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Doctoral regulations of the University of Freiburg for the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources

In accordance with section 38, subsection 4, sentence 1 of the Act on the Higher Education Institutions in the Land of Baden-Württemberg (Landeshochschulgesetz – LHG) of 1 January 2005 (Official Gazette (Gesetzblatt – GBl.) p. 1), last amended by Article 3 of the act of 1 December 2015 (GBl. p. 1047), the Senate of the University of Freiburg adopted the following doctoral regulations in its session on 24 February 2016.

The Rector approved the doctoral regulations on 29 February 2016.

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Annex:

Section 1 Purpose and forms of the doctorate

- (1) The regular doctorate serves to demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to carry out advanced academic work in a subject area represented within the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources. It is conferred on the basis of an independent academic work (doctoral thesis) and an oral examination (oral defence), which includes the doctoral thesis as a topic.
- (2) The Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources awards the academic degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Doctor rerum naturalium, abbreviated Dr. rer. nat.) or Doctor of Philosophy (Doctor philosophiae, abbreviated Dr. phil.) on the basis of the doctoral work it recognizes; women are entitled to use the feminine form of the respective doctoral title. In the context of doctoral programmes, the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (abbreviated Ph.D.) may be awarded instead.
- (3) The Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat.) degree is awarded if the doctoral thesis primarily focuses on the natural sciences. The Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) degree is awarded if the doctoral thesis primarily focuses on the humanities or social sciences.
- (4) The duration of doctoral studies may not exceed five years. In justified cases, the Doctoral Degree Board may grant an extension of up to two years upon application, provided the application is submitted before the deadline expires. If the maximum permissible duration for doctoral studies is exceeded, admission to the doctorate is terminated unless the doctoral examination process has already been initiated. Protection periods and leaves of absence in accordance with section 21 are not counted toward the duration of doctoral studies.
- (5) Persons who have been admitted to a doctoral programme at the University of Freiburg are enrolled as doctoral students. Other persons who wish to complete a doctoral thesis and have been accepted as doctoral candidates must register as doctoral candidates with the Registration Office; they can apply to be enrolled as doctoral students.

Section 2 Doctoral Degree Board

- (1) The Doctoral Degree Board is responsible for organizing the doctoral process, in particular for deciding whether to accept doctoral candidates, appointing supervisors, initiating the doctoral examination process, designating reviewers, appointing the members of the examination committee, monitoring the timely completion of the doctoral process including documenting the number of doctoral candidates in the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as for all tasks designated in these doctoral regulations. In all other matters, the responsibilities of the chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board remain unaffected.
- (2) The Doctoral Degree Board is elected by the Grand Faculty Council for a period of four years from among the full-time professors and senior lecturers (Privatdozent/Privatdozentin) of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources; it consists of seven members. The Grand Faculty Council also elects a member of the academic staff who holds a doctorate and a doctoral candidate nominated by the doctoral convention for a period of two years with an advisory vote; if the member of the academic staff who holds a doctorate is also an authorized to participate in the doctoral examination process pursuant to section 3, subsection 1, sentence 2 or if they have completed a habilitation, they are a voting member of the Doctoral Degree Board. The Grand Faculty Council elects the same number of deputies from the same group of people for members according to sentence 1; one deputy is elected for each member pursuant to sentence 2. The Doctoral Degree Board elects one professor from among its members as the chairperson and another professor as the deputy chairperson.
- (3) The Doctoral Degree Board generally deliberates and makes decisions in a duly convened and chaired session; its sessions are not open to the public. The Doctoral Degree Board has a quorum if all members have been duly invited and the majority of voting members are present. Decisions are generally made by a simple majority. In the event of a tie, the chairperson casts the deciding vote. Decisions may also be made through a written or electronic process, provided that no member objects and at least two-thirds of the members participate. Abstentions, secret ballots and the transfer of voting rights are not permitted in decisions regarding examination regulations and, in particular, in decisions regarding the revocation of the doctoral degree.
- (4) The members of the Doctoral Degree Board and their deputies are obliged to maintain confidentiality with respect to examination matters and where an obligation to confidentiality has been specifically established. The obligation to maintain confidentiality includes keeping documents on deliberations secret; it remains in effect even after membership of the Doctoral Degree Board has ended.

- (5) The Doctoral Degree Board ensures the transparency and quality of the grading process. Every five years, it prepares a report for the Faculty Council on its measures to ensure transparency and quality assurance, which is made available to the other faculties by the Vice Rector for Research in order to share experiences and further develop quality assurance measures.
- (6) The Doctoral Degree Board may revocably transfer the execution of specific tasks to the chairperson or the deputy chairperson; this does not apply to decisions regarding the acceptance of doctoral candidates, the retraction and revocation of the acceptance of a doctoral candidate, the invalidity of doctoral work, the revocation of the doctoral degree, or in the case of objections.
- (7) The Doctoral Degree Board is an authority within the meaning of Germany's laws governing administrative procedures and court procedures.

Section 3 Reviewers and examiners

- (1) The following individuals may generally be appointed as reviewers of a doctoral thesis and as examiners in the oral examination: professors, honorary professors, adjunct professors (außerplanmäßiger Professor/außerplanmäßige Professorin), emeritus professors, retired professors and senior lecturers (Privatdozent/Privatdozentin) of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources. Upon application, the Doctoral Degree Board may also grant temporary authorization to participate in the doctoral examination process to full-time working group leaders at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources with a special qualification for academic work or to other researchers employed full-time at the faculty who have been recognized in peer-reviewed competitions and may appoint them as reviewers and examiners in doctoral examination processes. The prerequisite for this is that the special qualification for academic work is demonstrated through a doctoral thesis of outstanding quality or an equivalent academic work and external review by a recognized research funding institution.
- (2) In addition, the Doctoral Degree Board may appoint members of other faculties of the University of Freiburg or other German or foreign higher education institutions or employees of academic research institutions as reviewers and examiners. In the case of interdisciplinary or cross-faculty doctoral theses, members of other faculties should also be appointed as reviewers and examiners. The prerequisites set out in subsection 1 apply accordingly.
- (3) In each doctoral examination process, at least one reviewer must fulfil the requirements in accordance with subsection 1, sentence 1.

