

Study programs

- Doctor / PhD in TCM

This document is based on the study regulations for the Bachelor's, Master's/Master's+ and Doctor/PhD degree programs in TCM.

(For the sake of simplicity, the masculine form is used throughout the text; the feminine form is always included).





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I. General provisions

§1 Aim and form

- ¹ SWISS TCM UNI offers the Dr./PhD programme at the third level of study for those interested in a doctorate who meet the admission requirements. This is a scientifically orientated path in which demanding research work in the field of basic and clinical research has to be carried out and which is completed with the title "Dr./PhD".
- ² Doctoral students at SWISS TCM UNI work at the interface between teaching and research. The core of the doctorate is the acquisition of scientific competence through a personal and original contribution to research. The acquisition of specialist, methodological and transversal knowledge and skills as well as scientific socialization and networking are central objectives of the doctorate.
- ³ Interdisciplinary work should be promoted across institutional structures within the framework of the doctorate. This applies both between several universities (inter-university) and between several areas of a university (inter-institutional). The SWISS TCM UNI is involved in corresponding programs and activities that harmonize with its own strategy and planning.
- ⁴ The independent doctorate is the classic form of doctorate and allows you to organize the time available to a high degree individually. It therefore requires a particularly high degree of independence and self-motivation.

§2 Indicative and maximum period of study and enrollment

- ¹ The duration of the doctorate is 3 to 5 years. The doctoral period may not last longer than 6 years without a valid reason and corresponding approval by the doctoral committee, whereby the start of employment as a doctoral student or the date of registration as well as the date of registration for the doctoral degree are decisive as cut-off dates.
- ² The doctoral student must be enrolled at SWISS TCM UNI without interruption during the course of the program.

§3 Subject of the doctorate

3.1 Structure of the doctoral programs

¹ The structure of the Doctor / PhD programs is described below.

Doctor (Dr.) / Philosophiae Doctor / Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)		
Course	Natural science and specialist modules ≥ 20 ECTS	
Dissertation	Independent scientific work	
Topics	Basic or/and clinical research	
Scientific activities	Scientific seminars, congresses, writing scientific reports, clinical activities	
Doctoral colloquium	Dissertation defense	

² Doctoral students must continue their education in their chosen subject area by attending compulsory and elective modules, which are specified individually in the doctoral agreement. At least 20 ECTS credits must be obtained through these modules.

³ During the entire course of study, the doctoral student must submit certificates once a year for all courses, seminars, the clinical section, scientific activities and publications completed, as well as the previous work for the dissertation. These certificates must be submitted to the doctoral committee and approved by the doctoral supervisor.



3.2 Subject of the degree program

The subject to which the dissertation belongs is considered the main subject. The following can be chosen as the main subject:

- ¹ Human science
- ² Health culture
- ³ History and literature
- ⁴ Tuina acupressure
- ⁵ Acupuncture
- ⁶ Pharmaceuticals
- ⁷ Internal medicine
- ⁸ Gynecology
- ⁹ Yangshen and rehabilitation

3.3 Choice of language for the dissertation

The dissertation languages are the national languages of Switzerland, English or Chinese (in accordance with the "Study Regulations for the Bachelor Master Master* Doctor and PhD degree programs" §1.5 Language of instruction). The language choice made at the beginning must be retained for the entire dissertation.

§4 Admission requirements

4.1 Prerequisites for admission to the degree program

Admission to the degree program requires:

- ¹ The consent of a doctoral supervisor must be obtained before starting the doctoral thesis. For this purpose, the "Doctoral agreement for the preparation of a doctoral thesis at SWISS TCM UNI" must be signed. The doctoral supervisor must either be a head of department or a professor authorized to award doctorates at SWISS TCM UNI.
- ² The student has a university Master's degree in a degree program relevant to the doctoral subject or
- ³ The student has a degree from a Swiss university or college or a foreign diploma that is equivalent to a Swiss university or college and more than 6 years of practical experience.
- ⁴ There is no entitlement to admission.
- ⁵ The university management decides on admission to the degree program on a case-by-case basis.

