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**Regulations of the Graduate School  
of the Department of Biology of the Mathematical-  
Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University of Cologne  
from 21.09.2020**

On the basis of §§ 2 para. 4, 26 para. 3 of the law on the Universities of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz - HG) in the version of the Hochschulzukunftsgesetz of 16.09.2014 (GV. NRW. S. 547), last amended by Article 10 of the law on the Consistent and Solidary Management of the COVID-19 Pandemic in North Rhine-Westphalia and on the Adjustment of State Law with regard to the Effects of a Pandemic of 14. April 2020 (GV. NRW. p. 218b), the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne establishes a Graduate School in Biology according to § 3 para. 1 of its doctoral regulations of 12.03.2020 (AM 8/2020), gives it the name "Graduate School for Biological Sciences" (GSfBS) and issues the following regulations:

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## §1

### Legal status and tasks

(1)<sup>1</sup> As a graduate school for biology, the GSfBS is a scientific institution of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne (hereinafter: MNF) under the Department of Biology.

(2)<sup>1</sup>The GSfBS adopts the tasks of the Graduate School at MNF in accordance with § 3 paragraph 2 of the MNF doctoral regulations for doctoral students in the doctoral subjects assigned to the Department of Biology.

(3)<sup>1</sup>The GSfBS promotes a structured, research-based doctorate and supports scientific exchange within the department and across departmental boundaries. <sup>2</sup>In addition, it serves to ensure the quality of the doctorate, among other things by means of a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) in accordance with § 12 (3), and to further the professional and interdisciplinary qualification of doctoral students.

## § 2

### Membership

(1)<sup>1</sup> Members of the GSfBS are:

(a) the advisors of the doctoral students of the doctoral subjects of biology, as far as they are members of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne,

(b) the doctoral candidates in the doctoral subjects assigned to the Department of Biology of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne who have been admitted as doctoral candidates in accordance with § 5 (7) of the doctoral regulations and who are supervised at the GSfBS,

(c) the academic staff members who are mentors within the meaning of §12 (3) of these regulations, provided they are also members of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne.

(2)<sup>1</sup>Further members may be admitted to the GSfBS upon application. This applies in particular to students with the intention of obtaining a doctorate, professors and other persons to whom the Faculty has granted the right to supervise doctoral studies in accordance with the doctoral regulations and who supervise the doctoral students of the Department in accordance with § 1 letter b. <sup>2</sup> The steering committee examines whether the requirements are met and decides on admission.

(3)<sup>1</sup> Membership of the GSfBS ends:

(a) by written or electronic notice of resignation to the steering committee,

(b) for doctoral candidates who have completed their doctorate.

(c) <sup>2</sup>Membership for further members according to § 2 ends 5 years after acceptance as a member and can be extended upon request.

(4) <sup>1</sup>When a supervisor changes to another university or is retired, the membership of this supervisor shall continue to exist on his or her application to the GSfBS until the conclusion

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of all doctoral procedures supervised by him or her at the University of Cologne.<sup>2</sup> The Steering Committee decides on exceptions.

### **§ 3**

#### **Rights and duties of members**

(1) <sup>1</sup>All members undertake to actively participate in the realization of the objectives and tasks of the GSfBS pursuant to § 1 (3). <sup>2</sup>For the supervisors, this means in particular participation in and co-responsibility for the qualification programme of the graduate school; for the doctoral candidates, this means in particular participation in the GSfBS qualification programme. <sup>3</sup>All members are also required to enable an appropriately timely doctoral procedure.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The members of the GSfBS may at any time submit proposals to the Steering Committee for activities to be carried out within the GSfBS and supported by the GSfBS.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The members are obliged to adhere to the rules of good scientific practice in accordance with the University of Cologne's Regulations for the Safeguarding of Good Scientific Practice and for dealing with scientific misconduct.

(4) <sup>1</sup>All members of the GSfBS have the right to elect the representatives of their groups for the Steering Committee and otherwise have equal voting rights in the General Assembly.

### **§ 4**

#### **Duties of doctoral students**

(1) <sup>1</sup>PhD students must register in writing or electronically with the coordinator of the graduate school in accordance with § 5 Para. 3 Letter f Doctoral Regulations before they begin their membership. <sup>2</sup>This should be done at the beginning of the examination procedure.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral candidates are obliged to propose a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) to the GSfBS within 3 months in accordance with § 12 (2). <sup>2</sup>It is also one of the duties to regularly communicate plans, progress and any problems to the members of the TAC in accordance with the schedule set out below. <sup>3</sup>The organization of necessary TAC meetings, which can also be held in digital form, is also one of the duties of the doctoral students.