Section 4 Supervision of the doctoral thesis; doctoral supervision agreement

- (1) The Doctoral Degree Board appoints at least two academic supervisors for each doctoral candidate, one of whom is designated as the principal supervisor. Only individuals who are eligible for appointment as a reviewer under section 3, subsection 1 can be designated as the principal supervisor. Individuals who are eligible for appointment as a reviewer under section 3, subsection 1 or 2 can be appointed as second supervisors. If a junior researcher who has not completed a habilitation is appointed as the principal supervisor pursuant to section 3, subsection 1, sentence 2, a person who fulfils the requirements pursuant to section 3, subsection 1, sentence 1 must be appointed as a second supervisor. If a professor or senior lecturer (Privatdozent/Privatdozentin) who has been appointed as a supervisor leaves the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, they may continue to exercise the associated rights and obligations for up to three years after their departure; in justified cases, the Doctoral Degree Board may extend this period to a maximum of five years in total. If the principal supervisor leaves, the Doctoral Degree Board, on the recommendation of the principal supervisor and after consulting with the doctoral candidate, appoints a person who meets the requirements of section 3, subsection 1, sentence 1 as an additional supervisor.
- (2) Honorary professors, adjunct professors (außerplanmäßiger Professor/außerplanmäßige Professorin), emeritus professors and retired professors may be appointed as supervisors on the condition that resources may only be used with the agreement of authorized persons.
- (3) Members of the academic staff who hold a doctorate may serve as additional supervisors; in the case of cooperative projects, this also applies to individuals at the respective partner institution who hold corresponding qualifications.

(4) The prospective supervisors and the prospective doctoral candidate conclude a doctoral supervision agreement using the form provided by the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources and including the following contents at a minimum:

1. a timetable for regular advising meetings and progress reports which reflects the doctoral candidate's thesis project and personal circumstances and must be updated annually,
2. information on the individual study programme,
3. a mutual commitment to the principles of good research practice,
4. rules for dispute resolution and
5. the evaluation periods that are to be set upon submission of the doctoral thesis.

(5) The doctoral supervision agreement only comes into effect once the doctoral candidate has been accepted.

Section 5 Prerequisites for admission to the doctorate

(1) To be admitted to the doctorate, the applicant

1. must have earned a qualified degree

- a) in a master's programme at a German higher education institution,
 - b) in a degree programme at a German university or university of education with a standard period of study of at least four years or
 - c) in a degree programme that builds upon an undergraduate degree programme at a German university, university of education or other higher education institution with the right to confer doctoral degrees in a subject that is relevant to the intended topic of the doctoral thesis,
2. must not have already been accepted as a doctoral candidate or admitted to the doctorate in the same academic subject at another faculty or higher education institution and may not already have passed a corresponding doctoral examination in the same academic subject at a higher education institution and
3. may not be unworthy of holding the doctoral degree in accordance with legal requirements.

If the qualified degree in accordance with sentence 1, no. 1 was not earned in a subject relevant to the intended topic of the doctoral thesis, the Doctoral Degree Board may exceptionally admit the applicant to the doctorate, provided the other admission requirements have been met. If, in cases in accordance with sentence 1, no. 1, letter b, the standard period of study is less than five years, the applicant must be among the top ten percent of graduates in their degree programme over the past six semesters.

(2) Foreign degrees require recognition by the Doctoral Degree Board. In order for a degree to be recognized, it must be established that it is equivalent to the German degrees required. Decisions about equivalence must take into account the equivalence agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the German Rectors' Conference as well as agreements within the framework of university partnerships. If there are any doubts about equivalence, the Central Office for Foreign Education may be consulted. If the equivalence of a foreign degree cannot be established because proof of individual coursework and examinations was not provided, the applicant may be admitted to the doctorate if, on the basis of the evaluation proposals of the Central Office for Foreign Education, the missing coursework and examinations can be made up within the framework of an aptitude assessment procedure and the applicant successfully completes this procedure; the duration of the aptitude assessment procedure is not to exceed two semesters.

(3) Exceptionally qualified graduates of bachelor's and state examination programmes who are not covered by subsection 1, no. 1, letter b may be admitted to the doctorate if they are among the top five percent of graduates in their degree programme over the past six semesters, provided that, before initiating the doctoral examination process, they earn at least 40 and no more than 60 ECTS credit points by successfully completing modules in master's programmes at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources. The Doctoral Degree Board specifies the eligible modules, taking into account the intended topic of the doctoral thesis.

(4) The Doctoral Degree Board may admit exceptionally qualified graduates from Diplom degree programmes in the environmental or natural sciences at a university of applied sciences or an academy of cooperative education to the doctorate if they demonstrate in an aptitude assessment procedure that they are fundamentally as qualified to complete academic work in the intended subject area of the doctoral thesis as graduates according to subsection 1. In order to be admitted to the aptitude assessment procedure, the applicant must be among the top five percent of graduates in their degree programme over the past six semesters and a professor, adjunct professor (außerplanmäßiger Professor/außerplanmäßige Professorin) or senior lecturer (Privatdozent/Privatdozentin) of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources must support the admission and be willing to supervise the doctoral thesis. The aptitude assessment procedure, which is conducted by two members of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources who are authorized to participate in the doctoral examination process and takes into account the subjects of the degree completed at the university of applied sciences or academy of cooperative education as well as the intended topic of the doctoral thesis, comprises a written academic paper with a grade of "good" or better and an oral examination graded "pass". The duration of the aptitude assessment procedure is not to exceed two semesters.

Section 6 Acceptance as a doctoral candidate

(1) Anyone who intends to complete a doctoral thesis and fulfils the admission requirements in accordance with section 5 should apply for acceptance as a doctoral candidate as soon as possible. The written application describing the topic of the doctoral thesis should be submitted to the Doctoral Degree Board. If the topic of the doctoral thesis is interdisciplinary and the subject areas are taught at different faculties, the application should be made to only one of the relevant faculties. In the case of a cross-faculty doctoral thesis, only one of the relevant faculties will award the corresponding doctoral degree. The faculties involved must determine which faculty will award the degree prior to the acceptance of the doctoral candidate.