4.2 Documents for admission to the degree program

A complete application must include the following documents in addition to the application form:

- ¹ complete proof of previous education with the relevant documents (original or officially certified copy)
- ² a passport photo
- ³ proof of payment of the application fee
- ⁴ a current extract from the criminal record or an equivalent document
- ⁵ a medical certificate (see document "Medical certificate template")
- ⁶ A personal assessment of the current situation with regard to career-relevant skills and career motivation
- ⁷ other documents requested in individual cases.
- ⁸ Further information can be found in the admission regulations of SWISS TCM UNI, §3.2 Documents.



§5 Supervision of the dissertation

- ¹ The doctoral student works closely with the head of department and the doctoral committee, who manage, supervise and evaluate the thesis.
- ² The doctoral supervisor sits on the doctoral committee.

5.1 Requirements for the doctoral supervisor

- ¹ As a rule, the doctoral supervisor should have the right to award doctorates at SWISS TCM UNI or acquire the right to award doctorates before the doctoral candidate is admitted.
- ² The doctoral supervisor can also be from outside SWISS TCM UNI or from another university:
- ^{2.1} Active and retired professors
- ^{2.2} Private lecturers
- ³ In individual cases, academic staff can also be doctoral supervisors. If a person from this group has been accepted as a habilitation candidate or has not (yet) been accepted as a habilitation candidate, they can apply for a doctoral authorization, which is decided on an individual basis by the university management. The application for such exceptional cases must be submitted to the university management. The application must include the following information:
- 3.1 proof that the person is working full-time
- ^{3.2} a confirmation issued by the head of the relevant department that the person has been assigned the independent performance of research and teaching duties
- ^{3,3} proof that they have taught the examination subject independently for at least one year at a university
- ^{3,4} proof that they have been accepted as a habilitation candidate or
- ^{3.5} if you have not yet been accepted as a habilitation candidate, a good justification for SWISS TCM UNI's decision not to accept you as a habilitation candidate
- ^{3.6} for persons working part-time: additional separate justification of the special qualification.
- ⁴ Further information can be found in the document "Regulations on the granting and withdrawal of the right to award doctorates for professors at SWISS TCM UNI".

5.2 Supervision by the doctoral supervisor

- ¹ During the first semester, the doctoral student is assigned a doctoral supervisor for an appropriate doctoral program for the dissertation.
- ² The composition of the doctoral program must be agreed and approved between the doctoral supervisor and the doctoral student.
- ³ The doctoral candidate receives professional supervision in regular meetings. The doctoral supervisor receives regular feedback from the doctoral student on the quality and progress of the academic work.
- ⁴ If there are disagreements between the doctoral candidate and the doctoral supervisor, the doctoral committee is involved as an arbitration body.

5.3 Discussion between the doctoral candidate and the doctoral supervisor

- ¹ The doctoral student's educational and research objectives are formulated for one year at a time, discussed annually and revised. In addition, the doctoral student is entitled to regular meetings with the doctoral supervisor, in which the progress of the dissertation and any problems are discussed.
- ² In addition, the doctoral supervisor and the doctoral student meet a total of three times during the course of study. The first meeting takes place six months after the start of the program, followed by meetings every one year.



- ³ At the annual meetings with the doctoral supervisor, the following topics, among others, are discussed with the doctoral candidate:
- 3.1 Target agreements for the next assessment period
- 3.2 Course and clinical section
- 3.3 Scientific activities
- 3.4 Dissertation
- ^{3.5} Gender equality and family issues.
- ⁴ The last meeting between the doctoral candidate and the doctoral supervisor is also the final meeting before the dissertation is submitted.

