

GUIDE

for Doctoral Degrees at the
Faculty of Social Sciences

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Foreword

Thank you for your interest in pursuing a doctoral degree at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Goethe University Frankfurt. On the following pages, you will find an overview of doctoral studies at our faculty, in particular the requirements, the procedure and the publication of your thesis. The Examination Office for Humanities, Cultural and Sport Sciences is responsible for conducting the doctoral examination procedure at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

You can submit all your applications in conjunction with your doctoral degree to the Doctoral Studies Office of the Dean's Office by the closing dates of **15.01., 15.03., 15.06. or 15.09.** of each year. As a rule, you will receive a reply to your application after six weeks. The Doctoral Studies Office is also your point of contact in the Dean's Office. You can contact the staff there by email at promotionen.FB03@soz.uni-frankfurt.de, the full [contact details](#) can be found at the end of this document.

You can find all applications on our website.

1 Registering as a doctoral candidate

1.1 Formal requirements for doctoral degrees at the Faculty of Social Sciences

a. General requirements

As a rule, a degree in the doctoral subject with distinction, i.e. "3" (Satisfactory) or better, is needed, which requires a minimum period of study of eight semesters. The following degrees fall under this provision: State Examination, Magister, Diplom, accredited master's programmes.

Degrees in related subjects may also be recognised as meeting the requirements. The Doctoral Committee decides on the similarity and equivalence of other degrees. If necessary, a supplementary examination must be taken after acceptance as a doctoral candidate.

b. Recognition of foreign degrees

The Doctoral Committee decides on the similarity and equivalence of foreign degrees in consultation with the Global Office. In this case, an application for the evaluation of the university degree must be submitted. Please also send the **checklist** and a Curriculum Vitae to the Dean's office.

c. Proof of language proficiency

University graduates who obtained their degree abroad, whose native language is not German and who wish to write their thesis in German must present a certificate from a DSH examination (German language examination for university entrance) or confirmation from the Global Office that the DSH examination is waived due to the existence of equivalent proof of language proficiency, exceptions are decision of the Doctoral Committee.

d. Requirements for graduates of Universities of Applied Sciences

Highly qualified graduates of universities of applied sciences can apply for acceptance as a doctoral candidate pursuant to Section 3 (2) and (5) if the following conditions are met:

- University of applied sciences degree in Social Work or Social Welfare
- Overall grade of the university of applied sciences degree of at least "Very Good" (1)
- Declaration of consent from the first supervisor of the thesis

As a further requirement, supplementary studies in the doctoral subject lasting two semesters in the master's programme/graduate studies are necessary. In this context, two qualified modules, i.e. graded at least "Good" (1.7 - 2.3), of the master's programme or relevant teacher education programme must be completed.

- In Sociology, these are the modules "Sociological Theory, History of Sociology and Philosophy of Science" and "Research Practice 1".
- In Political Science, these are the modules "Paradigms and Methods of Political Science" and "Research Practice".
- In the doctoral subject Didactics of Social Sciences, doctoral candidates must either attend "Principles of Subject Didactics" or "Advanced Subject Didactics".

The Doctoral Committee maintains a list of the corresponding module abbreviations, which is updated as per resolution.

1.2 Finding a supervisor

Once you are clear about your research field, you should first obtain an overview of the current state of research. Literature research and reading are therefore your first priority. Through this, you can already identify research gaps, which you can use to develop a first research question.

With these initial considerations and a first research question, you can write an initial draft. You can then present this to potential supervisors and discuss it with them. You should enquire in advance with whom your project would be in good hands.

The professors at the faculty are potential supervisors, but also external lecturers (see [Section 4 \(3\) Doctoral Regulations](#) for further details). You can find an overview of professors and other staff members on the institutes' websites:

Link: [Institute of Sociology](#)

Link: [Institute of Political Science](#)

It is best to go during office hours with your idea/draft.

1.3 Writing an exposé

Once you have found a supervisor, you should write your exposé in consultation with them. You can find below a list of criteria that a good exposé should meet. Please note: a good exposé is the basis for your work.

