



Ordinance on the Conferral of a Doctorate of Jurisprudence (Dr. iur.) at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich (Doctoral Ordinance)

dated 25 May 2009¹

LS 415.413

Consolidated English translation (status as of 1 August 2026)

English is not an official language of the Canton of Zurich. This translation is provided by the University of Zurich for information purposes only and has no legal force.

Contents

Part 1: General Provisions	1
Section 1: Basic Principles.....	1
Section 2: Types, Structure, and Objectives of the Doctorate	1
Section 3: Organization and Implementation	2
Part 2: Admission to the Doctorate	3
Section 1: Admission to the General Doctorate.....	3
Section 2: Admission to the Doctoral Programs.....	4
Section 3: Conditions and Additional Requirements ⁷	4
Part 4: Curriculum of the Doctoral Programs	6
Section 1: Modules	6
Section 2: Assessments	7
Part 5: Academic Misconduct ⁷	8
Part 6: Completion of the Doctorate ⁶	8
Part 7: Legal Protection ⁷	11
Part 8: Honorary Doctorate ⁷	12
Part 9: Transitional and Final Provisions ⁶	12
Transitional provision for the amendment dated 5 May 2026 (OS 81, 332) ⁶	13
Footnotes.....	13

The Board of the University has resolved:

Part 1: General Provisions

Section 1: Basic Principles

§ 1. Scope of application

¹ The ordinance for obtaining a Doctoral degree governs the doctorate of the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich.

² Special regulations resulting from agreements with other faculties remain reserved.

§ 2. Supplementary provisions⁷

¹ The more detailed structure of the doctorate is specified in the Doctoral Regulation issued for this purpose.

² The Framework Ordinance on the Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich (RVO RWF)³ and the Program Regulation for the Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs, the Minor Study Programs, and the Special Programs at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich (StudO RWF) apply analogously to questions that are not covered in this ordinance for obtaining a Doctoral degree or in the Doctoral Regulation.

³ The Faculty Council decides on questions that are not covered there either.

§ 3. Information obligation⁷

¹ All information relevant to the course of study is made known in an appropriate manner and is binding.

² Prospective students and PhD candidates are obliged to inform themselves independently about all relevant matters, applicable enactments, and deadlines.

Section 2: Types, Structure, and Objectives of the Doctorate

§ 4. Types of doctorate

¹ The Faculty of Law offers the general doctorate and doctoral programs.

² The doctoral programs are divided into:

- a. the Doctoral Program of the Faculty of Law, and
- b. the cross-faculty doctoral programs.

§ 5. Structure of the doctorate⁷

¹ The general doctorate comprises:

- a. writing a dissertation in accordance with § 17b,
- b. attending at least two colloquia in accordance with § 24 worth at least 12 ECTS credits,
- c. the defense.

² The doctoral programs comprise:

- a. writing a dissertation in accordance with § 17b,
- b. colloquia and additional modules in accordance with §§ 24 and 25 worth at least 30 ECTS credits,
- c. the defense.

³ The Doctoral Regulation may include additional requirements for the cross-faculty doctoral programs.

§ 6. Objectives of the doctorate⁷

¹ The objective of the doctorate is to equip candidates to conduct independent academic research.

² The Doctoral Program of the Faculty of Law also aims to impart the skills needed for employment in research and teaching. In doing so, teaching skills are to be imparted and encouraged in view of a possible academic career.

³ The further objectives of the cross-faculty doctoral programs are specified in the Doctoral Regulation.

Section 3: Organization and Implementation

§ 7. General doctorate

The general doctorate is organized and implemented by the governing bodies of the Faculty.

§ 8. Doctoral Program of the Faculty of Law

¹ The Doctoral Program of the Faculty of Law is organized and implemented by the governing bodies of the Faculty.

² The Faculty Council appoints an Admissions Committee for the selection process.