§6 Doctoral agreement for the preparation of a doctoral thesis

6.1 Framework and objectives of the doctoral agreement

- ¹ The doctoral agreement sets out the framework conditions (form and duration of the doctorate, training, research and supervision objectives), eventually the clinical section and the intended academic achievements (academic activities and publications) to ensure optimal support for doctoral students. The doctoral agreement contains the necessary information that must be included in every doctoral agreement.
- ² In addition to individual supervision, formal training objectives support the professional competence as well as the research and publication work of the doctoral students. The doctoral supervisors are free to credit such educational achievements as part of the degree program at SWISS TCM UNI.
- ³ Doctoral students are expected to document the results of their dissertation project in writing on an ongoing basis with the support of their doctoral supervisor, present them at national and international specialist conferences and prepare them for publication in specialist journals or monographs. In the case of collaborations, the dissertation must be recognized as an independent scientific achievement of the doctoral student.
- ⁴ The doctoral agreement can be adapted to the academic work over time. This agreement is an aid and orientation tool that can be used to achieve the doctoral level in the best possible way.

6.2 Deadline and approval of the doctoral agreement

- ¹ The doctoral student submits a doctoral agreement, including the doctoral program, to the doctoral supervisor no later than 6 months after the start of studies. The doctoral agreement must be signed by the doctoral supervisor and submitted to the Rector of SWISS TCM UNI.
- ² If the doctoral committee deems the doctoral program mentioned in paragraph 1 to be "unsatisfactory", the doctoral candidate must revise the doctoral program within a period of 3 months and resubmit it to the doctoral committee.
- ³ Further information can be found in the template "Doctoral agreement for the preparation of a doctoral thesis".

§7 Course, clinical section, publications and scientific activity

7.1 Course and compulsory readings

- ¹ Each doctoral student works out an individual doctoral program together with the doctoral supervisor of the dissertation, which is part of the doctoral agreement. The acquisition of ECTS credits is determined by the respective course in the doctoral program (see also point 3.1 Structure of the doctoral programs).
- ² In the Dr./PhD in TCM degree programme, students must complete scientific and specialist modules amounting to at least 20 ECTS credits.



- ³ ECTS credits can be acquired through courses offered by SWISS TCM UNI as well as through external courses. If the latter is the case, this must be recorded as part of the doctoral program in a doctoral agreement, which must be approved by the doctoral committee.
- ⁴ ECTS credits that are earned alongside the doctoral program and are equivalent to it can be credited to a maximum of one third of the minimum number of credits for modules of the doctoral program if a corresponding application is submitted. Cooperation agreements with other universities may constitute exceptions to credit transfer.
- ⁵ The doctoral supervisor checks whether the credits earned are identical to the performance requirements of the doctoral program and meet all SWISS TCM UNI requirements.

7.2 Clinical section

The doctoral student must participate in clinical research work, summarize case studies and evaluate this work. This work is assessed by the doctoral supervisor.

7.3 Preparation and publication of publications

During the degree program, the doctoral student must write at least 2 papers and publish at least 1 paper to be published in a specialist journal.

7.4 Scientific activities

The doctoral student must actively participate in scientific seminars or congresses and contribute to scientific reports. Independently written scientific reports can be combined with the doctoral thesis.

II Dissertation

§8 Requirements for the dissertation

- ¹ The topic and structure of the dissertation must meet general university standards. The dissertation should make an independent, comprehensive and thorough research contribution to a topic that has not yet been worked on or a convincing correction of the results of a topic that has already been dealt with.
- ² The dissertation is a scientific research paper written by the doctoral student without any help from third parties during the course of study and demonstrates that the doctoral student can work scientifically and has sufficient knowledge in the relevant subject area.
- ³ The dissertation must clearly recognize the academic achievement, the results and the doctoral candidate's own contribution. The argumentation and methodology must be in line with the current state of research. Quotations as well as content-related references are to be identified as such with precise references.

§9 Permitted formats of the dissertation

- ¹ The dissertation consists of a monograph or a cumulative dissertation.
- ^{1.1} Monograph: The monograph consists of a general introduction and a discussion. It may include a collection of publications that have been published or accepted for publication. Co-authorships and works that have already been submitted for the acquisition of an academic degree are excluded.
- ^{1.2} Cumulative dissertation:
- a) At least two papers must be submitted as the sole, first or main author, which address an overarching issue and are internally consistent.