Formal requirements for the exposé

- No more than 15 pages (including bibliography, preliminary structure, time plan, etc.)
- 1.5 line spacing
- Font size 10-12 pt

Quality criteria for exposés

Research problem

- Is the research problem clearly defined?
- Are the academic and social relevance of the research problem clear?

Current state of research

- Has the current state of research been collected systematically?
- Is the current state of research clearly structured?
- Has the doctoral candidate succeeded in identifying gaps in previous literature – and points of reference for their own study?

Research question

- Is the research question clearly formulated?
- Does the research question connects convincingly to the current state of research?

Theoretical framework

- Has the theoretical approach or the choice of theoretical approaches been well founded?

- Are the terms and concepts clearly defined?

Method

- Is the approach appropriate in terms of the research question?
- Has the choice of methods been well founded (in relation to the research question and theory)?
- Is the research design practicable (within the given time frame)?

Formal aspects

- Does the design comply with common standards for references and bibliography?
- Is the design linguistically flawless?

If you have any queries about your exposé, please contact your supervisor.

1.4 Concluding a Supervision Agreement

Before registering your doctoral project, you should conclude a Supervision Agreement with your supervisor. For this purpose, you should discuss with your supervisor the doctoral process as well as your mutual expectations and obligations.

1.5 Applying for acceptance as a doctoral candidate

First, please register at the [Goethe Campus](#) as a Doctoral Candidate and apply for a doctorate at our Faculty.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Goethe University Frankfurt website. The breadcrumb trail is highlighted with a green box and labeled "Correct ✓". The path is: Home > Service > Requests > Doctorate. The "Doctorate" link is underlined and highlighted in green.

The screenshot shows the "Requests" section of the website. It contains an "Information" box stating: "On this page you can apply for your doctorate approval and send the request to the university." Below this is a "Requests" box with a message: "No requests have been created yet." A "Create new request" button is visible, with a sub-message: "You wish to apply for admission to the doctorate program and submit the request to the university."

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Goethe University Frankfurt website. The breadcrumb trail is highlighted with a red box and labeled "Wrong ✗". The path is: Home > Goethe-Campus > Your Applications. The "Your Applications" link is underlined and highlighted in red.

After acceptance by the Doctoral Committee, you'll receive an Acceptance Letter. With that you are allowed to enrol as a Doctoral Student at the Goethe Campus. You will find the manual on our website.

Application

Once you have written your exposé, you can submit an application for acceptance as a doctoral candidate, which will be reviewed by the Doctoral Committee.

The application for acceptance must include the following information:

- Doctoral subject (Sociology, Political Science, Didactics of Social Sciences)
- Working title of the doctoral thesis
- Thesis supervisor
- Signed declaration of consent and statement by the supervisor
- Declaration on whether previous doctoral procedures have been unsuccessful

Please note that only applications completed in full will be accepted.

Your application must include the following documents:

- Completed application form "Acceptance as a Doctoral Candidate"
- Signed declaration of consent by the supervisor, including their short statement
- Certified copies of all university degree and final examination certificates, including the Diploma Supplement, if applicable
- In the case of a foreign degree (cf. Section 3 (4) Doctoral Regulations): Application for Evaluation of a University Degree
- Presentation of the doctoral research project (exposé) in electronic form by email

Please include the Supervision Agreement with your application form.

Closing dates

Applications can be submitted to the Dean's Office (Room: PEG 2.G 152) by 15 January, 15 March, 15 June or 15 September of each year. The postal and email addresses can be found in the [contact details](#) at the end of this document.

Announcement of the decision

As a rule, the Doctoral Committee convenes four weeks after the submission closing date. It may:

- Approve the application

- Approve the application subject to certain conditions
- Reject the application

Usually the applicant receives the decision on acceptance within two weeks after the committee meeting.

2 Acceptance as a doctoral candidate subject to fulfilment of conditions

2.1 Enrolment according to Section 3 (3) Doctoral Regulations

According to Section 3 (3) Doctoral Regulations, the applicant should have been enrolled at Goethe University Frankfurt for two semesters prior to completion of the doctoral examination procedure.