³ A Doctoral Committee is to be appointed for each PhD candidate in accordance with the provisions of the Doctoral Regulation to ensure that the PhD candidate receives appropriate supervision. The Doctoral Committee comprises at least the primary supervisor and the secondary supervisor.⁷

§ 9. Cross-faculty doctoral programs⁷

¹ The faculties involved in a cross-faculty doctoral program establish a joint governing body, of which at least one person from each of the faculties involved is a member, and which will guarantee contact between the faculties involved.

² Additional governing bodies may be created, in particular:

- a. a faculty Doctoral Program Committee and a coordination office responsible for planning, implementing, and coordinating the doctoral program,
- b. a Doctoral Committee whose tasks are specified in the Doctoral Regulation.

³ The more detailed structure of the organization and the doctoral program, as well as the assessments to be made, is specified in the Doctoral Regulation.

Part 2: Admission to the Doctorate

Section 1: Admission to the General Doctorate

§ 10. Graduates of the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich

¹ Candidates who have obtained a Master of Law degree or a licentiate degree in law from the University of Zurich with the distinction *summa cum laude* or *magna cum laude* are entitled to admission.

² Candidates who have not achieved the distinction specified in paragraph 1 will be admitted to the doctorate if a primary supervisor and a secondary supervisor have indicated willingness to assume supervision.⁷

§ 11. Graduates of other Swiss universities⁷

Candidates who have obtained a Master of Law degree or a licentiate degree in law from another Swiss university are admitted if a primary supervisor and a secondary supervisor have indicated willingness to assume supervision.

§ 12. Graduates of foreign faculties of law⁷

¹ Graduates who have obtained a Master of Law degree or an equivalent degree from a state-accredited foreign university are admitted if a primary supervisor and a secondary supervisor have indicated willingness to assume supervision.

² Repealed.⁸

³ The Faculty Assembly decides on admission. It may delegate this authority.

§ 13. Admission for candidates with degrees in another field of study⁷

¹ Admission of graduates with a recognized university Master's degree in another field of study or an equivalent degree from a state-accredited university is possible in individual cases. §§ 10-12 apply analogously. There is no legal entitlement to admission.

² Repealed.⁸

³ The Faculty Assembly decides on admission. It may delegate this authority.

⁴ Continuing education qualifications at the Master of Advanced Studies level and equivalent programs of study do not entitle candidates to admission to the doctorate. However, they may be taken into consideration in the decision on admission if the continuing education was successfully completed in the field of law.

§ 14. Refusal of admission⁷

Candidates who have been definitively excluded from a doctorate at the Faculty of Law of the University of Zurich or at another faculty of law will not be admitted to the doctorate, subject to § 32 paragraph 3.

§ 15. Application⁷

The application is governed by the Ordinance on Admission to Studies at the University of Zurich².

Section 2: Admission to the Doctoral Programs

§ 16. Admission

¹ The provisions for admission to the general doctorate apply analogously. However, there is no general entitlement to be admitted to a program.

² Additional admission requirements may be provided for in the Doctoral Regulation.⁷

§ 17. Application⁷

¹ The application is governed by the Ordinance on Admission to Studies at the University of Zurich and requires evidence of admission to a doctoral program.

² The selection process is governed by the Doctoral Regulation.

Section 3: Conditions and Additional Requirements⁷

§ 17a. Conditions and additional requirements⁶

Admission may be made subject to conditions or additional requirements.

§ 17b. Dissertation work⁶

The dissertation is an independent academic research achievement that demonstrates in-depth subject knowledge and methodological competence.

§ 18. Form of the dissertation⁷

¹ The dissertation must be drafted in the form of a monograph or a cumulative dissertation. Commentaries are not recognized as a dissertation.

^{1bis} A switch from a monograph to a cumulative dissertation or vice versa requires the Doctoral agreement to be adjusted. The requirements under §§ 18a and 22a remain unaffected. Multiple switches are not permitted.

² In justified cases, a monograph that has already been published may also be accepted as a dissertation; this does not apply to work that has already been submitted to another Swiss or foreign university for the purpose of obtaining an academic degree.

^{2bis} A Master's thesis may form the basis for a dissertation. The details are governed by the Doctoral Regulation.