- b) In addition to the papers, an introduction and a concluding discussion or synopsis must be written. This must explain the scientific context and the added value of the compilation.
- c) If the cumulative dissertation contains contributions from several authors, the respective contribution to each contribution must be indicated by a declaration of independence and attached to the dissertation as a separate text
- d) The authors must confirm to the SWISS TCM UNI by means of a self-declaration that any rights to data among the authors have been clarified.
- e) The corresponding appendix explains the subject-specific requirements.
- f) If the subject-specific requirements are met, contributions that have not yet been submitted for publication may also be included in a cumulative dissertation.
- ² At least one publication must be an article with first authorship in an international scientific journal.
- ³ If a dissertation is based on a Master's thesis, both the Master's thesis and the dissertation must be submitted as independent and self-contained works. Both the Master's thesis and the dissertation must comply with all regulations.
- ⁴ Further information can be found in the document "Regulations on the forms of dissertations at SWISS TCM UNI".

§10 Condition for submitting the dissertation

- ¹ The dissertation must be started and completed at the SWISS TCM UNI.
- ² If a dissertation is started at SWISS TCM UNI but not completed there, the doctoral student can only submit the dissertation to SWISS TCM UNI if an application has been submitted to a department head at SWISS TCM UNI and the following conditions have been met:
- ^{2.1} The institution in which the doctoral student completes his/her dissertation must confirm in writing to SWISS TCM UNI that the proper completion and publication of the dissertation is guaranteed.
- ^{2.2} The institution must confirm in writing to SWISS TCM UNI that the members of the doctoral committee will be granted access to monitor the research work.
- ^{2.3} It must also be confirmed in writing that the supervisor of the dissertation is able to effectively supervise the doctoral student.

III Doctoral degree

§11 Dissertation

11.1 Submission of the dissertation

- ¹ The student must submit a written application for assessment of the dissertation to SWISS TCM UNI. The application deadlines set by SWISS TCM UNI must be adhered to. Late or incomplete applications cannot be considered.
- ² The following documents must be attached to the application for assessment of the dissertation:
- ^{2.1} the doctoral application form signed by the doctoral supervisor
- ^{2.2} the expert reports sealed in an envelope
- ^{2.3} a printout of the dissertation
- 2.4 proof of the ECTS credits earned by the doctoral student in accordance with the doctoral agreement
- ^{2.5} a written and signed declaration with the following wording: "I declare that I have written the dissertation ... only with the help indicated therein and that I have not submitted it to any other college or university." In the case of a cotutelle, the declaration reads: "I declare that I wrote the dissertation ... only with the help specified therein and



have not submitted it to any other higher education institution or university apart from the one specified in the contract."

³ Once the application for assessment of the dissertation has been submitted, the doctoral committee must send a written statement of acceptance to the SWISS TCM UNI within 2 weeks. The assessment of the dissertation can only take place once this has been submitted.

11.2 Assessment of the dissertation

- ¹ The dissertation must be accepted by the doctoral committee. Acceptance is a prerequisite for admission to the doctoral colloquium.
- ² Each member of the doctoral committee assesses and evaluates the dissertation individually with a grade in accordance with the study regulations for the Bachelor's, Master's/Master's* and Doctoral/PhD degree programs TCM, point V. Performance evaluation. Following this assessment, the dissertation is either accepted or rejected.
- ³ If the dissertation shows deficiencies that must and can be remedied, the dissertation can be returned to the doctoral candidate twice for revision together with conditions. These conditions are added to the "Dissertation report"; the supervisor checks the conditions. The dissertation will only be published once all conditions have been fulfilled.
- ⁴ If the dissertation receives an "unsatisfactory" grade from a member of the doctoral committee, the doctoral committee may request a new expert opinion in order to be able to make a final decision on the acceptance or rejection of the dissertation.
- ⁵ If the dissertation receives grades from the members of the doctoral committee that differ by a whole grade, the doctoral committee must receive a further review before a decision is made on admission to the doctoral colloquium.
- ⁶ If all members of the doctoral committee approve the dissertation, it is deemed to have been accepted.
- ⁷ A revised dissertation is treated as a first submission in the assessment.
- ⁸ If a revised dissertation is again assessed as "unsatisfactory" or "failed", this will result in de-registration from the degree program.
- ⁹ If the doctoral committee detects fraud in the dissertation (e.g. if the dissertation was written by a third party, only partial or unidentified citations, falsification of research results, etc.) or if it recognizes serious deficiencies in the execution of the research work, the dissertation will be assessed with a grade of 1 or as "failed". Diplomas or titles that have already been awarded will be withdrawn or revoked if fraud is detected at a later date.
- ¹⁰ The expert opinion is prepared by the doctoral supervisor and the chair of the doctoral committee.
- ¹¹ Should the doctoral candidate discover any discrepancies in the application, these must be reported in writing to the administration within 30 days of submitting the application.