2.2 Supplementary examination

The Examination Committee can make acceptance conditional on a supplementary examination. This is the case, for example, if the degree subject and the doctoral subject are not identical. For this, the doctoral candidate submits an application for admission to the supplementary examination to the Doctoral Committee and nominates two potential examiners.

The supplementary examination is oral. **To open the doctoral examination procedure, the doctoral candidate has to pass the supplementary examination with a grade of "3" or better; only then can the thesis be accepted.**

Supplementary examination provisions

- The supplementary examination must be taken in the doctoral subject.
- The topics of the supplementary examination and the topic of the thesis should be clearly separate insofar as the examination may not deal with the main contents of the thesis.
- The supplementary examination must be taken in the presence of two university lecturers.

Procedure

- The application for admission to the supplementary examination can be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Office by 15 January, 15 March, 15 June or 15 September of each year.

- The doctoral candidate should propose at least two university lecturers authorised to hold examinations in the doctoral subject to the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences. At its meeting, the Doctoral Committee decides which university lecturers are accepted, normally the first two professors named are chosen. However, it should be noted that none of the professors proposed for the supplementary examination can be the supervisor or the reviewer of the thesis.
- Please note: The supplementary examination can only be conducted **after receiving** the Doctoral Committee's decision!
- The examinee and the examiners agree on the topics of the supplementary examination as well as the date and time.
- The supplementary examination lasts one hour. Usually the examiners take the minutes alternately. The requirements of the supplementary examination are equivalent to those of the oral part of a major subject examination.
- The doctoral candidate must pass the supplementary examination with a grade of at least "3" (Satisfactory).
- The examinee is informed of the result of the supplementary examination immediately afterwards.
- The supplementary examination can be repeated once.

Recommendations on how to prepare

- Please contact potential examiners in advance regarding topics and dates and to specify the further procedure.
- Regardless of individual agreements, it is recommended that you prepare a literature list for each of the examination topics. Agree with your examiners whether perhaps a position paper should be prepared.
- The supplementary examination should be taken at the latest one year before the opening of the doctoral examination procedure. We recommend thinking about the supplementary examination one year before submitting the thesis so that the doctoral candidate has sufficient time in reserve to meet a fixed deadline for submitting the thesis even in the event of a delay in taking or passing the examination. Such a delay can occur, for example, if the supplementary examination is not passed at the first attempt or if one of the chosen examiners is undertaking a research sabbatical or is ill.

3 Thesis

3.1 Formal requirements

The Doctoral Regulations do not specify any rules regarding the layout of the thesis (e.g. font, font size, etc.). Please follow the instructions of the respective supervisor and discuss this question with them.

3.2 Cumulative thesis

In principle, a cumulative thesis is possible at the Faculty of Social Sciences, provided that it is equivalent to a monographic thesis in terms of quality. A cumulative thesis consists of an introduction, at least three essays and a final discussion. The following conditions must be met:

Essays

- (1) The cumulative thesis includes the submission of at least three thematically independent, single-authored essays by the doctoral candidate, which have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals or verifiably submitted for peer review. The essays must be closely related to the fields of Sociology, Political Science or Didactics of Social Sciences and linked by an overarching question that is reflected in the topic of the thesis.
- (2) At least two of the essays must have been accepted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals listed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) at the time of submitting the thesis. For essays that have not yet been published in print or online at the time of submitting the thesis, the corresponding confirmation of acceptance from the respective journal must be presented.

In addition to these two publications in SSCI-listed journals, at least one further essay can also have been submitted for review to a journal not listed in the SSCI.

- (3) At least one of the essays **must** be single-authored. For co-authored essays, one of the minimum number of three single-authored essays required can be substituted in each case by two equivalent essays according to the rules in (1) and (2), to which the doctoral candidate has made a significant contribution as co-author. Co-authors of publications submitted for the cumulative thesis may not act as reviewers of that thesis. The further rules from (1) and (2)

apply accordingly.

