Regulations for the doctoral student program „Org-BOOST (Organoid-Based mOdelling Of Solid Tumors)" of the Medical Faculty of Ulm University and the DFG RTG 3175/1.

§ 1 Scope of this Regulation

(1) Participation in Org-BOOST may commence prior to formal enrollment in a doctoral program. Enrollment in IGradU or another recognized doctoral program at Ulm University is a prerequisite for the award of the Org-BOOST Completion Certificate.

(2) Doctoral candidates shall be subject to the applicable doctoral regulations of their respective program. For candidates enrolled in IGradU, the IGradU Doctoral Regulations shall apply in full. At the time of adoption of this Regulation, the applicable version is published in the Official Announcements of Ulm University No. 33 of 22 December 2025, pp. 504–524. The additional requirements specified in this Regulation shall apply to all Org-BOOST doctoral candidates, irrespective of their doctoral program.

(3) This Regulation exclusively defines the additional mandatory requirements for the award of the "Org-BOOST" Completion Certificate. It does not establish an independent doctoral degree program.

§ 2 Temporal Framework

(1) Participation in Org-BOOST may commence prior to formal enrollment in IGradU or another recognized doctoral program at Ulm University.

(2) For all time-bound requirements defined by the applicable doctoral regulations, the official date of enrollment in the respective doctoral program shall serve as the reference date. As an exception, activities completed after successful participation in the IGradU Selection Day are usually recognized towards the corresponding IGradU requirements, even if completed prior to formal enrollment.

(3) The structured Org-BOOST program is designed for a regular funding and qualification period of four (4) years, commencing on the individual start date in Org-BOOST. The individual start date in Org-BOOST shall be the date specified in the candidate's admission to the Org-BOOST program, irrespective of the date of formal enrollment in the respective doctoral program. This program duration does not alter or extend the time limits defined by the applicable doctoral regulations.

(4) Periods of statutory maternity protection, parental leave, long-term illness, or other justified interruptions shall be considered in accordance with the applicable doctoral regulations of Ulm University. The Org-BOOST Steering Committee may approve appropriate adaptations of program-specific requirements and qualification timelines on a case-by-case basis, without prejudice to the provisions of the applicable doctoral regulations or funding conditions.

For information, not legally binding

§ 3 Org-BOOST Briefing Seminar

(1) Participation in the mandatory four-day Org-BOOST Briefing Seminar.

(2) The seminar consists of structured, program-specific modules covering organoid technologies, bioengineering, bioinformatics, and translational applications within the Org-BOOST research framework.

(3) Dates and times of the seminar shall be announced by the Org-BOOST coordinators or responsible person in due course.

(4) Participation shall be considered successful only if all modules have been attended in full.

(5) In cases of absence for reasons beyond the candidate's control, alternative arrangements for completing the missed components may be offered on a case-by-case basis. The Org-BOOST Steering Committee shall determine the appropriate arrangements in consultation with the responsible lecturers.

§ 4 Annual Organoid Retreat (AOR)

(1) The AOR is expected to take place once per academic year and doctoral candidates are required to participate in each annual retreat during their enrollment in Org-BOOST.

(2) Participation in the AOR shall be recognized as a key competence activity within the meaning of the IGradU regulations and subject to the provisions of § 10.

(3) In cases of absence for reasons beyond the candidate's control, the Org-BOOST Steering Committee may determine appropriate compensatory measures on a case-by-case basis.

§ 5 Program-Specific Practical Training

(1) The practical training requirement defined in the IGradU Doctoral Regulations for the second year of doctoral studies (11 days of laboratory rotations) shall be fulfilled within Org-BOOST through mandatory participation in the following program-specific modules:

- Organoid and Printing Practical Training (OrgPrint)
- Organoid Computational Practical Training (OrgComp)

(2) Dates and formats of the practical training modules may be delivered in consecutive sessions or through flexible, individually scheduled components. Dates and formats shall be announced by the Org-BOOST coordinators in due course.

(3) Successful participation requires full attendance and completion of all required course components. The responsible lecturers may grant exemptions from individual sessions based on the candidate's prior knowledge or relevant training experience.

For information, not legally binding

(4) In cases of absence for reasons beyond the candidate's control, alternative arrangements for missed components may be offered on a case-by-case basis. The responsible lecturers shall determine appropriate arrangements in consultation with the Steering Committee.

(5) Successful completion of both modules shall be documented by the Org-BOOST coordinators. Doctoral candidates shall submit the corresponding confirmations to IGradU for recognition in accordance with § 10.

(6) Successful completion of both modules is a prerequisite for the award of the Org-BOOST Completion Certificate.

§ 6 IYTK Attendance Regulation (Program-Specific Modification)

(1) For Org-BOOST doctoral candidates, IYTK lectures delivered by Org-BOOST PIs shall not be included in the calculation of the total number of lectures forming the 100% attendance basis. This modification is justified by the fact that the respective subject areas are covered in extended and program-specific depth within the Org-BOOST Briefing Seminar.

