



The habilitation procedure

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Preamble

The habilitation is the recognition by the faculty of a special qualification for research and teaching in a subject or field of biosciences.

The habilitation procedure is based on the habilitation regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences (<https://www.bio.uni-heidelberg.de/en/study-and-teaching/habilitation>).

Overview of the procedure

1. The candidate submits the application to initiate the habilitation procedure to the Dean's Office.
2. If the application fulfils the formal requirements, the candidate will be invited to present him/herself at a meeting of the habilitation conference.
3. After the presentation, the habilitation conference votes on the opening of a habilitation procedure and appoints a committee.
4. The commission evaluates the written performance and obtains external expert opinions.
5. As soon as all reviews are available, the chair of the committee reports to the habilitation conference on the result of his/her work based on the assessments of the committee and the external reviewers on the quality of the candidate and his/her performance. The habilitation conference then votes on the continuation of the procedure. In the event of a positive vote, it also selects the topic of the habilitation lecture from the proposals previously submitted by the candidate.
6. The candidate is invited to give a presentation to the habilitation conference on the selected topic, which is communicated to him/her three weeks before the date of the meeting. The habilitation conference gives a final vote.
7. If the result is positive, the candidate is awarded the title of Privatdozent and with it the authorisation to teach (Venia legendi) in the selected subject.

Initiation of the habilitation procedure

(!) Before you initiate the habilitation procedure, you should contact the chairperson of the habilitation conference, who will advise you and initiate and accompany your procedure. This is usually the Vice Dean of the Faculty. You can also obtain further information from the Dean's Office. Unless the respective candidate objects, you can also attend the lectures of other habilitation candidates for information purposes.

The application to initiate the habilitation procedure must include
(Please label each document with your surname and first name).

1. Personal sheet (form available from the dean's office) (2-fold)
2. Doctoral certificate, certified (2-fold)
3. Curriculum vitae (2-fold and as pdf)
4. Information on teaching activities (2-fold and as pdf)
5. Complete list of publications and list of third-party funds (2-fold and as pdf)
6. Habilitation thesis or cumulative habilitation (see below) (2 copies and as pdf)
7. Three suggested topics and an alternative topic for the habilitation lecture (see below)
8. A statement on previous habilitation applications (1 original and 1 pdf)
9. A statement as to whether or not a court judgement prohibits the practice of a professionally relevant occupation. (1 original and 1 pdf)
10. A declaration of the subject area for which authorisation to teach is being applied for ("*Venia legendi in ...*"). (1 original and 1 pdf)

The individual pdf files should not be larger than 5 MB (please split the documents if necessary).
The habilitation thesis should not exceed 15 MB.

Point 4:

According to §6 of the habilitation regulations, the pedagogical and didactic aptitude must be proven in detail. If you have already been teaching several courses on the Faculty's Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes for some time, you can apply for a teaching certificate. A separate application must be submitted to the Dean and the Dean of Studies. A total of at least 100 hours of teaching activity at the Faculty of Biosciences is expected. The teaching certificate can also be applied for independently of the habilitation. (Form available from the Dean's Office, see also §6(4) of the habilitation regulations).

Point 6:

In the case of a cumulative habilitation, the publications to be assessed instead must be clearly labelled in the publication list and a detailed summary must be prepared. The usual length of a cumulative habilitation is approx. 30 A4 pages (not including the publications). A *common thread* should be recognisable throughout. In the case of publications with several authors where you are not the first or corresponding author, you should also clearly indicate your contribution to the work.

The habilitation thesis can be written in English or German. In the latter case, a summary must also be submitted in English.

Presentations

The habilitation procedure comprises two lectures before the habilitation conference:

1. **The presentation (according to § 5 (4) HabO)**
2. **The scientific presentation (according to §9 HabO)**

Contents:

In your **presentation**, you will report on your research work. You must convince your future colleagues of the quality and originality of your research.

In the **academic presentation or "teaching rehearsal"**, you give a presentation on a topic that is largely unfamiliar to you and that the habilitation conference has selected from your suggestions. Submit three possible topics and an alternative topic no later than the opening of the habilitation procedure and make them palatable with a few substantive references. These topics must not be related to your research work and must not overlap. It is recommended that you provide an alternative topic so that no time is lost due to a late submission if the habilitation conference is of the opinion that one of the topics mentioned does not fulfil the required criteria. You will be informed of the topic chosen by the habilitation conference by the Dean's Office at least three weeks before the presentation.