(3) <sup>1</sup>Intermediately within the first five months after registration at the GSfBS in accordance with §13 paragraph 1, the doctoral candidate must submit a brief written research proposal to the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) in accordance with §12 paragraph 2. <sup>2</sup>After submission of the research plan, the doctoral candidate must submit an oral report to all members of the TAC within four weeks <sup>3</sup>followed by a consultation meeting to provide support for further project development. <sup>4</sup>In addition to experimental strategies, recommendations for further training should also be discussed. <sup>5</sup> The recommendations made during the consultation must be recorded and signed by all those involved. <sup>6</sup> The corresponding protocol (Feedback Form) must be submitted to the coordinator in accordance with § 9.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The doctoral candidates must submit a first progress report to the TAC within 17 months and a second progress report within 29 months on the progress of their work followed by a

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consultation meeting, which is intended to provide support for the further development of the project. <sup>2</sup> In addition to experimental strategies and any problems that arise, the plans regarding the completion of the doctorate and its time perspective and the publication of the results should also be discussed. <sup>3</sup>The signed protocols (Feedback Forms) of the annual talks should be submitted to the coordinator.

(5) <sup>1</sup>If the doctorate cannot be completed within 3.5 years, further progress reports (3rd, 4th, etc. progress reports) and TAC meetings should be held at 6-month intervals (after 41, 47, etc. months). <sup>2</sup>Deviations from these intervals can be decided by the TAC, which must be communicated to the coordinator. <sup>3</sup>This can also be recorded in the feedback form.

(6) <sup>1</sup>If a doctorate is not to be completed after 54 months, separate consultations will be held with the doctoral candidate and the supervisor by a member of the Steering Committee or by a member of the GSfBS appointed by the coordinator from the group of supervisors. <sup>2</sup>The doctoral candidates are obliged to prepare all necessary consultations of the TAC by means of the relevant reports and presentations.

(7) <sup>1</sup>PhD students are obliged to participate in a continuing education event on good scientific practice.

(8) <sup>1</sup>PhD students are to participate in scientific lectures and further training in the field of "key qualifications". <sup>2</sup>This may include, in particular, scientific writing and presentation, statistics and data analysis, courses in university didactics, management skills, start-up & self-employment, and language courses.

(9) <sup>1</sup>PhD students are required to participate in the business processes and procedures used at the University of Cologne. <sup>2</sup>Status reports and TAC meeting minutes are to be uploaded to the electronic doctoral student file in accordance with § 19 of the doctoral regulations and the coordinator is to be informed accordingly.

## **§ 5**

### **Governing Bodies**

<sup>1</sup>The GSfBS has the following bodies:

1. General assembly (§ 6),
2. steering committee (§ 7, 8),
3. speaker (spokesperson) (§ 9),
4. coordinator (coordinator) (§ 10).

## **§ 6**

### **General assembly**

(1) <sup>1</sup>The general assembly serves in particular to provide regular information to all members of the Graduate School. <sup>2</sup> The spokesperson shall chair and conduct the assemblies. <sup>3</sup> The general assembly elects the members of the steering committee from among its members, separated into groups.

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(2) <sup>1</sup>The general assembly is usually held once a year. <sup>2</sup> It shall be convened by the spokesperson on a notice board with a minimum notice period of 14 days; the agenda shall be posted at least 7 days before the meeting.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The General Assembly must be convened within six weeks at the request of at least half of the GSfBS members with voting rights. <sup>2</sup> The request to be addressed to the spokesperson must contain a proposal for an agenda.

(4) <sup>1</sup>The general assembly may submit motions to the steering committee for the further development of the qualification program in accordance with § 12. <sup>2</sup> It may make recommendations and submit statements to the departmental committee on fundamental matters of the GSfBS, including the dissolution of the GSfBS.

(5) <sup>1</sup>The general assembly may establish committees.

(6) <sup>1</sup>The general assembly of the GSfBS has a quorum if half of all members entitled to vote are present after proper summons. <sup>2</sup>The transfer of voting rights is not permitted. <sup>3</sup>The general assembly of members is deemed to have a quorum unless its absence has been established at the request of a member present. <sup>4</sup>The request must be made at the latest before the start of a vote. <sup>5</sup>If a quorum cannot be established upon request, a quorum shall exist at the next meeting to be convened, regardless of the number of members present, if the invitation specifically refers to this case.

## § 7

### Steering Committee

(1) <sup>1</sup>The steering committee of the GSfBS consists of

(a) six members from the group of professors in accordance with § 2 (1) (a), representing the various subjects or institutions assigned to the department;

(b) one representative from the group of students who are members of the GSfBS pursuant to § 2 (1) (b);

(c) three representatives from the group of academic staff pursuant to § 2 (1) (b) and (c), including one mentor and two representatives from the group of doctoral candidates.