§ 18a. Cumulative dissertation⁶

¹ The cumulative dissertation must have an overarching research topic and establish an internal relationship among the papers.

² It consists of at least four papers that must have been published, or at least accepted for publication, in reputable national or international academic journals or comparable publication outlets.

³ A separate concluding document must, in particular, place the findings of the individual papers within the overarching research topic, establish the internal relationship among the papers, highlight their theoretical and practical relevance, and make clear their position within the field.

⁴ The majority of the papers must be written during the doctoral studies and constitute the main part of the dissertation.

⁵ At least two papers must be written under sole authorship and constitute the main part of the dissertation. Co-authorship is permitted for the remaining papers, provided that the PhD candidate's contribution is material.

⁶ If at least one intended publication outlet does not provide for sole authorship, at least three papers in total must each be written under sole authorship or lead authorship. Co-authorship is otherwise permitted, provided that the PhD candidate's contribution is material. If two papers are written under sole authorship, paragraph 5 applies.

⁷ Lead authorship and co-authorship, as well as the PhD candidate's own contribution, must be identifiable and verifiable. If this is not directly apparent from the individual papers, evidence must be provided in the document under paragraph 3.

⁸ The details are governed by the Doctoral Regulation. It may lay down further requirements, in particular regarding the minimum length of the individual parts of the dissertation, additional validation methods for the papers, and time restrictions.

§ 19. Language of the dissertation⁷

The dissertation must be written in German. The doctoral agreement may provide for the dissertation to be written in French, Italian, or English. The Faculty Assembly may authorize the dissertation to be written in another language.

§ 20. Repealed⁸

§ 21. Supervision of the PhD candidates⁷

¹ The principle of dual supervision applies.

² Professors, emeritus professors, and privatdozenten of the Faculty of Law are authorized to act as primary supervisors of PhD candidates.

³ Professors, emeritus professors, and privatdozenten of other faculties or higher education institutions may also act as secondary supervisors.

⁴ The Doctoral Regulation may provide for exceptions to paragraph 3 for the doctoral programs.

⁵ If the primary supervisor is a privatdozent, the secondary supervisor must be a member of the Faculty of Law.

⁶ The Doctoral Regulation may provide for additional supervisors in the doctoral programs.

§ 22. Doctoral agreement⁷

¹ The supervisors or the Doctoral Committee and the PhD candidate reach agreement in writing, as a tool to aid and guide them, on the objectives, process, time frame, type and scope of supervision, and the other parameters of the doctorate.

² The Doctoral agreement also records the choice of modules, the requirements for the assessments to be made, and the number of ECTS credits awarded for them.

^{2bis} For a cumulative dissertation, the research plan forms part of the Doctoral agreement.

³ The Doctoral agreement may be adjusted to changes in circumstances.

§ 22a. Research plan for a cumulative dissertation⁸

¹ The research plan describes the overarching research topic, the research objective, the research questions, and the research methods.

² It sets out the planned number and type of papers, the intended publication outlets and types, and the internal relationship among the papers.

Part 4: Curriculum of the Doctoral Programs

Section 1: Modules

§ 23. Structure

The doctoral programs are modular in structure and comprise:

- a. modules in the form of colloquia,
- b. additional modules.

§ 24. Colloquia⁷

¹ The colloquia serve to deepen and broaden methodological skills in legal scholarship or to facilitate scholarly engagement with the dissertation. With the consent of the primary supervisor, other academic achievements may also be recognized as a colloquium.

^{1bis} The Faculty ensures that PhD candidates can attend a colloquium on deepening and broadening methodological skills in legal scholarship at least once a year.

² Each subject group guarantees that PhD candidates supervised by one of its members, or by a person assigned to its subject area, can attend a colloquium for scholarly engagement with their dissertation at least once a year. Colloquia may be conducted jointly by several members of the subject group or by one member alone.

³ The cross-faculty doctoral programs may include their own colloquia.

§ 25. Additional modules

In particular, the additional modules consist of courses, conferences, lectures, workshops, summer schools, mentoring programs, teaching activities, internships, and academic continuing education courses.