In the case of co-authored publications, the doctoral candidate must also describe in writing their respective personal contribution in terms of content and scale.

Introduction and final discussion

In addition to the essays, the cumulative thesis includes an introduction and a final discussion. In the introduction, the doctoral candidate presents the relationship between the submitted essays in terms of content within the framework of an overarching question and makes clear which aspects of the overarching question are covered by the individual manuscripts.

The final discussion is intended to bring together the individual results of the essays. The doctoral candidate must show what the essays contribute to answering the thesis question and embed the work in a larger scientific context. This part should also include the theoretical or methodological reflection of the doctoral candidate's own academic approach as well as a synoptic presentation and evaluation of the results in terms of content.

To ensure a substantive discussion and presentation of the results of the research, the introduction and final discussion must have a total length of at least 90,000 characters (including spaces).

4 Doctoral examination procedure

4.1 Application for the opening of the doctoral examination procedure

You submit your thesis together with your application for the opening of the doctoral examination procedure. The application form must be completed in full. The following information is required:

- Doctoral subject
- Title of the thesis
- First and second reviewer
- Members of the Examination Committee

Please submit your application in duplicate. Only applications completed in full can be accepted. Please note the instructions in [Section 4 \(3\)](#) when listing the members of the Examination Committee. The members of the Examination Committee should have been asked in advance concerning their participation.

Checklist: Annexes to the application for the opening of the doctoral procedure

1. Thesis

- Three bound copies of the thesis (no spiral binding)
- Electronic version of the thesis as a PDF file (CD or by email)

The following must be **bound into** the respective copies of the thesis:

- Cover sheet in accordance with the Doctoral Regulations
- Curriculum vitae (signed original, not a copy)
- Written declaration that the thesis has been written independently and that all resources used have been indicated in it (signed original, not a copy)

2. Curriculum vitae (signed original, not a copy) with details of education and studies

3. Degree certificate and final examination certificate

4. List of academic papers already published, if applicable

5. If the thesis has already been published in full or in part: exact details of which chapters or pages of the thesis have been published where (exact bibliographical references). This declaration must be signed and include the place and date (not a copy).

6. If applicable, supplementary examination certificate.

7. If applicable, proof of supplementary studies (graded certificates), enrolment certificates.

You can submit your application for the opening of the doctoral examination procedure by 15.01., 15.03., 15.06. or 15.09. of each year. The reviewers' reports should be available within three months after the opening of the doctoral examination procedure.

4.2 Fees

Examination fee

The examination fee pursuant to Section 8 (4) is €125.00. It must be transferred within four weeks after applying for the opening of the doctoral examination procedure and after the invoice has been issued. You will receive a payment request by post from the Examination Office for Humanities, Cultural Studies and Sport Sciences.

4.3 Examination Committee

Reviewers and composition of the Examination Committee

Reviewers:

One reviewer must be a regular member of the faculty. The other can be an external reviewer (Section 9 (4)). External means from another university or from another faculty. All professors employed at the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as postdoctoral (habilitated) researchers or junior research group leaders employed at the Faculty of Social Sciences are regular members of the faculty.

Emeritus or retired professors, external lecturers, honorary professors, adjunct professors and senior professors are affiliates of the faculty and not regular members. They are therefore external.

If you nominate an external reviewer, please also include their address in your application.

Examination Committee:

The Examination Committee includes, in addition to the reviewers, three further members (Section 10). A maximum of two committee members can be external. The faculty assumes that one member from the respective other institute will be nominated (in the case of Political Science, one member from the Institute of Sociology, and vice versa).

It is strongly recommended that doctoral candidates also nominate substitute members. Without substitute members, scheduling the disputatio might be considerably delayed.

You should contact the members of your Examination Committee in advance and enquire whether they are willing to participate in the committee.

4.3 Display period

Once the reviewers have submitted their reports, the thesis is displayed in the Examination Office for Humanities, Cultural Studies and Sport Sciences. The display period lasts two weeks during the lecture period and four weeks during the lecture-free period.