(2) The application must include:

1. proof of compliance with the admission requirements in accordance with section 5;
2. the doctoral supervision agreement in accordance with section 4, subsection 4;
3. the name of the desired degree, either Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat.) or Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) in accordance with section 1, subsection 3; the reasons for the choice of doctoral degree must be given and a written statement from the principal supervisor must be attached; if the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is pursued within the framework of a doctoral programme, this must also be indicated;
4. a declaration stating that the applicant is familiar with the applicable doctoral regulations of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources;
5. a current curriculum vitae outlining the applicant's personal and professional development;
6. a declaration of current or previous applications for admission to the doctorate; the declaration must state the date of application, the topic and the faculty or department to which the application was made; if applicable, the reason the doctoral process was not completed or a certified copy of any previously awarded doctoral degree certificate must be submitted;
7. foreign nationals must provide proof of sufficient German language skills if applicable;
8. a declaration regarding existing criminal convictions and ongoing criminal investigations.

Upon written request, the choice of doctoral degree made in accordance with sentence 1, no. 3 may be changed for valid reasons prior to the initiation of the doctoral examination process; the Doctoral Degree Board makes the decision on this matter.

(3) The Doctoral Degree Board generally makes a decision on the application within three months, or at the start of the respective doctoral programme. The application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate must be refused, if

1. the admission requirements in accordance with section 5 have not been met,
2. the intended topic of the doctoral thesis does not fall under the academic focus of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources or no member of the faculty who meets the requirements under section 3, subsection 1 is able to provide an expert assessment of the doctoral thesis,

3. none of the faculty members qualified in accordance with section 3, subsection 1 considers the chosen topic to be worthy of research or suited to the applicant's educational background, or
4. the availability of the material resources necessary to carry out the project cannot be guaranteed.
- (4) If the applicant is accepted as a doctoral candidate, they will receive written notification. At the same time as the decision on acceptance, the Doctoral Degree Board appoints the individuals specified in the doctoral supervision agreement as supervisors; it also determines whether the doctoral degree sought in accordance with subsection 2, sentence 1, no. 3 can be awarded on the basis of the intended doctoral thesis topic. If the acceptance of the doctoral candidate in accordance with section 5, subsection 3 is subject to a condition, the notification pursuant to sentence 1 must also contain information on the work to be completed. If the Doctoral Degree Board decides to reject the doctoral candidate, the reasons for the decision must be given in writing and include information on the right to appeal.
- (5) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate may be revoked, particularly if
 1. the doctoral supervision agreement (section 4, subsection 4) is invalid or has been rescinded,
 2. reasons for rejecting the application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate subsequently arise,
 3. there is no prospect that the doctoral thesis can be successfully completed within a reasonable timeframe, or
 4. the doctoral candidate has seriously violated the obligations they assumed in the doctoral supervision agreement (section 4, subsection 4).

Acceptance as a doctoral candidate may be revoked in accordance with sentence 1, no. 4 only if an ombuds process has previously taken place without success and no new supervision agreement has been concluded.

- (6) Acceptance of a doctoral candidate signifies the fundamental willingness of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources to evaluate a doctoral thesis on the intended topic as an academic work. Acceptance of a doctoral candidate obliges the faculty to provide the doctoral candidate with academic supervision.
- (7) Acceptance as a doctoral candidate does not constitute a legal right to admission to the doctoral examination process.
- (8) The principal supervisor must ensure that the doctoral candidate is familiar with the principles of good research practice.
- (9) Two years after the acceptance of the doctoral candidate, the principal supervisor reviews whether the doctoral project can continue and informs the Doctoral Degree Board of the result of this review in writing.

Section 7 Initiation of the doctoral examination process

- (1) The initiation of the doctoral examination process requires that the doctoral candidate continue to fulfil the admission requirements specified in section 5. The application to initiate the doctoral examination process (evaluation of the doctoral thesis and oral examination) is to be submitted in writing to the Doctoral Degree Board. The application must include the following documents:
 1. the official notification of acceptance as a doctoral candidate in accordance with section 6, subsection 4, sentence 1;
 2. the doctoral supervision agreement in accordance with section 4, subsection 4 in its current version;
 3. a current curriculum vitae outlining the applicant's personal and professional development;
 4. six copies of the doctoral thesis in printed and bound form as well as in electronic form on the specified storage medium and in the specified file format;
 5. a declaration of current or previous applications for admission to the doctorate including the location, date, higher education institution and topic of the doctoral thesis as well as a certified copy of any previously awarded doctoral degree certificate, if applicable.
 6. a recent certificate of good conduct in accordance with the Federal Central Criminal Register Act (Bundeszentralregistergesetz – BZRG), unless the certificate of good conduct is sent directly to the

Doctoral Degree Board, as well as a declaration regarding ongoing criminal investigations; foreign nationals who are unable to provide a certificate of good conduct in accordance with the Federal Central Criminal Register Act must provide an equivalent certificate, not older than six months, from a competent court or administrative authority in their country of origin;

7. a declaration in lieu of oath in accordance with the annex of these doctoral regulations;
8. a copy, signed by the doctoral candidate, of the instruction provided by the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources regarding the significance and legal consequences of the declaration in lieu of oath;
9. if completing doctoral studies or participating in a structured doctoral programme, evidence of the work completed;
10. if applicable, a complete list of academic publications and presentations;
11. if applicable, evidence of coursework in preparation for the doctorate or of the fulfilment of other conditions.

(2) The application may only be withdrawn once by written declaration. The application may not be withdrawn if the Doctoral Degree Board has already received an evaluation or if at least four weeks have passed since the examination committee was appointed.

(3) An application that fulfils the requirements of subsection 1 may only be rejected if one of the legal reasons for which the doctoral degree could be withdrawn applies. The decision in this matter is made by the Doctoral Degree Board.