Section 2: Assessments

§ 26. Types of assessment

¹ An assessment must be completed for each module.

² In particular, an assessment consists of an oral or written examination, a written paper, an academic publication, a presentation, report, or transcript, provided it is an active and verifiable contribution.

³ An assessment may exceptionally be completed jointly if it is objectively necessary and the contribution of each individual PhD candidate is clearly discernible.

§ 27. Evaluation of the assessments⁷

¹ Passed assessments are evaluated as a "pass" and failed assessments as a "fail".

² The ECTS credits envisaged in the Doctoral Regulation are awarded for passed assessments.

³ Unless agreed otherwise, the person responsible for the module is responsible for evaluating the assessments; in exceptional circumstances, the primary supervisor is responsible.

§ 28. Rules on repeating assessments⁷

Any rules on repeating assessments are included in the Doctoral Regulation.

§ 29. Recognition and transfer of credit⁷

The recognition and transfer of credit for academic achievement and ECTS credits are governed by the Doctoral Regulation.

Part 5: Academic Misconduct⁷

§ 30. Academic misconduct⁷

¹ By submitting the dissertation, the PhD candidate confirms that the work was prepared independently and in accordance with the Ordinance on the Handling of Academic Misconduct at the University of Zurich (Integrity Ordinance).

² The corresponding provisions of the RVO RWF apply analogously to academic misconduct in the completion of assessments.

Part 6: Completion of the Doctorate⁶

§ 31. Application for conferral of a doctorate⁷

¹ Submission of the application for conferral of a Doctoral degree presupposes matriculation in the relevant semester.

² If all conditions specified in this Ordinance for obtaining a Doctoral degree and in the Doctoral Regulation are met, the application for conferral of a Doctoral degree may be submitted. The documents to be submitted are specified in the Doctoral Regulation.

³ The dissertation is to be handed to the primary supervisor at the same time.

⁴ The Faculty makes the dissertation available without delay, in an appropriate manner, for inspection by all members of the Faculty Assembly entitled to vote on the decision under § 32.

§ 31a. Reviews⁶

¹ A first and a second review are prepared.

² The primary supervisor prepares the first review.

³ At the suggestion of the PhD candidate and the primary supervisor, the Faculty Council appoints the second reviewer:

a. As a general rule, the secondary supervisor is appointed as the second reviewer.

b. If this is not possible, a person from within the Faculty is appointed. In special cases, persons from outside the Faculty may also be brought in.

⁴ The Faculty Council may delegate the authority referred to in paragraph 3 to the Office of the Vice Dean of Studies.

⁵ Any peer review and any further validation procedures under § 18a paragraph 8 are not binding on the reviewers.

⁶ As a rule, the reviews are prepared within six months of submission of the application for conferral of a doctorate.

⁷ The Faculty makes the reviews available without delay, in an appropriate manner, for inspection by all members of the Faculty Assembly entitled to vote on the decision under § 32.

§ 31b. Defense⁶

¹ Positive first and second reviews are a prerequisite for the defense.

² The defense is public. It is scheduled promptly after completion of the reviews and may be held online if necessary.

³ The PhD candidate presents the results of the dissertation for 20 minutes and defends them in the academic discussion that follows. In doing so, the PhD candidate must demonstrate in-depth knowledge in the field of the dissertation.

⁴ Following the defense, the defense committee evaluates it as a "pass" or a "fail".

§ 31c. Repetition⁶

¹ A failed defense may be repeated once.

² The repeated defense is recorded in minutes and supplemented by an audio recording.

§ 31d. Defense committee⁶

¹ The defense committee consists of the first reviewer, the second reviewer, and a member of the Faculty Committee who is appointed by the Faculty Council to chair the defense committee. For objective reasons, the Faculty Council may appoint no more than two additional members with a qualification under § 21 paragraphs 2 and 3.

² In the cross-faculty doctoral programs, another member of the Doctoral Program Committee is appointed to chair the defense committee instead of the member of the Faculty Committee.

³ The chair of the defense committee directs the defense.