(d) <sup>2</sup>The coordinator is a member in an advisory capacity.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The term of office of the members of the steering committee in accordance with (1) (a) and (c) is two years. <sup>2</sup>The term of office of the students is one year. <sup>3</sup> Re-election is possible in each case.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The steering committee manages the business of the GSfBS. <sup>2</sup>It is responsible for the use of the GSfBS's financial resources and all tasks of the GSfBS, unless otherwise provided for in these regulations. <sup>3</sup>In particular it is responsible for:

(a) the election of the spokesperson and a deputy spokesperson in accordance with § 9

(b) the appointment of a coordinator pursuant to § 10,

(c) decisions on the admission of members,

(d) the development of the qualification concept and its coordination and quality control in consultation with the Executive Board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with § 3

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paragraph 3 of the doctoral regulations, the coordination and quality control of the Master's/Doctoral Program (so-called fast track option, § 4 paragraph 2 letter c of the Doctoral Regulations)

(e) recommendations for changes to the GSfBS regulations to the Restricted Faculty of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Cologne in agreement with the Departmental Committee for Biology,

(f) the coordination of cooperation with other institutions of the University of Cologne and the integration of non-university partners,

(g) the annual status report to the general assembly and to the board of directors of MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with § 3 paragraph 3 of the doctoral regulations,

(h) the financial planning,

(i) the raising of third-party funds,

(j) public relations,

(k) the convening of unscheduled TAC meetings involving members of the steering committee, or representatives authorized by it, to address situations of conflict or difficulty,

(l) mediation in cases of conflict in accordance with § 14.

(4) <sup>1</sup> Upon application, the steering committee shall decide on the approval of scholarships for the Masters/Doctoral program.

(5) <sup>1</sup>The steering committee may set up subcommittees to revocably delegate responsibility for (c) - (l) above.

(6) <sup>1</sup>The steering committee usually meets once or twice a year. <sup>2</sup>The meeting of the steering committee shall be convened in writing or electronically by the spokesperson with at least 7 days' notice; the agenda shall be sent to all members of the steering committee at least 7 days before the meeting. <sup>3</sup> The spokesperson shall chair the meetings.

(7) <sup>1</sup>The steering committee of the GSfBS constitutes a quorum if, after due summons, half of the members entitled to vote are present or represented and the professors constitute the majority. <sup>2</sup>If a quorum cannot be reached at an invitation, a quorum shall exist at the next meeting to be convened, irrespective of the number of members present, if the invitation specifically states so.

(8) <sup>1</sup>The members of the steering committee may agree to adopt resolutions by circular letter. A circulation procedure is only permissible if discussion at a meeting is not (no longer) necessary and no steering committee member objects.

## § 8

### **Election of the members of the steering committee**

(1) <sup>1</sup>The members of the steering committee in accordance with § 7 (1) (a) - (c) and one deputy in each case shall be elected separately by groups at the general assembly and, if necessary, voted out.

(2) <sup>1</sup>If a member of the steering committee resigns before the end of his or her term of office, the deputy shall take over the office. <sup>2</sup> If the deputy also resigns, the steering committee shall

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immediately convene the general assembly to elect a successor by posting a notice on the notice board within 14 days.

(3) <sup>1</sup>De-election may take place if at least half of the members entitled to vote, vote in favour of de-election. <sup>2</sup> After de-election new members shall immediately be elected for the steering committee.

## **§ 9**

### **Speaker**

(1) <sup>1</sup>The members of the steering committee in accordance with § 7 (1) (a) elect a spokesperson and a deputy spokesperson for a period of two years. <sup>2</sup>Re-election is permitted.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The spokesperson manages the GSfBS and represents its interests within and outside the university, in particular on the executive board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with § 3 paragraph 3 of the doctoral regulations, together with the coordinator.

(3) <sup>1</sup>If the spokesperson is unable to attend, she or he shall be represented by the deputy spokesperson.

(4) <sup>1</sup>De-election may be effected by a majority vote of the steering committee. <sup>2</sup> A new spokesperson or a new deputy spokesperson shall be elected immediately upon de-election.

## **§ 10**

### **Coordinator**

(1) <sup>1</sup>The Steering Committee appoints a post-doctoral research assistant as coordinator for the GSfBS. <sup>2</sup>The coordinator is responsible for the administrative tasks of the GSfBS.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The tasks of the coordinator include in particular

(a) the provision of information and advice to members,

(b) financial management,

(c) representing the GSfBS on the board of directors of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with § 3 paragraph 3 of the doctoral regulations,

(d) the implementation of public relations activities in accordance with the decisions of the steering committee,

(e) supporting the examination of whether the requirements for acceptance into the doctoral procedure as per § 4 of the doctoral regulations have been met in consultation with the doctoral office at MNF,

(f) the coordination of the study program for doctoral students who receive conditional admission from the Faculty and certification of the academic achievements,

(g) the implementation of the qualification program in accordance with the decisions of the steering committee (§ 7 para. 3 letter d, § 12),

(h) the issue of certificates and the certificate pursuant to § 13.

