

Guidelines
regarding the doctoral qualification process

at the Faculty of Humanities

Updated: October 20, 2026

based on the
Doctoral degree regulations, 29.03.2018 version

1. Acceptance as a doctoral candidate by the Faculty of the Humanities

Acceptance as a doctoral candidate is a requirement for the admission to the doctoral process in accordance with Section 6 of the Doctoral Regulations. In your own interest, you should submit the application to the Deans' Office (attn: Office of Doctoral Affairs) at the beginning of your doctoral project. Then we will check whether the admission requirements according to § 3 PromO have been fulfilled, whether additional studies and/or examinations are required to meet the requirements, whether an aptitude test is required or whether a degree from outside Germany may be recognized.

Please complete the **application forms for acceptance** as a PhD candidate and the **supervision agreement** (in the download area of the Deans' Office homepage under "Promotion") and have the supervision agreement signed by both your supervisors. The main supervisor specifies the frequency (at least once a year) in which you must report to the supervisors on the progress of your doctoral project. Please also print and fill out the form "**Additional Information – Application for Acceptance**".

If, at the outset, only the principal supervisor has been confirmed, acceptance is possible on condition that a second supervisor is nominated within three months.

In addition to the signed supervision agreement, please also enclose with your application for acceptance the **other documents** listed on the form (university degree certificates, academic education, school leaving certificate, proof of required language skills, if applicable). If you hand in the application in person at the Deans' Office and present the original certificates, it is sufficient to submit uncertified copies of the certificates; if you send them by post, certified copies of the certificates must be submitted. In the case of degrees from outside Germany, a transcript of records should be enclosed; in the case of certificates written in languages other than German, English, French, Spanish or Italian, an officially certified translation should also be enclosed.

Once you have been accepted as a doctoral student by the faculty, you will receive **written confirmation** (which may include requirements for post-graduate qualification) with which you enroll as a doctoral student at Student Administration: [Doctoral studies at the University of Tübingen | University of Tübingen](#).

2. Admission to the doctoral examination process

As soon as your thesis has been completed, please apply in writing to the Deans' Office (attn: Office of Doctoral Affairs) for admission to the examination process.

The **letter to the Dean**¹ as head of the doctoral committee must contain the information specified in § 5 para. (1) PromO (at the least, your name and address, the doctoral subject, the title and, if applicable, the supervisor(s) of the thesis, and the desired reviewers; optionally also the examiners in the doctoral colloquium). You can find a template for the cover letter in the downloads section.

In accordance with § 5 para. (2), the following must be **enclosed** with the application:

¹ Since 1 October 2023, Prof. Dr Dietmar Till and Prof. Dr Angelika Zirker share the office of Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Prof. Zirker is responsible for doctorates.

- three printed and bound softcover copies of the thesis, also their electronic equivalent (pdf file).
- a current tabular résumé showing your professional and academic development as well as a complete list of your academic publications,
- declarations in accordance with § 5 para. (2) nos. 4 to 8 PromO (you must also explicitly state if they do not apply), which you can list in separate paragraphs on a page; then you only have to sign once at the end (sample in the downloads section: [Download / Formulare | Universität Tübingen](#))
- if you have been convicted of academically-related crimes (and only in this case), a police clearance certificate issued no more than 6 months previously.

You will be issued a written confirmation of your admission to the doctoral qualification process.

3. Assessment, inspection and acceptance of the doctoral thesis

After your admission to the doctoral qualification process, the examiners - usually the supervisors of your thesis - each receive a hard copy from the Deans' Office with the request to prepare their examiner's reports within a maximum of three months and to submit them to the Deans' Office. As a rule, **two examiners' reports** are requested; however, under certain circumstances, the number of examiners is expanded to three, either from the start of the process, or after receipt of the first or second examiner's report. The doctoral regulations permit the appointment of up to four examiners.

