

II) Guide for Accepted PhD Candidates

This guide covers the period after a professor at the Department of English has agreed to supervise your thesis and you've been formally admitted for a PhD. (See the "Guide for Prospective PhD Candidates" on how to get to that point.) Please note that these are just guidelines and that some of these steps may look a little different depending on who your supervisor is.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO A DOCTORAL PROGRAMME:

Following your admission, you can apply for admission to one of several graduate school study programmes, which offer a range of courses and networking opportunities and will, on completion, earn you a Diploma Supplement.

The Walter Benjamin Kolleg's Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities offers four [doctoral programmes](#) (20 ECTS each): Global Studies, Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies, Studies in Language and Society, and Studies in the Arts. Find out how to apply for them [here](#). There are two rounds of applications per year.

The Graduate School Gender Studies also offers a [doctoral programme](#) (20 ECTS; website in German only). Find out how and when to apply [here](#).

The Conférence Universitaire de la Suisse Occidentale (CUSO), which brings together faculty and doctoral students from the Universities of Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel and of which the University of Bern is a partner, offers a more loosely structured [Doctoral Programme in English Language and Literature](#). It may be possible to join the CUSO programme in addition to the programmes listed above. You can register [here](#).

Note that joining doctoral programmes is different for each of the department's sections, with some supervisors normally expecting their PhD candidates to join a particular programme and others leaving the choice of whether to join a programme, and if so which one, up to the candidate – so be sure to discuss this with your supervisor.

FINDING A SECOND SUPERVISOR:

In addition to your principle supervisor, you're required to find a co-supervisor, or "second supervisor" (*ZweitbetreuerIn*), for your thesis. This can, but doesn't need to, happen prior to your official admission as a PhD candidate. If your first Doctoral Agreement (*Doktoratsvereinbarung*), which has to be submitted no later than three

months after your admission, doesn't specify a co-supervisor, you get another six months to find one and submit a revised Doctoral Agreement to the Dean's Office. This means you need to find and declare a co-supervisor within nine months of your admission. It's advisable to discuss potential co-supervisors, the timing of approaching them with your request for co-supervision, and the level of their involvement in your PhD early on with your principle supervisor.

ANNUAL EMPLOYEE APPRAISAL INTERVIEWS (MAG):

Every year for the duration of your PhD studies, you and your principle supervisor review your performance against the objectives stated in the Doctoral Agreement/MAG form. Monika Iseli-Felder, our secretary in charge of personnel and finances, sends out a reminder about the deadline in advance.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES:

You may be eligible for reimbursement of (some of) the expenses you incur during your PhD studies. Note that there are different arrangements for each section for such things as ordering books, inter-library loans, and so on.

If you're on a contract with the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF, *Schweizerischer Nationalfonds*, or SNF in German) that covers conference and research trips, lodge a request for reimbursement on the finance department's online platform, [eForms](#), as soon as possible after your return.

Assistants and PhD candidates hired via competitive third-party funding (usually the SNSF) that *doesn't* cover travelling are eligible for the Faculty's [conference travel funds](#) and [fieldwork funding](#).

Paid-up student members of the Swiss Association of University Teachers of English (SAUTE) are eligible for [conference funding and the SAUTE Travel Award](#).

OPTIONAL ADVANCED TRAINING COURSES:

The University of Bern offers advanced training courses that you can take during your PhD if you wish. The ZUW (*Zentrum für universitäre Weiterbildung*, Centre for University Advanced Training, [website](#) in German only), offers a range of courses on higher-education teaching, evaluation and research management. Depending on your employment status, you're eligible for a cost reduction or even waiver for some of these courses – for example, you can study for a certificate in higher-education teaching, the Certificate of Advanced Studies in Hochschullehre HE Universität

Bern (CAS HE Unibe), free of charge if you're employed by the University on a 25% contract or more.

APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES:

If you realise you'll take longer than anticipated to complete your PhD, you'll need to get the approval of your supervisors and send a revised Doctoral Agreement to the Dean's Office for their files. This can be done at any time before the original deadline. Note that this step is also required if you're on an SNSF contract that has been extended beyond its original timeframe.

COMPLETION:

The PhD completion process involves a number of steps. What follows is a detailed breakdown of that process. All of the forms outlined below, as well as further documents outlining submission dates and PhD completion (mostly in German), can be accessed [here](#).

1. Regardless of when the thesis is submitted, a candidate's **registration for the oral examination** takes place two times a year: before a date in May or November (specific dates vary each year but can be found via [this link](#)).

At this point, the examination fee of CHF 300 must be paid. You can pay this fee with a credit slip (you can get one at the Dean's Office) or via e-banking. Details of the Faculty bank account are available [here](#).