4.4 Disputatio

The disputatio is the oral defence of the thesis. A date for the disputatio can be set as soon as the display period commences. The disputatio can only take place after the end of the display period.

The date is set in agreement between the doctoral candidate and the examiners, whereby first of all the two reviewers are asked to propose dates. Please inform the Doctoral Studies Office as soon as you have found a date for the disputatio. The Doctoral Studies Office can book a room for it.

Please enquire in advance about the technical possibilities of the respective room; you might have to bring your own laptop, for example, and please arrive about 30 minutes earlier for a briefing on the media equipment.

If external examiners participate in your disputatio, they are entitled to partial reimbursement of travel costs within Germany. Alternatively, a video conference can be arranged.

4.5 Issue of a provisional final examination certificate

After the disputatio, you will receive a provisional final examination certificate (pursuant to Section 12 (5) Doctoral Regulations). This includes the examination result.

4.6 Possibilities for repeating the doctoral examination procedure

A failed disputatio may be repeated once. This must take place at the latest twelve months after the first attempt. The date is set by the chairperson of the Doctoral Committee, and the doctoral candidate is informed accordingly (Section 11 (4) Doctoral Regulations).

5 Thesis publication

5.1 Revision certificate

Before the thesis can be published, the supervisor must confirm that there are no objections against the publication of the thesis in the version submitted. Accordingly, please send your supervisor the final version of your thesis as it is to be published (this might be a revised and/or abridged version of the originally submitted thesis).

The supervisor is responsible for signing and issuing the revision certificate.

5.2 Possible forms of publication

The publication of the thesis, which is governed by Section 13 of the Doctoral Regulations, can be done in different ways. The thesis must be published as a photo print, book, microfiche, CD-ROM, in electronic form, as a contribution to an anthology or in journals (Section 13 (1)).

The three most important forms of publication are printed book or photo print (Section 13 (4a)), via an academic publisher (Section 13 (4c)) or via the internet server of University Library (Section 13 (4f)).

Number of deposit copies to be submitted:

- a) Printed book or photo print: 5 copies to the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Social Sciences and 5 copies to University Library (10 copies in total)
- b) Academic publisher: 5 copies to the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Social Sciences and 2 copies to University Library (7 copies in total)
- c) Internet server of University Library: 1 CD-ROM, of which the data format and data carrier are to be agreed with University Library, 5 copies to the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Social Sciences and 2 copies to University Library (7 copies in total + 1 CD-ROM)

The deposit copies for University Library can be submitted there directly. Do not forget to obtain a receipt confirming delivery. Please submit this receipt together with the deposit copies for the faculty to the Doctoral Studies Office of the Dean's Office.

Important information about the deposit copies:

- The deposit copies of the approved version of the thesis must contain all the information in the form included in the Supplementary Provisions of the individual faculties on a title page or a supplementary sheet.
- For the edition for book retailers, the seal number D.30 must be printed in the copyright (if published via a publishing house).

Special case: Online publication via a publishing house

Unfortunately, online publication via a publishing house is not regulated in the Doctoral Regulations. You can, however, nonetheless publish your thesis as an online publication via a publishing house. However, for it to be considered published within the meaning of the Doctoral Regulations, you must publish it pursuant to Section 13 (4a) of the Doctoral Regulations (publication as a printed book or photo print, submission of 10 deposit copies, see above).

6 Doctoral Degree Certificate

The doctoral degree certificate is issued by the Examination Office for Humanities, Cultural Studies and Sport Sciences. You will receive your doctoral degree certificate if you bring the following documents with you:

- Revision certificate (original): signed by the supervisor
- Publishing contract (a copy is also acceptable): the deposit copies are submitted after printing

or

- In the case of publication via (private) printing: deposit copies of the thesis

IMPORTANT! The doctoral candidate is not authorised to use the doctor title until after receipt of the doctoral degree certificate. The Doctoral Regulations do not provide for the "Dr. dess." title.

Further information

Link: [Doctoral Regulations \[PDF\]](#)

Contact

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