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Doctoral studies - Quality of creditable coursework

Notes on Art. 36 of the ETH Zurich Ordinance on the Doctorate, Section 10.3 of the Rector's Implementation Provisions:

Doctoral students must undertake further training as part of their regular doctoral studies to deepen their knowledge within and outside their field of research, acquire interdisciplinary skills and integrate themselves into the scientific community. To achieve these three objectives, at least 12 ECTS credit points must be earned. The departments provide students with access to corresponding courses, e.g. by designating suitable course units from the ETH course catalogue (VVZ) or by designing course units or programmes. This also applies to the acquisition of the compulsory credit point on the topic of good scientific practice and ethics, which is recognised within the framework of "interdisciplinary competencies".

Section 10.3 of the Rector's Implementation Provisions for the ETH Zurich Ordinance on the Doctorate lists examples of academic achievements and expresses their scope in ECTS credit points. For regular courses the credit point details of the VVZ are binding and for language courses the respective details of the ETH/UZH Language Centre apply.

It is important to have an ETH-wide, standardised understanding of the level and quality of these academic achievements. As the description and the specific examples show, these academic achievements refer to those at university level (university/university of applied sciences) remunerated with ECTS credit points. The quality of the creditable coursework must be ensured, especially for courses that are not offered by ETH itself.

Since 1 January 2022, ETH issues an official transcript for doctoral studies, which is why the quality of externally attended courses must be guaranteed even more. Achievements that do not meet the above-mentioned standards will not be credited towards the doctoral studies.

For other possible academic achievements that are not typically remunerated with credit points, such as participation in committees, Clause 10.3 of the Implementation Provisions explicitly specifies the credit points that can be credited. The section also contains a negative catalogue, i.e. it describes achievements that cannot be credited.

The supervisors of doctoral theses are strongly encouraged to always discuss the coursework intended for their doctoral students' doctoral studies individually and to take the appropriate care when making their selection. The early involvement of the doctoral administrations of the departments is extremely important to ensure that all requirements for the regular doctoral studies are correctly fulfilled before registering for the doctoral examination. If this is not the case, the doctoral examination cannot be carried out.

If you have any questions, please contact the Doctoral Administration Office (doktorat@ethz.ch).