§12 Doctoral colloquium

12.1 Implementation of the doctoral colloquium

- ¹ If the dissertation is accepted, the doctoral committee will simultaneously forward the "Admission to the doctoral colloquium" to the head of the department. The doctoral colloquium must be completed within 6 months. If this deadline cannot be met, a reasoned statement must be submitted to the doctoral committee. If the doctoral committee has valid reasons, it may make an exception in individual cases.
- ² The purpose of the doctoral colloquium is, on the one hand, to enable the doctoral candidate to verbally present and discuss scientific problems and, on the other hand, to prove that the dissertation and the scientific results discussed therein were actually developed by the doctoral candidate him/herself.



- ³ The doctoral colloquium is open to the public and lasts 45 minutes. Upon application to the doctoral committee, the public may be excluded. It consists of a questioning by the examination committee and the presentation of the dissertation by the doctoral candidate.
- ⁴ The examination committee is made up of the doctoral committee and at least one faculty member. At least 2 persons with the right to award doctorates must be present. Following the doctoral colloquium, the examination committee decides on the application for approval of the dissertation for the attention of the Faculty Assembly.
- ⁵ The presentation of the dissertation by the doctoral student comprises 3 parts:
- ^{5.1} the public presentation of the research results of the dissertation
- ^{5.2} the public discussion of the dissertation following the public presentation
- ^{5.3} the non-public discussion of the dissertation with the doctoral committee.
- ⁶ The discussions relate to the content, scientific aspects and processing of the research work as well as to teaching-related knowledge acquired during the course of study.
- ⁷ The examination record must be signed by all examiners. All improvements that need to be made to the dissertation are listed in this protocol. Improvements that are not listed in the protocol are not permitted. Once all agreed improvements to the dissertation have been made, the dissertation must be submitted to the doctoral supervisor for examination.

12.2 Assessment of the doctoral colloquium

- ¹ The doctoral colloquium is assessed with a grade and evaluated overall as "passed" or "failed".
- ² The overall rating of the dissertation is determined as follows:
- ^{2.1} the calculated average grade of the dissertation with double weighting
- ^{2.2} the grade of the doctoral colloquium.
- ³ In case of failure, the doctoral colloquium can be repeated once within 6 months.
- ⁴ Failure to pass the three repeat examinations will result in de-registration from the degree program.

IV. Promotion

§13 Provisional doctorate and vow

- ¹ After the doctoral colloquium has been passed, the chairperson of the examination shall award the provisional doctorate and administer the vow to the candidate.
- ² The doctoral formula reads: "After you have passed the doctoral colloquium with the grade ... the SWISS TCM UNI will confer on you the title of Doctor/PhD, provided that you fulfill the remaining obligations."
- ³ The vow reads: "As Deputy Rector, I ask you to promise and vow that you will always pursue academic work honestly and responsibly, that you will respect it as a serious task and that you will always act with conscientious thoroughness and impartial objectivity if your future work places you in the service of science." The candidate replies: "I promise and vow to do so."
- ⁴ The provisional doctorate only becomes a legally binding full doctorate after publication of the dissertation with any changes prescribed in the examination protocol and the issue of the doctoral certificate in accordance with §16 Doctoral certificate and title. The provisional doctorate entitles the holder to use the title "Dr./PhD designatus/designata".