(4) The Doctoral Degree Board makes decisions on admission to the doctoral examination process. The Doctoral Degree Board may delegate decisions about applications that do not present any special difficulties to the chairperson. The doctoral candidate receives written notification of admission. If admission is refused, the reasons for the decision must be given in writing and delivered to the doctoral candidate with information on the right to appeal.

Section 8 Examination committee

(1) After deciding on admission to the doctoral examination process, the Doctoral Degree Board appoints the examination committee. The examination committee consists of the reviewers of the doctoral thesis and two additional examiners for the oral examination. The principal supervisor is generally appointed as the first reviewer. A person who is not involved in the supervision of the doctoral candidate and who fulfils the requirements according to section 3, subsection 1 or 2 is appointed as the second reviewer. Upon the request of a supervisor or the doctoral candidate, the second supervisor or another person involved in the doctoral project who fulfils the requirements according to section 3, subsection 1 or 2 may be appointed as an additional reviewer. The majority of the members of the examination committee must belong to the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources.

(2) The examination committee is chaired by a member who is appointed by the Doctoral Degree Board and must be a professor of the faculty. The principal supervisor of the doctoral thesis may not be the chairperson.

(3) The examination committee deliberates and makes decisions in a closed session. Its decisions are to be recorded in a protocol. Abstentions are not permitted.

(4) The members of the examination committee are obliged to maintain confidentiality regarding facts that become known to them during a closed session, unless the fact is already public knowledge or does not require confidentiality due to its nature. Confidentiality obligations arising from the service or employment relationship remain unaffected.

(5) The appointment obliges the reviewers to prepare their evaluations within two months.

Section 9 Doctoral thesis

(1) The topic of the doctoral thesis must be selected from a subject that is officially represented at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources. The doctoral thesis must demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to carry out advanced academic work independently and make a significant contribution to the advancement of academic knowledge.

(2) The doctoral thesis must generally be written in German or English. Upon a justified request by the doctoral candidate, the Doctoral Degree Board may permit the doctoral thesis to be written in a foreign language, provided that its evaluation within the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources can be ensured. The request must be submitted to the Doctoral Degree Board before the doctoral thesis is written and must be accompanied by a statement from the principal supervisor. If the doctoral thesis is written in a language other than German, it must include a detailed summary in German as an annex; if the doctoral thesis is written in German, it must include a detailed summary in English as an annex.

(3) The doctoral thesis may be submitted as a monograph or as a cumulative doctoral thesis. The academic papers that the doctoral candidate compiles into a cumulative doctoral thesis must have been written around a common research question and at least two of them must have been published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed, internationally recognized journals. The doctoral candidate must have made a significant contribution to at least two of the publications; none of the work submitted may be the subject of another doctoral thesis in a current or completed doctoral examination process of the doctoral candidate. The work must be prefaced by a detailed overview, offering a critical assessment of the research topics and key findings of the papers submitted in the context of the academic literature on the topic and, if applicable, should appraise the doctoral candidate's own contribution as well as the contribution of the other authors of the individual papers.

(4) If the doctoral thesis is based on research conducted as part of a collaborative research project, the individual contribution of the doctoral candidate must be clearly delineated and assessable.

(5) The doctoral thesis must include a title page in accordance with the template provided by the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, a table of contents, an abstract and detailed list of the sources and literature used.

Section 10 Evaluation of the doctoral thesis

(1) The reviewers thoroughly and independently assess whether the doctoral thesis submitted can be accepted as doctoral work, or if it must be rejected or returned for revision. Unless it is proposed that the thesis be returned for revision, it must be awarded one of the following grades and the corresponding rating:

Grade	Rating	
1	summa cum laude	for an outstanding achievement
2	magna cum laude	for a particularly commendable achievement
3	cum laude	for a good achievement
4	rite	for a sufficient achievement
5	non probatum	for an insufficient achievement

To allow for a more nuanced assessment of exam performance, grades can be increased or decreased by increments of 0.3; however, the grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are not permitted. The rating "summa cum laude" may only be awarded if the thesis is characterized by a high degree of originality and academic maturity.

(2) Once all evaluations have been received, the doctoral thesis and the evaluations are made available for review in the dean's office for at least two weeks during the lecture period or for at least three weeks during the lecture-free period. The review period should not exceed four weeks. The chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board informs the members of the faculty who are authorized examiners in the doctoral examination process about the location and time of the review period either in writing or electronically. Those who are entitled to review the doctoral thesis have the right to submit a written objection to its acceptance, rejection or grade by the end of the review period. The reasons for the objection must be given in writing within one week of submission. During the review period, the doctoral candidate is given the opportunity to review the evaluations. The doctoral candidate has the right to respond to the evaluations in writing; the response, which must be submitted to the Doctoral Degree Board no later than one week after the end of the review period, will be forwarded to the examination committee.

(3) If the reviewers have unanimously recommended the acceptance of the doctoral thesis, it is thereby accepted, provided no objection has been raised. If the reviewers have unanimously recommended the rejection of the doctoral thesis, it is thereby rejected, provided no objection has been raised. If the evaluations differ in their recommendation for acceptance, rejection or revision of the doctoral thesis or in

their evaluation by more than one grade level, or if an objection in accordance with subsection 2 is raised against the acceptance or rejection during the review period, the Doctoral Degree Board will appoint an additional reviewer. If the objection pertains solely to the grade of the doctoral thesis, the Doctoral Degree Board decides whether the objection will be disregarded or whether an additional reviewer will be appointed. This additional reviewer should submit their evaluation within two months. Taking into account the recommendation of the additional evaluation, the Doctoral Degree Board decides whether the doctoral thesis is to be accepted or rejected.

(4) If the doctoral thesis is accepted, the overall grade of the doctoral thesis will be determined by calculating the arithmetic mean of the individual grades. Only the first decimal place is taken into account; all subsequent decimal places are deleted without rounding. The ratings are as follows: summa cum laude for an average of up to 1.3, provided no individual grade is worse than 1.3; magna cum laude for an average of up to 2.4; cum laude for an average between 2.4 and 3.4; rite for an average between 3.4 and 4.0.