Place, duration, means:

Both lectures usually take place as part of the habilitation conferences of the Faculty of Biosciences (usually before the meetings of the Faculty Council). The time and place will be agreed with you in advance. The contact person here is the managing director. All aids and presentation media of your choice are available for *both* presentations. Familiarise yourself with the room in advance and prepare for the presentation. Both presentations should last *a maximum of 20 minutes*.

Didactics:

Your **teaching skills** will be tested in both lectures; after all, your habilitation is intended to confirm your qualification as a university lecturer. You will be faced with a special problem that needs to be overcome. Unlike in the staff seminars or "lectures" that you give at academic conferences and institute colloquia, you are not dealing with an audience that shares your interests and has roughly the same prior knowledge. You are dealing with a very inhomogeneous audience:

- with people who have no prior knowledge and whose interest in the subject must first be awakened (not just students),
- but also with lecturers with teaching experience or even specialists who may know the research area presented better than you do.

Remember the **basic didactic rules**:

- First develop the topic in an elementary and generally understandable way and arouse interest.
- Raise the level in the middle section. Do things that, at best, even surprise the specialist.
- Finally, summarise the most important results in a generally understandable form.

For the teaching sample:

- In the discussion, it is positively impressive when you realise that you know a lot beyond what has been presented and have read a lot of literature.
- However, it is fatal if it turns out that you are not even familiar with the usual textbook and examination knowledge.
- It is particularly unpleasant if your PowerPoint presentation is based on material that obviously comes from other sources - even if you state them correctly (scanned images, data downloaded from the Internet, even entire slides from other scientists). Always remember that *your effort and performance will be assessed!*

Tasks after the habilitation

With the habilitation you receive the title "Privatdozent / in" (and the authorisation to teach or *venia legendi*) at the Faculty of Biosciences. The title obliges you to participate in teaching at the Faculty free of charge to the extent of 2 SWS (SWS = semester hour per week; 1 SWS corresponds to 45 minutes of teaching per week during the lecture period) per semester. The title "Privatdozent" expires if you do not fulfil this obligation. If you work full-time at the University, you will now become a member of the Habilitation Conference and are obliged to attend the meetings of the Habilitation Conference.

Frequently asked questions

- **Do I have to be employed by the university to apply for the habilitation?**

No.

- **At what stage in your career does it make sense to apply for a habilitation?**

The habilitation is/was generally used to assess whether a candidate is eligible for a professorship. Successful candidates have therefore demonstrated their ability to conduct innovative research in a leading position through publications as senior authors. They have usually acquired third-party funding and have extensive experience in teaching. The typical successful candidate is a group leader, "Akademischer (Ober)Rat" or advanced senior postdoc, but other profiles can also be successful.

- **How many (first/last/corresponding) theses do I need for the habilitation?**

There are no fixed figures.

- **Do I have to have acquired third-party funding for my habilitation?**

This is not an absolute requirement. However, if you have not yet received a grant, you should be able to justify this.

- **How many teaching hours do I need to have completed in order to qualify for the habilitation?**

According to the doctoral regulations, at least one course must have been held. In order to receive the teaching certificate, one hundred hours must have been completed at the Faculty of Biosciences.

- **What is expected of me during the introductory lecture (or presentation talk)?**

You should present your achievements in research, teaching and third-party funding. The aim is to convince the habilitation conference (which has not necessarily read your CV or the documents you have submitted) that you are a suitable candidate for the habilitation.

- **Can I freely choose the topics for the habilitation lecture ("Lehrprobe")?**

Yes, but the topics must not be related to your field of research. The aim is to assess your didactic skills by presenting a topic that is not part of your usual area of specialisation to a broad audience.

- **What is expected of me during the habilitation lecture ("Lehrprobe")?**

Put your didactic skills to the test when you present a topic that is not part of your specialism. You need to show that you know the scientific facts well and can explain them clearly with original illustrations.

- **What is the target level of the habilitation lecture, Bsc, Msc level?**

Advanced Bachelor's or Master's level.

- **Can I habilitate at the Faculty of Life Sciences and teach at another faculty?**

No.

- **How long does the procedure usually take?**

Usually 6-9 months.

- **I already have my habilitation from the University of XYZ, can I transfer it to Heidelberg?**

Yes, it is possible to rehabilitate. You no longer have to submit a habilitation thesis, but you must give a presentation on your research achievements. Please contact the Dean's Office (management) for further information.

- **I still have questions. Who can I contact?**

Either the Dean's Office (management) or the Vice Dean responsible for habilitations.

- **I'm not sure if my profile is sufficient; who can help me?**

Please contact the Vice Dean responsible for habilitations.