⁴ The Faculty Council appoints substitute members in the event that a member is unavailable. For objective reasons, it may also appoint Faculty members who do not belong to the Faculty Committee as members of the defense committee.

§ 31e. General rule: decision of the defense committee⁶

¹ On the basis of the reviews and the defense, the defense committee decides whether the defense has been passed or failed, whether the dissertation is accepted, and which distinction is awarded.

² It announces the decision orally immediately following the defense.

§ 31f. Exception: decision by the Faculty Assembly upon application by the defense committee⁶

¹ The Faculty Assembly decides on acceptance of the dissertation and the distinction in the following cases:

a. if a member of the Faculty Assembly entitled to vote on the decision under § 32 or a member of the defense committee so requests. The request need not state reasons. It must be addressed to the defense committee and may be made at any time until the decision is announced (§ 31f paragraph 2),

b. if the defense committee wishes to depart from the distinction proposed in the reviews,

- c. if the reviews propose different distinctions,
- d. if the two reviews are not both positive within the meaning of § 31b paragraph 1,
- e. if the defense is evaluated as a "fail" for the second time.

² In the cases under paragraph 1 letters a-c, the defense committee prepares a proposed distinction on the basis of the reviews and the defense and submits an application for acceptance of the dissertation to the next possible meeting of the Faculty Assembly.

³ In the cases under paragraph 1 letters d and e, the defense committee submits an application to the Faculty Assembly for non-acceptance of the dissertation and definitive exclusion.

§ 32. Decision of the Faculty Assembly⁷

¹ A passed defense is a prerequisite for acceptance by the Faculty Assembly.

² Non-acceptance of the dissertation results in definitive exclusion by the Faculty Assembly.

³ Definitive exclusion does not impose a bar to admission; a new doctorate on a new topic may be commenced if a primary supervisor and a secondary supervisor have indicated willingness to assume supervision and the other admission requirements are met.

§ 33. Distinctions⁵

Dissertations are evaluated as follows:

- a. summa cum laude,
- b. magna cum laude,
- c. cum laude,
- d. rite.

§ 34. Deposit copies⁷

¹ The deposit copies must be delivered to the Zentralbibliothek Zürich and the University Library (UB Law) Zurich within two years of the dissertation being accepted.

² The Dean's Office may extend this deadline upon a justified request. If the deadline is breached again, approval to deliver the deposit copies must be obtained from the Dean's Office, which may be made dependent on the dissertation being updated. In justified cases, the Faculty Assembly may order definitive exclusion.

³ The Doctoral Regulation governs the number of deposit copies to be delivered, a possible Internet publication, and the arrangements for publication and delivery. In particular, it specifies the form in which the documents forming part of a cumulative dissertation are to be delivered as deposit copies.

⁴ The dissertation must be published with the content approved by the Faculty. If updates or additions to the text prove necessary after the dissertation has been accepted by the Faculty Assembly, they must be submitted to the primary supervisor for approval.

§ 35. Title of doctor (PhD)

¹ The Faculty of Law awards the academic degree of a doctor of law once the dissertation has been accepted. The title is abbreviated to "Dr. iur."

² The English translation "PhD" equates to the title "Dr. iur."

³ The title is conferred upon delivery of the signed PhD certificate. Use of the title is prohibited before the PhD certificate is delivered.⁷

⁴ The PhD certificate is delivered only once the prescribed number of deposit copies has been delivered.

§ 36. PhD certificate⁷

¹ The PhD certificate contains the title and the distinction awarded for the dissertation, as well as the date of the defense. It also bears the signatures of the Dean and the President of the University and the Seal of the University.

² The PhD certificate is provided in German. An English translation is issued.

§ 37. Diploma Supplement and Academic Record⁷

¹ For each PhD certificate, a Diploma Supplement with information about the course of study and an Academic Record (degree transcript) are issued in German and English.

² The Academic Record contains the list of all modules successfully completed in the relevant course of study and the number of ECTS credits. Assessments that were not completed at the University of Zurich are marked accordingly.