(5) The doctoral thesis will be returned for revision if this is recommended by at least two reviewers. If the doctoral thesis is not resubmitted in a revised form within one year, it counts as rejected.

(6) If the doctoral thesis is rejected, the doctoral examination process is concluded unsuccessfully. The doctoral candidate receives written notification of the rejection from the Doctoral Degree Board, which must include the reasons for the decision and information on the right to appeal. In this case, the doctoral candidate may only apply once, and not before a year has passed, to reopen the doctoral examination process with a thesis on a different topic. If this thesis is also rejected, the doctoral examination counts as definitively failed.

Section 11 Oral examination

(1) The oral examination in the form of an oral defence should take place no more than four weeks after the acceptance of the doctoral thesis. The chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board sets the date at the suggestion of the principal supervisor during the examination periods, which must be scheduled at least twice a year. The date of the oral defence must be announced in good time. The members of the examination committee must be given access to the doctoral thesis, the evaluations as well as any objections and responses.

(2) The oral defence, in which the doctoral candidate should demonstrate their ability to discuss aspects of academic research verbally, is prepared in a session of the examination committee. It consists of a discussion between the doctoral candidate and those authorized to ask questions in accordance with subsection 5 that covers the doctoral thesis as well as related questions regarding methodology and content. The discussion, led by the chairperson of the examination committee, may additionally include more general questions on aspects of other subject areas at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources or other faculties that are related to the doctoral thesis. If the doctoral thesis is the result of collaborative research work, the doctoral candidate should demonstrate that they can independently explain and defend their own contributions as well as the work process and results of the group. The oral defence begins with a presentation on the topic of the doctoral thesis lasting no more than 30 minutes; the defence lasts at least 60 and no more than 90 minutes.

(3) The oral defence is generally held in German. If the oral defence is to be held in English, the doctoral candidate must notify the chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board, with the agreement of their principal supervisor, no later than when submitting the application to initiate the doctoral examination process.

(4) The oral defence is open to the university public. Guests from outside of the university may be admitted to the oral defence by mutual agreement between the doctoral candidate and the chairperson of the examination committee. The public may be excluded for good cause or at the request of the doctoral candidate. Public attendance does not extend to deliberations or the announcement of the examination result.

(5) In addition to the members of the examination committee, members of the Grand Faculty Council who hold a doctorate as well as other members of the academic staff of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources who hold a doctorate are entitled to ask questions during the oral defence. The chairperson of the examination committee can authorize other doctorate holders of the faculty or other academic institutions that are cooperation partners of the faculty to ask questions.

(6) All members of the examination committee must be present at the oral examination. If the second reviewer or any other potential additional reviewer is unable to attend pursuant to section 8, subsection 1, sentence 5, a substitute is to be appointed who fulfils the requirements of section 3, subsection 1 or 2. In justified cases, no more than one member of the examination committee, but not the chairperson, may participate in the oral defence and the subsequent deliberation on the results of the oral examination via video conference, if

1. the examination committee and the doctoral candidate have agreed to participation via video conference and
2. the transmission of all necessary audio and video data, in particular the image of the doctoral candidate and the examiner as well as the doctoral candidate's presentation, is ensured in both directions and in appropriate quality without interruption during the oral defence; the chairperson of the examination committee is responsible for assessing the quality of the transmission.

(7) An observer prepares a written record of the oral defence, which is to be signed by the members of the examination committee. The observer must hold a doctorate and be employed by the University of Freiburg.

(8) After the oral examination, the examination committee decides in a closed session whether the examination was successful. Each examiner awards a grade for the oral examination in accordance with section 10, subsection 1. The grade for the oral examination is determined by calculating the arithmetic mean of the individual grades in accordance with section 10, subsection 4. The oral examination is only passed if the grade determined in this manner is at least 4.0. The rating "summa cum laude" may only be awarded if none of the individual grades is worse than 1.3.

(9) At the same time, the examination committee determines the doctoral degree to be awarded in accordance with the requirements of section 1, subsections 2 and 3 and taking into account the doctoral candidate's choice.

(10) The examination committee further specifies any revisions the doctoral candidate must make to the doctoral thesis for publication, along with the deadline by which these revisions must be completed. The principal supervisor checks to ensure that the conditions set by the examination committee have been met before granting permission to print in accordance with section 14, subsection 2.

Section 12 Failing and repeating the oral examination

(1) If the oral examination is failed or counts as failed, the Doctoral Degree Board will provide written notification stating the reasons for the decision and including information on the right to appeal. The oral examination may be repeated once within one year of the effective date of the written notification. The application for admission to the repeat examination is to be submitted to the Doctoral Degree Board no sooner than two months after the notification.

(2) The doctoral examination process is concluded unsuccessfully and the doctoral examination definitively failed if, within one year of the effective date of the examination notification, no application has been submitted to repeat the oral examination, or if the oral examination is also failed on the second attempt. The doctoral candidate will receive written notification from the Doctoral Degree Board, which must include the reasons for the decision and information on the right to appeal.

Section 13 Overall rating of the doctorate

(1) If the candidate passes the oral examination, the Doctoral Degree Board determines the overall grade and the corresponding overall rating of the doctorate.

(2) The overall grade is calculated from the weighted arithmetic mean of the grade of the doctoral thesis determined in accordance with section 10, subsection 4 and the grade of the oral examination determined in accordance with section 11, subsection 8. The grade of the doctoral thesis is doubly weighted. Section 10, subsection 4, sentences 2 and 3 apply accordingly. The overall rating "summa cum laude" may only be awarded if neither of the two individual grades were worse than 1.3.

(3) Once the overall grade has been determined, the doctoral candidate will be informed of the result of the doctorate.

