

Protocol of the 2. meeting in the summer semester 2016

23.06.2016, 17:30 – 19:00, Seminar room 3/1

Participants: 19: Andre Schneider, Andreas Parger, Andreas Schäfer, Andreas Schlüter, Anne Zilles, Aso Rahimzadegan, Enrico di Muzio, Garlich Fischbeck, Hendrik Seitz-Moskaliuk, Iris Schwenk, Julia Link, Julian Gethmann, Konrad Deetz, Laura Gaßner, Martin Fruhnert, Martin Schumann, Matthias Bard, Robin Roth, Tim Ludwig

Guests:

Chair: Martin Schumann

Protocol: Julian Gethmann

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Presence of a quorum

We have a quorum.

1 Acceptance of the agenda

The agenda sent as part of the invitation is accepted.

2 Report and discussion of PhD Ordinance

In the last faculty council, the process to change our PhD Ordinance (Promotionsordnung) was officially started. In the next session on Wednesday, July 6th 2016, there will be votings on a draft which then needs to be discussed with KIT's department of law.

2.1 Dr. rer. nat.

There cannot be a differentiation between a PhD in physics, geo-physics, meteorology, and KSOP, because formally all PhD students obtain their title at the faculty of physics. So there must be a single PhD ordinance to obtain the Dr. rer. nat. in physics, valid for all of the four physics subdivisions.

2.2 Cumulative thesis

Status quo needs to be put into the new PO. That means that a cumulative dissertation — in the sense of using already published material for the thesis — is allowed. The stereotype cumulative dissertation (staple together your papers) is still not foreseen to be accepted.

2.3 Oral exam

According to law it is still possible to have an oral exam like we have it at the moment with questions concerning your topic (in a very broad interpretation). Questions only on the topic of the student's thesis might not work in practice. Also, such a procedure might be voted against by the faculty council. While an interrogation very close to the student's thesis might be favorable especially for meteorologists, geo-physicists and KSOP PhD students, a common solution for all of the four subdivisions has to be found (see 2.1).

2.4 Permanent PhD commission / Promotionsausschuss

There need to be an permanent PhD commission, that decides on the acceptance as a PhD student (e. g. for foreign PhD student candidates). Formerly this function was fulfilled by the dean alone. The PhD commission is proposed to consist of the dean, vice dean, and dean of studies. The overall procedure of acceptance will be the same as now.

2.5 Distinction

Until now there has not been an official procedure to honor someone with a distinction. It is planned to grant each examiner a right to veto against a distinction, as it is done at

the moment.

2.6 Switch to new PhD Ordinance

Vote

Ein Wechsel in die neue Ordnung soll möglich sein.

It should be possible to switch to the new PhD Ordinance.

Yes	No	Abstain
19	0	0

2.7 Presentation and exam

It is proposed to add a sentence to the PhD ordinance that limits the questions to those with a *direct link* to the PhD student's topic. This addition could possibly help the supervisors to argue for the student's presentation. A link might be difficult to find and then the questions might spoil the exam, because they are supposed to fit the topic though they do not. In contrast to this argumentation a link to the topic can always be found based on the presentation and not the professors' notion of your topic. The idea of proving a general physics knowledge is not valuable, since it was already proven in the Bachelor's and Master's exams and the promotion should be a phase of specialization.

Vote

In der Prüfung werden nur Fragen **mit direktem Bezug** zur eigenen Arbeit gestellt.

Only questions directly related to the candidate's thesis should be allowed.

Yes	No	Abstain
16	3	0

At other universities there are longer public presentations. KIT regulations do not allow completely public presentation or exam, but only non-public or faculty-public ones.

One possibility would be to have a faculty-public presentation (like at the faculty of Math) with a subsequent non-public oral exam. Alternatively, one could think about a faculty-public defense (consisting of a faculty-public presentation with subsequent faculty-public discussion). In any case only the examiners would be allowed to ask questions in the exam/discussion part.

It is discussed to make it optional to have the presentation public or private. It might be difficult to compare candidates if the candidate can decide on giving a public or private talk.

Vote

Der Vortrag zur eigenen Arbeit soll fakultätsöffentlich sein.

The presentation of the candidate's work should be public for the faculty.

