

FAQ PhD „Epidemiology and Clinical Research“

– Frequently asked questions and answers:

1. Application

F: When is the annual application deadline?

A: The application deadline is December 31 each year for the following year.

F: Which degree programs are recognized for admission to the PhD program?

A: The admission requirements for the PhD program are regulated in § 5 of the PhD regulations. They differ in terms of the degrees completed (e.g., bachelor's, master's, or state examination) and are anchored in the PhD regulations:

https://imibe.uk-essen.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PhD_Ordnung.pdf .

Completed degree programs in the natural sciences or life sciences are generally recognized. These include, in particular, the following degree programs:

human medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, epidemiology, public health, biology, chemistry, physics, biochemistry, pharmacy, psychology, mathematics, statistics, computer science, nutritional sciences, sociology, and sports science. Bachelor's and master's degrees must comprise a total of at least 300 ECTS credits.

F: What are the admission requirements for the PhD program?

A: The admission requirements are set out in the PhD regulations. These can be found on the website:

<https://imibe.uk-essen.de/phd/> Steps 1-12 for applying and the documents to be submitted are also described here.

F: How can English language skills be demonstrated?

A: TOEFL and IELTS are common language certificates for English language skills and are recognized for applications to the PhD program. Applicants who have demonstrated English language skills up to the high school level are not required to acquire such a certificate.

F: Is provisional admission possible?

A: No. The doctoral committee for PhD matters decides on the admission of applicants to the PhD program in Epidemiology and Clinical Research in the first quarter of each year.

F: Where can I find information about enrolling at the University of Duisburg-Essen after receiving my letter of admission from the doctoral committee for PhD matters?

A: All important information about enrollment can be found at the following link:

https://www.uni-due.de/studierendensekretariat/ts_zulassungsfreier_studiengang.php

F: When and how will I receive my student ID card?

A: After successful enrollment, your student ID card will be sent to you by mail. Therefore, please make sure to provide a current address when enrolling.

F: What conditions must supervisors fulfill in accordance with the PhD regulations?

A: Full-time and part-time professors, adjunct professors, junior professors who are members of the University of Duisburg-Essen, habilitated members of the University of Duisburg-Essen are eligible to participate as supervisors in a PhD program, provided that they were eligible to participate during their time as members. This eligibility also applies in the event of the departure of one of the aforementioned persons with regard to the doctoral students they supervise who are already admitted to the PhD program at the time of departure. University teachers who have been relieved of their duties or retired are entitled to accept doctoral students for supervision and participate in PhD programs if their relief from duty or retirement did not take place more than three years ago or if they continue to be actively involved in the faculty's research.

The doctoral committee for PhD matters decides on exceptions.

A special feature of the PhD program is the support of the doctoral candidate during his or her PhD thesis by a second supervisor. This supervisor has to belong to a university institution that has the right to award doctorates.

2. Teaching**F: How many hours of teaching are offered in the PhD program in Epidemiology and Clinical Research?**

A: The implementing regulations stipulate that the PhD program in Epidemiology and Clinical Research comprises 300 teaching units as a compulsory program. One teaching unit (TU) is 45 minutes. A total of 300 teaching units (introductory week and eight module weeks) are offered in the first four semesters. Further details are specified in the implementing regulations.

F: When and how can doctoral students obtain an overview of the hours they have already completed?

A: The timetable tells students how many hours they have attended in each module week.

Example: Introductory week, summer semester 2025 (40 teaching units [TU] in total, each TU comprises teaching of 45 min)

20 TU Epidemiology

16 TU Statistics

3 TU Scientific Competence

1 TU SAS

As a rule, participation in the LE is recorded in a Transcript of Records (ToR) and only issued when the doctoral candidate intends to submit their dissertation.

In justified exceptional cases, a preliminary ToR can be requested at the end of the 4th semester.

F: Can teaching units attended outside the PhD program be credited toward a ToR?

A: Particularly in the case of elective modules, doctoral students can have lectures, conference attendance, etc. credited, provided that they relate in the broadest sense to the topics of epidemiology/clinical research/medical topics in line with the doctoral thesis topic.