Section 14 Publication of the doctoral thesis

- (1) The doctoral candidate is obliged to make the submitted and accepted doctoral thesis, including any revisions required or approved by the examination committee, available to the academic public in an appropriate manner via reproduction and distribution within one year of passing the oral examination.
- (2) Before publication, the doctoral thesis must be submitted to the principal supervisor for permission to print. Permission to print must be submitted on an official form and added to the doctoral file. If the principal supervisor rejects the version intended for publication, the Doctoral Degree Board makes a decision on the matter at the doctoral candidate's request.
- (3) The doctoral thesis may be translated into another language for publication with the approval of the examination committee.
- (4) The doctoral candidate has fulfilled their obligation to publish if they provide the following number of deposit copies, printed on archival-quality, wood- and acid-free paper and bound in a durable way, free of charge:
 1. three copies for the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources and
 2. for the University Library Freiburg:
 - a) if the thesis is published electronically via the University Library Freiburg's research information system FreiDok plus, a printed copy in reproducible typescript must be provided along with an electronic version in a file format and storage medium that meets the requirements of the University Library Freiburg; the doctoral candidate must ensure that the electronic copy corresponds to the printed copy in both content and formatting;
 - b) if the thesis is published by a commercial publisher in the book trade with proof of a minimum print run of 150 copies and the publication is identified as a doctoral thesis, with the thesis location listed in the imprint, one copy;
 - c) if the thesis is published in an academic journal, one offprint;
 - d) if the individual papers in a cumulative doctoral thesis are published in academic journals, three paper copies of the complete doctoral thesis.

In the case of sentence 1, no. 2, letter a, the doctoral candidate grants the University of Freiburg the right within the framework of the statutory responsibilities of the University Library Freiburg to produce and distribute further copies of their doctoral thesis and to make the thesis available in data networks.

- (5) The names of the reviewers and the Dean must be specified on the back of the title page of the deposit copies along with the date of the oral examination as the date of the completion of the doctorate. If the title is later changed, a reference must be made to the title of the doctoral thesis at the time it was originally submitted.
- (6) If the doctoral candidate fails to obtain permission to print from the principal supervisor or if they do not meet the deadline pursuant to subsection 1, they forfeit all rights acquired through the doctoral examination; if the doctoral degree certificate has already been issued, it must be rescinded. In justified cases, the Doctoral Degree Board may, upon application submitted prior to the deadline, extend the period specified in subsection 1 by a maximum of one year.

Section 15 Completion of the doctorate and degree certificate

- (1) The doctorate is completed with the presentation of the degree certificate. The doctoral degree certificate is signed by the Rector of the University of Freiburg and the Dean of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources and bears the university seal. In addition to the degree obtained, it includes the overall rating of the doctorate, the title and rating of the doctoral thesis, as well as the name, date of birth and place of birth of the holder. The date of the oral examination is listed as the date of completion of the doctorate.
- (2) The doctoral degree certificate will not be issued until the doctoral candidate has provided the deposit copies of the doctoral thesis to the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources and the University Library Freiburg in accordance with section 14, subsection 4.
- (3) The doctoral degree certificate should be presented in an appropriate manner. Until the certificate can be presented, the doctoral candidate will receive a provisional certificate confirming the successful

completion of the doctoral examination upon request. This certificate includes the title and grade of the doctoral thesis, the grade of the oral examination and the overall grade of the doctoral work.

- (4) Until the doctoral degree certificate is awarded, the doctoral candidate is not entitled to use the doctoral title, not even if they state that it is conditional or designated.
- (5) Procedural regulations based on international agreements remain unaffected.

Section 16 Withdrawal from the oral examination

- (1) If the doctoral candidate fails to participate in the oral examination, either in whole or in part, this is considered a withdrawal.
- (2) If illness or another good cause prevents the doctoral candidate from participating in the oral examination, withdrawal will be approved upon written application. The doctoral candidate must submit the application to the Doctoral Degree Board without delay, stating the reason for withdrawal and including suitable documentation. In the event of illness, a medical certificate containing the medical facts necessary to assess the inability to take the examination must be attached to the request.
- (3) If the Doctoral Degree Board approves the withdrawal, a new examination date will be set. If the withdrawal is denied, the oral examination counts as failed.

Section 17 Retraction and revocation of admission to the doctorate; invalidity of doctoral work

- (1) If it is discovered prior to the presentation of the doctoral degree certificate that the doctoral candidate used deception regarding an admission requirement or that essential requirements for admission were mistakenly assumed to have been met, admission to the doctorate may be revoked. The same applies if facts become known that would justify the revocation of the doctoral degree in accordance with section 36, subsection 7 of the Act on the Higher Education Institutions in the Land of Baden-Württemberg (LHG).
- (2) If it is discovered prior to the presentation of the doctoral degree certificate that the doctoral candidate used deception with regard to doctoral work, then some or all of the doctoral work can be declared invalid; in more serious cases, admission to the doctorate can be revoked.
- (3) Before a decision is made in accordance with subsection 1 or 2, the doctoral candidate must be given the opportunity to respond. The reasons for the decision must be given in writing and delivered to the doctoral candidate along with information on the right to appeal.

Section 18 Revocation of the doctoral degree

- (1) The revocation of the doctoral degree is governed by section 36, subsection 7 of the Act on the Higher Education Institutions in the Land of Baden-Württemberg (LHG) and section 48 of the Administrative Procedure Act of the Land of Baden-Württemberg (Landesverwaltungsverfahrensgesetz).
- (2) If the requirements for admission to the doctoral examination process were not met and there was no intent by the applicant to deceive, and if this fact only becomes known after the doctoral degree certificate has been presented, this deficiency is remedied by the candidate having passed the doctoral examination.
- (3) Before a decision is made to revoke the doctoral degree, the person in question must be given the opportunity to respond. The reasons for the decision must be given in writing and delivered to the person in question along with information on the right to appeal.
- (4) If the doctoral degree is revoked after the doctoral degree certificate has been presented, the certificate is to be rescinded.
- (5) The Rector may communicate the revocation of the doctoral degree with the necessary details, to all German institutions of higher education that have the right to confer doctoral degrees.

Section 19 Procedural deficiencies and appeals

- (1) Deficiencies in the doctoral examination process must be reported to the Doctoral Degree Board without delay.

- (2) The person in question may appeal any adverse decisions made on the basis of these doctoral regulations to the Doctoral Degree Board in writing within one month of notification. The Doctoral Degree Board will make a decision about the appeal, if necessary after consulting with the examination committee.
- (3) The provisions of the Code of Administrative Court Procedure (Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung – VwGO) apply to the appeal.