After completion of the review process, all members of the Faculty of Humanities who are entitled to supervise and assess a doctoral thesis will be notified that your thesis, along with the examiners' reports, is available for inspection in the Deans' Office. The **inspection period** is ten working days during the lecture period and 20 working days outside the lecture period. If, during this period, no objection to the acceptance or the grading of the thesis is raised by a faculty member entitled to supervise and assess a doctoral thesis, the thesis is accepted by the Faculty of Humanities when the inspection period ends; thus, the requirement for admission to the oral part of the examination procedure has then been fulfilled.

4. Oral defense (colloquium), conclusion of doctoral examination process and conferral of title

The doctoral colloquium should take place within six weeks of the acceptance of the thesis (end of the inspection period).

The Doctoral Regulations (§ 12) stipulate that an oral examination must take place, which must last at least 60 minutes but no longer than 90 minutes. The examination is divided into two parts: the '**Defensio**' and the '**Disputatio**'. Each part must last at least 30 minutes; it is possible for one part to last up to 60 minutes: in this case, for example, the second part must under no circumstances last longer than 30 minutes.

It is expected that, during the defence, the doctoral candidate will address the written reports and answer questions regarding the methodology, the findings of their work and the significance of the topic. This may be introduced by a short presentation – given the minimum duration of 30 minutes per

part, the presentation must take up only a limited amount of time so that the central function, namely answering questions, can be carried out. This also applies to the disputatio, the purpose of which is to conduct a 'discussion', not a monologue by the doctoral candidate. According to the doctoral regulations, this part covers the following:

In the second part (Disputatio), the candidate must demonstrate that they are able to discuss and answer questions relating to related and general issues within the subject area of their doctoral thesis in a scientifically sound manner. A key topic, which the candidate must have previously notified to the chair of the colloquium and which must differ significantly from the content of the thesis, may form the starting point for the discussion.

Please clarify with the chief examiner and the head of the examination board whether you should open the discussion in both parts of the examination with a short speech. This applies also to other questions about the course of the oral defense.

For your preparation, you will receive the **examiners' reports** in PDF form at the latest two weeks prior to the colloquium.

The **date of your doctoral colloquium** will be determined in consultation between the members of the examination board and you. If desired, the Deans' Office administration will assist you in finding a date and reserving the examination room.

The **examination board** is appointed in consultation between the Deans' Office and the primary reviewer, and your suggestions will be considered whenever possible. The examination board consists of five persons entitled to supervise and assess a doctoral thesis, one of whom chairs the board (but also has the right to take part in the examination and to vote). At least three examiners should be members of the Faculty of Humanities. The thesis reviewers are usually appointed as examiners. At least one committee member should be a full or deputy member of the faculty's doctoral examination committee; as a rule, at least one committee member is appointed who does not directly represent the doctoral subject or belong to the institute/seminar in question.

All persons entitled to supervise and assess a doctoral thesis in the department to which your doctoral subject belongs have the right to participate in your doctoral colloquium as audience members, but they do not have the right to speak. In addition, doctoral candidates accepted by the faculty may be admitted as audience members by the head of the examination board after prior registration and subject to the availability of seats. For important reasons or upon your request, audience members may be excluded from your doctoral colloquium. Any such wish to exclude the public from your oral examination should be noted in your application for admission to the doctoral qualification process.

Immediately after the doctoral colloquium, the head of the examination board will inform you of the result (colloquium grade and overall grade from the doctoral procedure) and return the display copy of your thesis to you. Provided the outcome is positive, the Dean's Office will send you official **confirmation of the completion of the examination process** upon receipt of the examination protocol. The confirmation contains the grades of the thesis and the doctoral colloquium as well as the overall grade; at the same time it states that, **until the publication of your thesis, you do not hold a doctoral degree.**

Moreover, the doctoral regulations of the Faculty of Humanities do **not provide a legal basis for the use of the "provisional" degree "Dr. des."**

You do not hold a doctoral degree (Dr. phil.) until you receive the doctoral certificate. This certificate is issued upon publication of your thesis.