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## § 11

### Principles of procedure

(1) <sup>1</sup>Resolutions of the organs of the GSfBS shall be adopted by a majority of the votes cast (simple majority). <sup>2</sup> Abstentions are considered as votes not cast. <sup>3</sup>In the event of a tie, a motion is rejected. <sup>4</sup>Voting must be secret if at least one member so requests.

(2) <sup>1</sup>Minutes of the results of meetings of the bodies of the GSfBS shall be drawn up and made available to their members at the latest with the invitation to the next meeting. <sup>2</sup>The minutes are deemed to be accepted if no objection is raised within 14 days of receipt.

(3) <sup>1</sup>Otherwise, the Rules of Procedure of the University of Cologne apply.

## § 12

### Qualification Program

(1) <sup>1</sup>The GSfBS offers a qualification program geared to its objectives defined in § 1 (3). <sup>2</sup>If the doctoral students participate in a further doctoral program, the rules of the further program shall take precedence. <sup>3</sup>Double membership is possible.

(2) <sup>1</sup>The GSfBS organizes a symposium once a year together with doctoral members as organizers, as far as circumstances permit. <sup>2</sup>All doctoral students at the GSfBS can participate in the symposium.

(3) <sup>1</sup>The supervision of doctoral students within the GSfBS is provided by an individually composed Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC). <sup>2</sup>In addition to the supervisor within the meaning of § 5 (2) of the doctoral regulations, this committee consists of two mentors who are at least holding a doctorate and who are independent of the supervisor in terms of employment law and scientific research. These mentors are determined by the doctoral candidate and the supervisor. <sup>3</sup>The mentors may also be members or affiliates of another university, college or non-university research institution in Germany or abroad, regardless of whether they hold the right to award doctorates. <sup>4</sup> The names of the respective mentors must be notified to the coordinator in accordance with § 10 by the doctoral candidates in writing after the written consent of all those involved has been obtained. <sup>5</sup>The composition of the TAC may change in the course of the project for disciplinary or non-disciplinary reasons by mutual agreement of the parties involved. <sup>6</sup> The coordinator must be informed of any changes by the doctoral candidates.

(4) <sup>1</sup>A graduate school supervision agreement shall be concluded between the doctoral student and the supervisor no later than one year after registration within the meaning of § 13 (1).



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## **§ 13**

### **Attestations and certificate**

(1) <sup>1</sup>After registration in accordance with § 4 (1), doctoral students will receive a certificate in accordance with § 5 Para. 3 letter f doctoral regulations. <sup>2</sup> The date of issue is considered the date of registration.

(2) <sup>1</sup>Before applying for admission to the doctoral examinations, the doctoral candidates will receive a certificate from the coordinator confirming their participation in compulsory and optional courses offered by the graduate school within the meaning of § 6 para. 3 letter h of the doctoral regulations.

(3) <sup>1</sup>Upon successful completion of the doctorate, doctoral candidates will receive a certificate from the GSfBS, provided that they have fulfilled the obligations set out in § 4. <sup>2</sup> The steering committee decides on exceptions. <sup>3</sup> The certificate attests to the work performed within the scope of the qualification programme.

(4) <sup>1</sup>All certificates and the certificate are issued by the coordinator.

## **§ 14**

### **Conflicts**

<sup>1</sup>Conflicts within the GSfBS should be settled amicably through the mediation of the Steering Committee. <sup>2</sup>If this does not succeed, one of the parties involved may first apply for mediation by the Executive Board of the MNF Graduate Schools in accordance with § 3 paragraph 3 of the doctoral regulations and, if necessary, subsequently by the ombudsperson in accordance with § 15 of the doctoral regulations.

## **§ 15**

### **Final clauses and entry into force**

(1) <sup>1</sup>Additions or amendments to these Regulations require the approval of the Departmental Committee for Biology at the University of Cologne.

(2) <sup>1</sup>These Regulations shall enter into force on the day following their publication in the Official Notices of the University of Cologne.

<sup>1</sup>Executed on the basis of the decision of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of July 9, 2020, and after review of its legality by the Rectorate of the University of Cologne on August 25, 2020.

Cologne, the 21.09.2020

The speaker of the Department of Biology

signed. University Professor Dr. Gunther Döhlemann

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The Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences  
the University of Cologne

signed. University Professor Dr. Paul H. M. van Loosdrecht