Proof of participation in the event, as well as the content and number of hours of the event, must be provided to the PhD coordination office. Please note the implementing provisions regarding the maximum creditability of, for example, lectures.

F: How many hours are there in a week of attendance at IMIBE?

A: A complete module week usually comprises 40 teaching units. One teaching unit lasts 45 minutes.

F: Are the module weeks always the same length?

A: The duration of the module weeks can vary, which is why there is no generally applicable duration for all module weeks.

F: On which platform is the teaching content for the module weeks made available?

A: The teaching content is made available for download on sciebo before a module week. Students are sent the current link in each case.

F: Is maternity leave or parental leave compatible with continuing studies?

A: The PhD regulations govern the use of maternity leave or parental leave. During a PhD program, the maternity leave provisions of the Maternity Protection Act apply, even if the student is not employed.

The maternity leave period is six weeks before the birth and eight weeks after the birth (12 weeks in the case of premature or multiple births).

It is advisable to notify your doctoral supervisor and the PhD coordination office of your pregnancy. The Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act provides for an extension of the qualification period by up to two years per child during the doctoral period.

3. Dissertation

F: Is a simple or extended certificate of good conduct required for the submission of a doctoral thesis?

A: A certificate of good conduct of type O is required for the submission of a doctoral thesis. If there are difficulties in obtaining such a certificate of good conduct, e.g. due to foreign citizenship, an extended certificate of good conduct is also sufficient.

F: Is it possible to change the doctoral thesis topic during advanced PhD studies?

A: It is generally possible to change the topic of your doctoral thesis. This requires careful restructuring, consultation with your supervisors, and consideration of all formal processes. The program director should be consulted in advance. A decision will then be made as to whether an application can be submitted to the doctoral committee for PhD matters.

F: How is exceeding a deadline handled?

A: The doctoral thesis should be submitted three years after registration on the doctoral candidate list. Any exceeding of this deadline must be submitted to the doctoral committee for PhD matters in accordance with § 6 (6) of the PhD regulations. In addition to the application for an extension, an additional statement regarding the exceeding of the deadline must be submitted. Both documents will then be reviewed by the doctoral committee for PhD matters.

F: How do I apply for an extension?

A: To apply for an extension, you must send an informal letter to the doctoral office explaining why you need the extension. This letter must be signed by the doctoral candidate and the supervisor. If the extension is approved, it will be valid for one additional year. After approval by the committee for PhD matters, the doctoral candidates will also receive a corresponding letter, a copy of which must be forwarded to the PhD coordination office.

F: When is it possible to submit a cumulative dissertation?

A: The dissertation can also be submitted in cumulative form if the doctoral candidate has three or more scientific publications (original works) with at least two publications (original works) as first author and

a) the publications have been published as original works in internationally recognized, peer-reviewed journals listed in Medline or Web of Science or have been accepted for publication, and

b) a written statement from the supervisor is available with a detailed description of the doctoral candidate's contribution to the work, and

c) the publications are no more than three years old.

A cumulative dissertation can only be submitted once all submitted publications have at least been accepted. If an article has been accepted but not yet been published, the dissertation can still be submitted.

F: How is admission to the doctoral examination regulated in the PhD regulations?

A: The application for admission must be submitted in writing to the chair of the doctoral committee for PhD matters. All documents required for admission to the doctoral examination are described in § 8 (2) of the PhD regulations. Based on the application and the documents, the doctoral committee for PhD matters decides on admission to the examination.

F: How long does the doctoral procedure take in total?

A: The application process—from submission to decision—usually takes several months and depends on various factors.

F: How often do the doctoral graduation ceremonies take place?

A: The doctoral graduation ceremonies take place twice a year, one ceremony per semester. These usually take place in June and December.

Participation is voluntary and requires prior registration.

F: The implementation regulations include PhD tours and PhD conferences. How can I participate?

A: PhD tours are not currently offered. Alternatively, we offer tours of the NAKO Study Center.

In the broadest sense, PhD conferences include the “Research Day,” which takes place annually in November at Essen University Hospital. Here, every doctoral student can present their PhD thesis and engage in conversation and exchange ideas with other doctoral students.