(2) The required 85% attendance rate therefore applies exclusively to the remaining IYTK lectures.

§ 7 Key Competence Activities

(1) In accordance with the IGradU Doctoral Regulations, doctoral candidates are required to complete two key competence activities per year. In the first year, one key competence activity is required in addition to submission of the project plan.

(2) The Good Scientific Practice (GSP) course, mandatory in the first year under IGradU regulations, constitutes one key competence activity.

(3) For doctoral candidates enrolled in Org-BOOST, the following program-specific components are recognized as key competence activities within the meaning of the IGradU regulations and subject to the provisions of § 10:

- the mandatory Org-BOOST Briefing Seminar, and
- each mandatory annual Org-BOOST Organoid Retreat (AOR)

(4) If, after recognition of the GSP course, the Org-BOOST Briefing Seminar, the AOR, the minimum number of key competence activities required under IGradU regulations has not yet been fulfilled within a given academic year, the remaining activity shall be completed in accordance with IGradU requirements. Such remaining activity may be fulfilled through:

- activities offered within the IGradU program,
- structured training activities offered within Org-BOOST (e.g., workshops, seminars), provided that such activity comprises a minimum duration of eight (8) hours, or
- active participation in scientific conferences (oral or poster presentation) or other external scientific activities, insofar as these are recognized under IGradU regulations.

For information, not legally binding

Documentation and recognition of all eligible Org-Boost activities shall be subject to the provisions of § 10.

§ 8 Org-BOOST Steering Committee and Decision-Making

(1) The Org-BOOST Steering Committee shall consist of:

- one Spokesperson,
- two Co-Spokespersons,
- two elected Principal Investigators (PIs), and
- one elected doctoral researcher representative.

The two PI representatives and the doctoral researcher representative shall be elected annually by their respective constituencies. The PI representatives shall be elected by the PIs participating in Org-BOOST. The doctoral researcher representative shall be elected by all Org-BOOST doctoral researchers (PhD and MD candidates), including associated doctoral researchers.

(2) The Steering Committee shall be responsible for all decisions arising under this Regulation, including but not limited to the evaluation of justified absences, approval of compensatory measures, and interpretation of program-specific requirements.

(3) Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of the votes cast.

(4) Members shall cast their votes within one week of the request for a decision.

(5) Failure to respond within this period shall be considered an abstention.

(6) A decision shall be valid if at least four members of the Steering Committee have participated in the vote.

(7) In the event of a tie, the Spokesperson shall have the casting vote.

(8) Members shall not participate in decisions in which they have a direct conflict of interest.

§ 9 Associated Doctoral Researchers and Postdoctoral Researchers

(1) Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers may apply for associated status within Org-BOOST. Admission shall be subject to approval by the Org-BOOST Steering Committee.

(2) Associated researchers may participate in Org-BOOST training activities, workshops, and other program benefits, may apply for financial support for eligible Org-BOOST-related activities, subject to applicable funding regulations, availability of funds, and approval by the Steering Committee.

(3) Participation in the Annual Organoid Retreat (AOR) is expected of all associated doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.

For information, not legally binding

(4) Associated doctoral and postdoctoral researchers can receive an individual certificate documenting the training activities successfully completed within Org-BOOST.

§ 10 Documentation and Recognition of Training Activities

(1) The Org-BOOST coordinators shall issue confirmations of participation and successful completion for the respective training activities.

(2) All Org-BOOST training activities eligible for recognition under IGradU regulations shall be submitted to IGradU by the doctoral candidates for formal recognition and documentation.

§ 11 Requirement for Award of the Org-BOOST Certificate

(1) The Org-BOOST Completion Certificate shall be awarded upon successful completion of a doctoral degree under the Doctoral Regulations of IGradU or another recognized doctoral program at Ulm University, provided that all requirements set forth in this Regulation have been fulfilled in full.

The Org-BOOST Completion Certificate shall require: (a) successful completion of the doctoral degree; (b) successful completion of the Org-BOOST Briefing Seminar; (c) successful completion of OrgPrint and OrgComp; (d) participation in the required Annual Organoid Retreats; (e) fulfillment of the applicable IYTK attendance requirement; and (f) fulfillment of the applicable key competence requirements.

(2) The Org-BOOST Steering Committee shall determine eligibility for the certificate, including the recognition of alternative doctoral programs and the assessment of justified individual circumstances.

§ 12 Entry into Force and Transitional Provisions

(1) These Regulations enter into force on 12.10.2026.

(2) These Regulations shall apply to all doctoral researchers enrolled in Org-BOOST, irrespective of their date of admission.

(3) Amendments to these regulations shall be communicated to all Org-BOOST doctoral researchers.

(4) Subsequent amendments shall not retrospectively impose additional qualification requirements on doctoral researchers already enrolled in Org-BOOST, unless required by overriding university regulations.

For information, not legally binding