Yes	No	Abstain
15	1	3

Vote

Die Prüfung soll fakultätsöffentlich sein.

The oral exam should be public for the faculty.

Yes	No	Abstain
4	9	6

Vote

Der Kandidat soll sich aussuchen dürfen, ob eine fakultätsöffentliche Präsentation oder eine nicht-öffentliche Präsentation stattfinden soll

The candidate shall decide if the presentation is faculty-public or non-public.

Yes	No	Abstain
7	6	6

Vote

Die Präsentationszeit soll im Verhältnis zur Fragerunde länger werden.

The presentation duration should be extended as compared to the duration of the examination.

Yes	No	Abstain
16	2	1

2.8 Five instead of six examiners

It is discussed to reduce the number of examiners from currently six to five. This could potentially lead to a higher ratio of examiners from the candidate's field vs. those who are not. Contrarily, professors of the candidate's field could also be "kicked out" to reduce the number, so the ratio could change to the disadvantage of the candidate. It may also be possible that the dean asks questions if there are only five examiners left. Will the time for questions also shrink if the number of professors decreases? That would be preferable.

Vote

Die Prüfungskommission soll 5 statt 6 Prüfer haben.

The exam committee should consist of 5 instead of 6 examiners.

Yes	No	Abstain
17	1	1

2.9 Explicit marks for the different parts

At the moment the candidate's supervisor proposes a mark for the PhD and after a discussion with the other examiners the candidate is assigned get one mark for your thesis and your exam in total. This procedure is not allowed anymore.

In the future the final mark needs to be the rounded sum of a mark for the thesis (made by the first and second supervisor) and the oral exam (averaged from all examiners' individual marks).

The relative weight of the mark for the thesis and that for your exam in the final averaging is to be discussed.

Examples of the different proposed ratios are 1:1, 1:2, or 2:1.

The focus should be on the thesis.

Vote

Die Gewichtung der Note der Dissertation im Verhältnis zur Note der mündlichen Prüfung soll sein:

The relative weight of the mark for the thesis as compared to the mark for the oral exam should be:

1:1	2:1 (favor thesis)	Abstain
0	18	1

It is not possible to have external examiners in the oral exam due to practical issues and also for the grading of the thesis it is not feasible.

2.10 Certificates of the marks

At the moment the candidates do not get information about individual marks for thesis and exam. This can be changed.

One might have a preliminary certificate which includes individual marks. This could be used to apply for a job.

Instead, one might want to have two sheets, one with individual marks and one preliminary certificate with one final mark, like it is done for master students who get their *transcript of records*.

Vote

Es sollte einen zusätzlichen Bescheid über die Noten geben (wie beim Transcript of records) und auf dem vorläufigen Bescheid sollten keine Noten stehen.

There should be two preliminary certificates, one with the marks only and one preliminary certificate of the PhD degree.

Yes	No	Abstain
18	0	1

2.11 Extension of the time to know your examiners

We might want to ask for a longer period in which we know the examiners. The necessity to be well prepared in different (the examiners') topics probably will increase.

Vote

Die Prüfer sollen einen Monat vor der mündlichen Prüfung bekannt gegeben werden.

The examiners should be announced to the candidate one month before the oral exam.

Yes	No	Abstain
2	10	7

2.12 Make the meeting of the PhD candidate and the professor

If the questions are related to the candidate's work this should not be an issue anymore. If we can't make the point with sticking to the topic, there might be a special meeting to discuss this point.

3 Miscellaneous

Since two weeks the meeting after the Kolloquium is funded by the faculty. Particularly PhD students are invited to come and have a drink and some snacks.

The question was raised whether it could be possible to vote if one can not attend the meetings. This is not possible with our current by-laws and it is not trivial to get an electronic voting system right. Maybe one could do a system of voting by e-mail?

Since quite some time there is the status of KIT associate fellows. People can apply for this status to the faculty council if they have a junior research group (Emmy Noether, ...), which includes funding for own PhD students. Accepted KIT associate fellows have the right to supervise PhD (and bachelor/master) students and be their official supervisor on the thesis and during the exam. It seems not all Professors are familiar with that so one might have to inform them.

The official document is: http://www.kit.edu/downloads/AmtlicheBekanntmachungen/2011_AB_053.pdf