At this point, you must also submit the following documents to Ms Manel Boulfernane (manel.boulfernane@histdek.unibe.ch) in the Dean's Office:

- a receipt showing payment of the examination fee
 - the *Anmeldung zum Doktorexamen* (Registration for the doctoral examination) form
 - the *Erklärung zur Dissertation* (Thesis declaration) form
 - the *Bescheinigung der ErstbetreuerIn* (Certification of first and second examiners, aka "supervisors") form
 - an academic CV
 - confirmation of enrolment in the previous semester
2. Your second supervisor needs to be **formally appointed as second examiner** before the submission of the thesis. Professors of other universities acting as second examiner need to be nominated via a *Gesuch um Erteilung einer*

Prüfungsberechtigung (Application to confer the right to examine, available [here](#)) to the Collegium Decanale. This can be submitted at any time. Examiners should be personally present for the oral exam. The department is responsible for any expenses incurred in bringing second examiners to Bern for the oral examination. If the second examiner can't be present, the first examiner can choose a staff member with "Habilitation" (e.g. *ProfessorIn* or *PrivatdozentIn*) within the department, who can replace the second examiner during the oral exam. Please inform the Dean's Office as soon as possible if your second examiner won't be present, as it can be difficult to find someone else. The assessment report (*Gutachten*) should only contain the evaluation of the thesis, and not the fact that the second examiner's role will be taken over by another person.

3. Generally, **submission of a candidate's thesis** takes place at the same time as registration for the oral examination.

At this point, you must submit an electronic version of your thesis (via USB, CD-Rom, or email) to Ms Manel Boulfernane in the Dean's Office.

Under the regulations of the Faculty of Humanities, you are yourself responsible for providing hard copies of your thesis to both of your examiners (*ErstbetreuerIn und ZweitbetreuerIn*). Examiners are free to request an electronic copy in addition to (or in lieu of) this hard copy.

It's possible to extend the thesis due date by completing a *Gesuch um Verlängerung der Abgabefrist Dissertation* (Application to extend the submission deadline of a thesis) by the official deadline date, deciding on a new submission date (*Abgabetermin*) with the examiners. This must provide enough time for them to examine the thesis fully before the examiners' submission date, which can't be changed.

4. **Written assessment reports (*Gutachten*) of the thesis** are submitted by the examiners by a date in either early February or late August/early September.

Both examiners evaluate the written thesis with a grade (6-point scale) and describe what should be changed in the thesis before publishing. Examiners will be informed about the necessary content of assessment reports.

The assessment reports and assigned grades are checked during February or September by the *Promotionsausschuss* (PhD examination board), a sub-committee of the Faculty. The examination board approves the grades for the thesis and forwards their recommendations for "promotion" (or not) during the first Faculty meeting of the semester. The oral examination can only occur after a candidate's "promotion" has been confirmed by the Faculty.

5. The **oral examination of the thesis** then takes place within a short window of time either in late September/early October or late February/early March. The oral exam lasts for one hour: a 20-minute presentation by the candidate and 40 minutes of questioning by the examiners.
6. The examiners award a single grade for the oral exam. Your **final doctoral grade** is composed of the grade awarded for the written thesis and the grade for the oral exam (weighted at a 2:1 ratio).
7. The Dean's Office will have provided an **official grade card** to the department secretariat; this is passed on to the first examiner (aka "supervisor"). The card is filled out with the written/oral grades and the final grade, signed by both examiners, and returned to the Dean's Office via post or in person.
8. The **graduation ceremony** takes place in October or March.

PUBLICATION:

Once you've successfully defended your thesis, you remain "Dr. des." rather than "Dr. phil." until you've formally published your doctoral thesis, which must happen within two years (extensions are possible). You're allowed to self-publish, do so via a publisher, or produce an e-book. If it's a self-publication, contact Ms Sandra Blaser (sandra.blaser@gs.unibe.ch) in the General Secretariat of the University of Bern, with 10 books or CD-ROMs of the thesis (there are no regulations on how the book is bound – hardcover or otherwise). If it's via a publisher, send a scanned copy of your contract to Ms Manel Boulfernane. If it's an electronic publication, contact Mr Igor Hammer (igor.hammer@ub.unibe.ch) of the central library of the University of Bern.

USEFUL LINKS AND ADDRESSES:

See the Faculty's "Regulations for doctoral promotion" at:

https://www.philhist.unibe.ch/about_us/regulations_and_guidelines/index_eng.html

The Admissions Office webpage for PhD candidates:

https://www.unibe.ch/studies/programs/doctorate/application/index_eng.html

PhD webpage of the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Humanities:

https://www.philhist.unibe.ch/studies/phd/index_eng.html

➔ Contact at the Dean's Office for any PhD-related queries:

manel.boulfernane@histdek.unibe.ch

Overview of the financial support offered by the Faculty:

https://www.philhist.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/finanzielle_unterstuetzung/index_ger.html

The homepage of the Zentrum für universitäre Weiterbildung ZUW:

<https://www.zuw.unibe.ch>