§14 Return of files and submission of the confirmation of passing the doctoral colloquium

- ¹ If the doctoral candidate has successfully passed the doctoral colloquium, he/she will receive the dissertation, a copy of the provisions for printing the dissertation, a diploma supplement, a certificate and a confirmation that the doctoral colloquium has been passed, which contains the following information:
- 1.1 the title of the dissertation
- 1.2 ECTS credits earned in the degree program
- 1.3 If applicable, details of the doctoral program completed.
- ² All other documents remain with SWISS TCM UNI.

§15 Publication and deposit copies

- ¹ Each dissertation must be submitted to SWISS TCM UNI within 12 months of the doctoral colloquium in the form and number specified by SWISS TCM UNI.
- ² An extension of the deadline may be granted in exceptional cases if an application is submitted to the management of SWISS TCM UNI.
- ³ If the dissertation is not submitted to SWISS TCM UNI by the specified deadline (see¹ and²), the requirements for the doctorate are deemed not to have been met and the doctoral candidate may no longer use the title "Dr. des." or "PhD des.".

§16 Doctoral certificate and title

- ¹ If §14 Return of files and submission of the confirmation of passing the doctoral colloquium have been fulfilled, the ordinary doctorate comes into force and the doctoral candidate receives a doctoral certificate from SWISS TCM UNI. This certificate contains the following information:
- 1.1 the name of SWISS TCM UNI and the acting rector
- 1.2 the name and signature of the head of department at the time the certificate is issued
- 1.3 the name of the doctoral candidate
- 1.4 the academic degree awarded
- 1.5 the title of the dissertation
- 1.6 the date of the doctoral colloquium, which is considered the date of the doctorate
- ^{1.7} the distinction of a doctorate.
- ² The certificate is presented to the doctoral candidate after 6 weeks at the latest. The doctoral candidate may now officially bear the academic title "Dr." or "PhD".

§17 Honorary doctorate / Doctores honoris causa

- ¹ SWISS TCM UNI can award an honorary doctorate with the title "honoris causa" to outstanding personalities in the field of science or healthcare. A head of department must submit an application with sufficient justification to the university management. The university management decides on the award.
- ² The university management of SWISS TCM UNI may award an honorary doctorate with the title "honoris causa" to persons who have rendered outstanding services to the promotion of TCM.

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³ Further provisions on honorary doctorates can be found in the regulations for honorary doctorates.





§18 Unfair conduct

¹ If SWISS TCM UNI has evidence that the doctoral candidate has submitted the doctoral colloquium or the dissertation in a dishonest manner, SWISS TCM UNI will decide whether to declare the doctoral procedure null and void. During this time, the doctoral procedure is interrupted and the doctoral candidate can comment on the charges.

² If the SWISS TCM UNI determines that the doctoral candidate is guilty beyond doubt, the doctoral procedure is terminated and the doctorate is assessed as "failed".

³ If the doctoral candidate already holds the title "Dr." or "PhD", SWISS TCM UNI is entitled to withdraw this title.

§19 Confidentiality

The exchange of scientific data and results between different institutes is important for the dissertation. In order to ensure that this knowledge does not reach third parties, the doctoral student is obliged to treat all data and results as strictly confidential. The confidentiality obligation is lifted as soon as the dissertation has been published. Data and results that could have a negative impact on SWISS TCM UNI or other participating institutes may not be used. Likewise, individual data and results may not be published prematurely, so that the right to protection of the intellectual property of SWISS TCM UNI or other participating institutes is guaranteed.

V. Transitional and final provisions, entry into force

§20 Transitional and final provisions

- ¹ This document is binding for all doctoral students at SWISS TCM UNI.
- ² In cases of hardship, deviating regulations may be made by the university management, insofar as this lies within its area of responsibility.
- ³ The university management of SWISS TCM UNI decides on matters that are not clarified in this document.
- ⁴ Complaints can be submitted in writing to the SWISS TCM UNI Appeals Commission. Any deadlines must be observed.

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§21 Entry into force

This document enters into force on 01.01.2024.

Management of the SWISS TCM UNI



Schematic representation of the dissertation process