§ 38. Withdrawal of the title of doctor (PhD)

If it emerges after the academic degree has been awarded that

a. admission to the doctorate was obtained by fraud, or

b. academic misconduct within the meaning of § 30 took place,⁷

the degree will be revoked by the Faculty Assembly and any certificates will be collected.

Part 7: Legal Protection⁷

§ 39. Inspection of records⁷

Following acceptance or non-acceptance of the dissertation, candidates are entitled to inspect the records.

§ 40. Legal protection⁷

¹ Transcripts of Records pursuant to § 26 paragraph 1 are subject, with respect to achievements newly recorded for the most recent semester, to appeal to the Faculty Council. The appeal must be submitted to the Faculty Council in writing and with reasons within 30 days of receipt of the Transcript of Records. The decision on the appeal is subject to further appeal.

² The other rulings under this Ordinance for obtaining a Doctoral degree are subject to appeal.

³ The Appeals Commission of the Higher Education Institutions of the Canton of Zurich has jurisdiction over appeals.

Part 8: Honorary Doctorate⁷

§ 41. Reason

The Faculty Assembly may award a doctorate on an honorary basis for outstanding achievements related to law or jurisprudence. The title is abbreviated to "Dr. h. c.".

§ 42. Procedure

¹ The procedure is initiated by submitting an application for an honorary doctorate.

² The application must be submitted and justified in writing to the Dean's Office by a Faculty member or a subject group.

³ The Faculty Assembly decides on the application by secret ballot. If more than one fifth of the Faculty members present vote against the honorary doctorate, the application is rejected.

Part 9: Transitional and Final Provisions⁶

§ 42a. Evaluation⁶

For quality assurance purposes, an evaluation is conducted every five years, and no later than five years after the introduction of the cumulative dissertation.

§ 43. Entry into force

¹ This Ordinance for obtaining a Doctoral degree is effective as of the beginning of the fall semester 2009 (1 August 2009).

² The Faculty of Law's regulations for obtaining the Doctoral degree dated 30 August 1994 were revoked on the same date.

§ 44. Further study under the old regulations

PhD candidates who started their doctorate under the regulations for obtaining the Doctoral degree dated 30 August 1994 may earn a Doctoral degree in accordance with the old regulations until the end of the spring semester 2015.

§ 45. Switch to the new regulations

¹ Those who started the doctorate under the regulations for obtaining the Doctoral degree dated 30 August 1994 may transfer to the doctorate under the new regulations from the fall semester 2009, provided any additional requirements and conditions are met.

² Candidates may not switch back to the old regulations.

§ 46. Degree under the old regulations⁴

The English translation "PhD" equates to the title "Dr. iur." acquired in accordance with the regulations for obtaining the Doctoral degree dated 30 August 1994.

Transitional provision for the amendment dated 5 May 2026 (OS 81, 332)⁵

§ 47. Entry into force⁶

¹ PhD candidates who began the doctorate before the amendment entered into force complete the doctorate under the previous provisions.

² A switch to a cumulative dissertation under § 18 paragraph 1bis is possible. Following the switch, the new provisions apply.

Footnotes

¹ [OS 64, 313](#).

² [LS 415.31](#).

³ [LS 415.415.1](#).

⁴ Added by decision of the Board of the University dated 1 December 2009 ([OS 64, 728](#)). Effective since 1 January 2010.

⁵ Version pursuant to the decision of the Board of the University dated 11 December 2017 ([OS 73, 111](#); [ABI 2017-12-22](#)). Effective since 1 March 2018.

⁶ Added by decision of the Board of the University dated 5 May 2026 ([OS 81, 332](#); [ABI 2026-05-15](#)). Effective since 1 August 2026.

⁷ Version pursuant to the decision of the Board of the University dated 5 May 2026 ([OS 81, 332](#); [ABI 2026-05-15](#)). Effective since 1 August 2026.

⁸ Repealed by decision of the Board of the University dated 5 May 2026 ([OS 81, 332](#); [ABI 2026-05-15](#)). Effective since 1 August 2026.