Section 20 Ombuds process

- (1) The ombudspersons appointed by the Senate of the University of Freiburg are the contacts for doctoral candidates at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources and their supervisors for any conflicts arising from the supervisory relationship or the work on the doctoral thesis.
- (2) The implementation of the ombuds process is governed by the University of Freiburg's statutes on the implementation of the central ombuds process.

Section 21 Protection periods

- (1) Upon application by the doctoral candidate, the protection periods in accordance with section 3, subsection 1 and section 6, subsection 1 of the Act on the Protection of Mothers at Work, in Training and at University (Mutterschutzgesetz – MuSchG) in the version published on 20 June 2002 (Federal Law Gazette (BGBl.) I, p. 2318) as amended must be observed. The application must include the necessary supporting documents. The maternity protection periods suspend any deadline according to these doctoral regulations.
- (2) Likewise, the parental leave periods in accordance with section 15, subsection 1 to 3 of the Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave (Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz – BEEG) of 5 December 2006 (Federal Law Gazette I, p. 2748) as amended are to be observed upon application. The doctoral candidate must inform the Doctoral Degree Board of the period of parental leave they wish to take in writing, including the necessary supporting documents no later than four weeks before the date from which they wish to take parental leave. The Doctoral Degree Board must verify whether the legal requirements that would entitle employees to parental leave have been met and inform the doctoral candidate of the result as well as any changes to examination deadlines or other deadlines, if applicable.
- (3) It is possible to make use of the protection provisions to care for a close relative within the meaning of section 7, subsection 3 of the Caregiver Leave Act (Pflegezeitgesetz – PflegeZG) of 28 May 2008 (Federal Law Gazette (BGBl.) I, p. 874, 896) as amended if the relative is in need of care within the meaning of sections 14 and 15 of the Eleventh Book of the German Social Code (SGB XI) of 26 May 1994 (Federal Law Gazette (BGBl.) I, p. 1014, 1015) as amended.

Section 22 Compensation for disadvantages

- (1) Doctoral candidates with disabilities or chronic illnesses that impede their completion of the doctoral requirements should be granted appropriate compensation for disadvantages by the Doctoral Degree Board upon application. The Doctoral Degree Board determines the form and extent of the compensatory measure in accordance with the severity of the documented disability or illness that impedes the candidate's completion of the doctoral requirements. Compensatory measures may include, in particular, the reasonable extension of examination deadlines specified in these doctoral regulations; in addition or alternatively, reasonable compensation may also be provided in another form.
- (2) The application for compensation for disadvantages must be submitted with the application to initiate the doctoral examination process at the latest. Documentation of a disability or chronic illness within the meaning of subsection 1, sentence 1 must be provided in the form of a medical certificate containing the medical findings necessary for the assessment. The Doctoral Degree Board may generally or in individual cases require the submission of a medical certificate from a doctor that it has designated.
- (3) In disputed cases, the Representative for Students with a Disability or Chronic Illness is to be consulted with the consent of the doctoral candidate prior to a decision by the Doctoral Degree Board in accordance with subsection 1, sentence 2.

Section 23 Retention of examination documents

- (1) Upon the successful completion of the doctoral examination process, the examination documents including the doctoral thesis will be kept on file at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources.
- (2) If the doctoral thesis is rejected or the doctoral examination is definitively failed, the doctoral thesis and all evaluations will be kept on file at the faculty.
- (3) The faculty must keep the examination documents for five years. After the retention period has expired, examination documents pursuant to subsection 1 are to be transferred to the University Archives and examination documents pursuant to subsection 2 are to be offered to the University Archives.

Section 24 Access to examination documents

For a period of one year after the completion of the doctoral examination process, the doctoral candidate is to be given access to review the examination documents. The chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board determines when and where such access will be given.

Section 25 Doctorate in joint supervision with other higher education institutions

(1) Joint doctoral examination processes with one or more German or foreign higher education institutions with the right to confer doctoral degrees may be conducted on the basis of an agreement between the University of Freiburg and the other institution or institutions. This cooperation agreement must be signed by the doctoral candidate and, on behalf of the University of Freiburg, by the supervisor, the chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board and the Rector. The cooperation agreement must be approved by the Doctoral Degree Board. The cooperation agreement must address the following points in particular:

1. the academic supervision of the doctoral candidate,
2. the minimum length of research stays at the partner institutions,
3. the examination procedures, including the language to be used, the composition of the examination committee and the grading system to be used,
4. the procedures for awarding the doctoral degree certificate,
5. the obligation to publish the doctoral thesis,
6. responsibility for travel expenses.

(2) The general provisions of these doctoral regulations apply to doctorates conducted by the University of Freiburg in joint supervision with other higher education institutions with the right to confer doctoral degrees, unless specific provisions are made below.

(3) The doctoral candidate is supervised by one member of the academic teaching staff from each of the other participating institutions as well as one member of the academic teaching staff from the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources who fulfils the requirements under section 3, subsection 1, sentence 1.

(4) The doctoral candidate decides in consultation with the supervisors of the doctoral thesis, which of the participating institutions will conduct the doctoral examination process.

(5) The doctoral thesis may also be submitted in a language other than German or English; section 9, subsection 2 applies accordingly. The participating faculties and higher education institutions must be listed on the back of the title page of the doctoral thesis.

(6) The provisions of the institution where the doctoral examination process is conducted apply to the evaluation of the doctoral thesis, the implementation of the oral examination, the determination of the overall result and the possibility of repeating the doctorate, whereby the following conditions must be met:

1. If the doctoral examination process is not conducted by the University of Freiburg, it must be ensured that at least one subject representative from the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Freiburg who fulfils the requirements pursuant to section 3, subsection 1 is involved as a reviewer in the doctoral examination process at the other institution.

2. If the doctoral examination process is conducted by the University of Freiburg, at least one representative from the other or one of the other participating higher education institutions who fulfils the requirements pursuant to section 3, subsection 2 must be appointed as a reviewer or examiner.

