reviews it and discusses it in a research plan presentation (see 1.3). The final research plan should be submitted to the D-USYS "Sekretariat"⁷ within the first year of the PhD project.

1.5 Extension of deadlines

In justified cases, the deadlines for research plan submission and presentation (sections 1.3 and 1.4) may be extended by the PhD supervisor upon request by the PhD student. Possible reasons include sick leaves, pregnancy, military leaves, or preparation of qualification exams. Extensions given for qualification exams should not exceed 6 months. The formation of the Doctoral Advisory Committee and the annual Progress Reviews should not be delayed.

1.6 Duration of PhD project

The funding of the PhD project is generally planned for three to four years, depending on the project. The funding of a PhD student beyond this period may be extended by the supervisor upon mutual agreement, but it is generally not guaranteed and may depend on availability of funding. This should be communicated clearly to the PhD student before the project starts.

1.7 PhD defense

The defense process follows the guidelines as given in by the Department⁸ and by ETH⁹. The members of the doctoral advisory committee are usually also members of the **"Examination Committee"**. At least one member of the examination committee must be an external expert who was not involved in the project as collaborator or co-author.

1.8 Salary and working time

The salary and working times of PhD students follow standard regulations at ETH or Eawag, depending on the employment contract.

1.9 Course work

At least 12 credit points must be obtained during the PhD in accordance with the regulations of the ETH and D-USYS. The PhD student should discuss the planned courses and credits to be earned with the supervisor.

⁶ [SR 414.133.1 Art. 11](#)

⁷ [Title Page Research Plan](#)

⁸ [USYS Guidelines](#)

⁹ [SR 414.133.1 Art. 26 - 33](#)

1.10 IBP events

The PhD students are expected to participate in the annual IBP PhD Congress (mandatory) and IBP Seminar (strongly recommended) in order to extend and deepen their knowledge in biogeochemistry and pollutant dynamics.

1.11 Contribution to teaching and other duties

PhD students are expected to contribute to teaching and/or other tasks in their research groups, in mutual agreement with the supervisor. Teaching may include e.g. contributions to laboratory or field courses, co-advising BSc and MSc theses, and tutoring of students in the IBP Term Paper cycle or in the BSc Seminar in Biogeochemistry.

1.12 Vacations

The vacations of the PhD students are to be chosen such that they do not conflict with teaching and research duties, and they should be discussed with the supervisor. In exceptional circumstances the PhD students can be granted an unpaid leave of absence.

1.13 Organization

- a. The institute is responsible for a database documenting the names and dates (entry, interviews) of the PhD students and their doctoral advisory committees. The supervisor ensures that new PhD students and the names of doctoral advisory committee members are entered.
- b. The PhD students organize the research plan presentation, annual progress reviews (date/time, room, and announcement), as well as the thesis defense.

1.14 Research integrity and good scientific practice

The PhD students and supervisors are responsible for working along the ETH guidelines for research integrity and good scientific practice^{10, 11}. This includes issues of plagiarism, the proper treatment of scientific data and principles of publications.

1.15 Conflicts

In case of unresolvable conflicts, the PhD student and supervisor may, at any time, request a discussion with the Institute Head of IBP. Alternatively, they may also directly contact the D-USYS Department Head or the Ombudsstelle of their institution of employment (e.g., ETH, Eawag) to seek advice or mediation.

1.16 Coming to force

These PhD regulations become effective at 1.1.2017 for all PhD students starting after that date. PhD students who started before this date are recommended to follow these regulations in agreement with their supervisor.

¹⁰ <https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/research/pdf/forschungsethik/Broschure.pdf>

¹¹ <https://rechtssammlung.sp.ethz.ch/Dokumente/133.pdf>