5. Publication of thesis and issuing of doctoral certificate

In order to be allowed to hold the doctoral degree and to maintain the claim to it, you must publish your thesis **within two years** of the day of the doctoral colloquium. Upon your justified request, the head of the doctoral examination committee may extend the deadline by one year at a time to a **maximum of five years**. The corresponding request must be submitted to the Deans' Office (attn: Office of Doctoral Affairs) before the expiry of the set deadline in each case.

Before publishing your thesis, you must obtain the faculty's publication approval (the "imprimatur") from the Dean's Office. For this you need to provide:

- a) the **insert sheet** for the archive copies (which, in case of online publication, is also the **title page** of the thesis) for approval of the Deans' Office (a template can be found on the faculty homepage under "Promotion"),
- b) a **declaration on differences** from the copies of the thesis submitted for examination, and
- c) a statement by **the main examiner approving publication of thesis in the planned form ("nihil obstat")** to the Deans' Office.

These documents may be sent by post or e-mail to the Deans' Office (attn: Office of Doctoral Affairs).

Your thesis must be published **either as a printed monograph** (publication via the book trade by a commercial publisher with a minimum print run of 150 copies and prominently stating that it is a thesis accepted by the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Tübingen in semester XY) **or in a journal or electronically** via the server of the University Library of Tübingen (TOBIAS-lib). For details, please refer to § 18 PromO; for electronic publication, please refer to the information on the University Library website under the keyword "TOBIAS-lib". Other forms of publication are subject to approval and require an application to be submitted to the Doctoral Committee.

In any case, you must deliver **four free copies to the University Library** (University Publications) and **one copy to each of the thesis examiners**. The latter should be sent directly to the examiner, not to the University Library. Please inform the doctoral candidates office about this step. In the case of online publication via TOBIAS-lib, the archive copies must be printed on aging-resistant, wood-free, acid-free paper and with permanent binding incorporating the title page insert.

The University Library will forward one of the archive copies together with confirmation that you have delivered the required number of copies to the Deans' Office. The Deans' Office will then **issue your doctoral certificate** (date: receipt of the archive copies by the University Library) and, after checking, will transfer its archive copy to the institute/seminar library of your doctoral subject or to the main examiner of your thesis.

As soon as the doctoral certificate with the seal of the University and the signatures of the Dean and the President is available, you will receive notification from the Deans' Office.

Under certain conditions - set out in § 19 para. 2 PromO - the doctoral certificate may be issued **before the delivery of the archive copies** of your published thesis under the so-called embargo procedure. For this purpose, you must have obtained the faculty's "imprimatur" (publication approval); the publisher or the institution intending to publish the thesis must confirm to the Deans' Office that it has the manuscript ready for printing or the data set ready for publication and that publication is guaranteed within two years or a corresponding confirmation from the principal supervisor; finally, you must submit a declaration of surety or other guarantee commitments with regard to the financing of the publication. In this case, please always contact the doctoral office first.

In those exceptional cases with special justification - to be approved by the head of the doctoral examination committee - online publication via TOBIAS-lib needs to be embargoed (maximum two-year postponement of upload of the electronic file). For this purpose, the electronic version of your thesis must be transferred to the publication server via an online form; this requires registration in the publication system with the university account or via a guest access to be applied for in advance at the publication service. Via "Publish" you enter descriptive data (metadata) for the paper into the online registration form and upload the PDF as well as the original file. If possible, the archive-safe PDF/A format should be generated for the PDF version. In addition to the electronic version, two printed copies, the faculty's publication approval (= "imprimatur"), a declaration of conformity and a publication contract (in duplicate) must be delivered. In addition, a **statement from the Deans' Office** must be included, showing that the embargo and the embargo period have been approved by the head of the doctoral examination committee.

Detailed information sheet on the online publication of doctoral theses at the University of Tübingen:
[Dissertations | University of Tübingen](#)

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