(7) The doctoral degree certificate includes the names and signatures of the persons designated in accordance with the doctoral regulations of the participating institutions and bears the seal of the University of Freiburg and the seal of the other participating institution(s) or faculty/faculties. It includes the designation of the academic degree of Doctor of Natural Sciences (Dr. rer. nat.), Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.) or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) as well as, if applicable, the corresponding foreign academic degree. The doctoral degree certificate includes a note that the doctorate was completed under joint supervision. If two doctoral degree certificates are issued, sentences 1 to 3 apply accordingly.

(8) Upon receiving the doctoral degree certificate, the holder obtains the right to use the doctoral title in the Federal Republic of Germany and, in the case of a joint doctorate with a foreign higher education institution, the right to use equivalent academic title in the country to which the foreign institution belongs. The holder obtains the right to use only one doctoral title.

(9) For the publication of the doctoral thesis and the number of deposit copies, the cooperation agreement can refer to the right of the other/an other participating higher education institution. It must be ensured that the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources receives at least three deposit copies and the University Library Freiburg receives the number of copies required in accordance with section 14, subsection 4, sentence 1, no. 2, depending on the type of publication.

Section 26 Doctoral convention

- (1) The doctoral candidates accepted to the doctorate at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources comprise a doctoral convention
- (2) The doctoral convention may debate matters that affect doctoral candidates and make recommendations to university bodies. Drafts of the doctoral regulations are made available to the doctoral convention for comment; the comments are included in the Senate documentation.
- (3) The doctoral convention adopts its own rules of procedure and elects a board. Details on the organization of the doctoral convention and the election of the board are laid down in the rules of procedure, which the doctoral convention adopts by a majority of the members present.
- (4) A member of the board of the doctoral convention may participate in sessions of the Grand Faculty Council in an advisory capacity when discussing drafts of the doctoral regulations.

Section 27 Doctoral anniversary

The Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources may renew the doctorate with a degree certificate on the occasion of the twenty-fifth and fiftieth anniversary of the date of the completion of the doctorate. It will deliver a laudatio, recognizing the honouree's academic or other public accomplishments since completing the doctorate. The Grand Faculty Council makes decisions in this regard.

Section 28 Honorary doctorate

- (1) The Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources awards the degree of Honorary Doctor of Natural Sciences (Doctor rerum naturalium honoris causa, abbreviated Dr. rer. nat. h.c.) or Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (Doctor philosophiae honoris causa, abbreviated Dr. phil. h.c.) as a rare distinction to recognize outstanding academic achievement in subject areas represented by the faculty. Women may use the feminine form of the honorary doctoral title.
- (2) The Grand Faculty Council in consultation with the Senate decides on the award of the honorary doctorate as well as its revocation in accordance with section 18.
- (3) The proposal to award an honorary doctorate must be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board by one or more professors or senior lecturers (Privatdozent/Privatdozentin) at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources. The proposal must include:
 1. a biography of the person to be honoured,
 2. a list of their publications,

3. a detailed justification and
4. a draft wording for the certificate.

After ensuring that the proposal is complete, the chairperson of the Doctoral Degree Board forwards it to the Grand Faculty Council.

(4) The Grand Faculty Council appoints a committee to review the requirements for the honorary doctorate and prepare a report for a decision by the Grand Faculty Council. The committee consists of: the proposer or one of the proposers as a representative of the group as well as three additional professors or senior lecturers (Privatdozent/Privatdozentin), one member of the academic staff who holds a doctorate and one student in an advisory capacity.

(5) Taking into account the committee's report, the Grand Faculty Council makes a decision on the application with a two-thirds majority of voting members.

(6) The person to be honoured is informed of the planned honorary doctorate only after the entire process has been completed. They will be offered the honorary doctorate by the Dean.

(7) The honorary doctorate should be awarded at a ceremony where the Dean presents the certificate in the presence of members of the faculty. The certificate should recognize the academic merits of the person to whom the doctorate is awarded. The certificate is signed by the Rector and the Dean and bears the university seal.

Section 29 Entry into force and transitional provisions

(1) These doctoral regulations enter into force on 1 April 2016. At the same time, the doctoral regulations for the University of Freiburg's Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources of 22 January 2009 (Official Announcements, Vol. 40, No. 5, pp. 7–21), last amended on 31 May 2013 (Official Announcements, Vol. 44, No. 33, pp. 468–469) ceases to apply.

(2) The previous regulations apply to doctoral examination processes that had already been initiated or for which an application to initiate the process had already been submitted at the time that these doctoral regulations enter into force.

(3) The previous regulations apply to doctoral candidates who have already been accepted to the doctorate but have not yet applied to initiate the doctoral examination process at the time these doctoral regulations come into force, unless the doctoral candidate expressly requests that these doctoral regulations be applied.

Freiburg, 29 February 2016



Prof. Dr. Gunther Neuhaus
Vice Rector

Annex:

(to section 7, subsection 1, sentence 3, no. 7)

Declaration in lieu of oath

The declaration in lieu of oath is generally to be submitted in writing. The possibility of recording a declaration in lieu of oath remains unaffected. The written declaration has the following wording:

“Declaration in lieu of oath in accordance with section 7, subsection 1, sentence 3, no. 7 of the doctoral regulations of the University of Freiburg for the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources.

1. The doctoral thesis submitted on the topic

_____ is my
own independent work.

2. I have used only the sources and aids specified and have not made use of any unauthorized assistance from third parties. In particular, I have clearly identified any content taken word-for-word or in substance from other works as such.

3. The doctoral thesis or parts thereof

(Please check if applicable)

- ☐ have not previously been submitted to a higher education institution in Germany or abroad as part of an examination or qualification requirement.
- ☐ were submitted as follows to a higher education institution in Germany or abroad as part of an examination or qualification requirement:

Title of the work submitted elsewhere:

Name of the relevant higher education institution:

Year in which the work was submitted:

Type of examination or qualification requirement:

4. I confirm the accuracy of the above statements.
5. I am aware of the significance of the declaration in lieu of oath and the legal consequences in the case of untrue or incomplete statements.

I declare in lieu of oath that the statements above are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Place and date

Signature”