

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE “RIGOROSUM” (DOCTORAL STUDY CATHOLIC THEOLOGY)**

*Status: January 2025*

The examination board usually consists of at least three persons (i.e. the director of the doctoral program or a deputy; the supervisor; a representative of the discipline of specialization; and possibly one or two reviewers).

Examinations can be conducted in German or English.

The examination interview lasts a maximum of one hour and consists of the following three parts:

1. **Short presentation of the findings of the dissertation by the doctoral candidate (maximum 15 minutes!)**: Above all, the presentation should answer the proposed research questions and especially focus on each part of the dissertation which demonstrates progress from or improvement upon previous research. Possible points of criticism in the two reviews should also be responded to.
2. **Defense of the thesis (approx. 15 minutes)**: The starting point are the critiques of the reviews to which the doctoral candidate can replicate (if not already done in the short presentation). Furthermore, the members of the examination board are able to ask additional critical questions on the coherence and scope of specific findings of the dissertation – if possible in such a way that requires the candidates to present arguments for their results.
3. **Theological contextualization of the study** and its results, especially from the perspectives of the dissertation and specialization disciplines (twice **10–15 minutes**): The members of the examination board should give the candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their familiarity with ongoing theological discourses, or to be able to place the results of their specific researches in the larger theological context by asking sufficiently open and clear questions (i.e. overview questions instead of specific questions).

It is recommended that the candidate consults with the examiners in advance about the range of possible overarching themes (at least three per discipline) that may be the subject of the examination discussion.