

**The following FAQs have been answered by the faculty's central doctoral examination committee (*Promotionsausschuss*). In addition to this document, you are strongly advised to carefully read both the doctoral degree regulations (*Promotionsordnung*) and the information on the individual stages of the Ph.D. process provided by the *GeKo* (short for *Gemeinsame Kommission*, i.e. the joint committee of the Philological Faculty and the Philosophical Faculty).**

- What is the role of the central doctoral examination committee (*Promotionsausschuss*)?
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- What format should my documents be in (e.g., CV, exposé, certified documents)?
- Can I sign the documents electronically?
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- What do I need to consider if I want to have an external second supervisor who is not a member of the University of Freiburg?
- What do I need to consider if I want to have an external second reviewer who is not a member of the University of Freiburg?
- What do I need to consider if the topic of my dissertation has a cross- or interdisciplinary nature, or cannot clearly be assigned to one particular Ph.D. subject (*Promotionsfach*)?
- Is it possible to submit a “cumulative” thesis, i.e. several article publications instead of a monograph?
- How can I change the topic of my dissertation?
- Is it possible to change my supervisor?
- How do I change from the old doctoral degree regulations to the new (March 2016) regulations?
- Can I withdraw my status as a Ph.D. candidate?
- I want to change to a different university, what do I have to do?
- What do I need to do, if I notice that I won't be able to submit my dissertation within the maximum allotted time of six years?

## Central doctoral examination committee (*Promotionsausschuss*)

- What is the role of the central doctoral examination committee (*Promotionsausschuss*)?  
The central doctoral examination committee makes key decisions on all aspects of the Ph.D. process and the regulations surrounding it. This includes decisions about the acceptance of new doctoral candidates and their supervisors, the selection of a grading committee and reviewers, and the regulations surrounding the entire Ph.D. process from acceptance to final grading. The focus of the committee is to guarantee a swift Ph.D. process and, above all, transparency, consistency, and quality of the Ph.D. process across all subjects and disciplines represented in the two faculties. For further information, see §2 of the doctoral degree regulations (*Promotionsordnung*).
- Who are the members of the central doctoral examination committee?  
You can find the current members of the examination committee on the faculty's homepage. Members are nominated for a period of three years. Importantly, the only contact person for questions regarding the committee and their decisions is Ms Ehinger, office manager of central doctoral examination committee. The head of the committee may be contacted only in very special cases.
- Who do I contact with questions about the Ph.D. process?  
The first point of communication should be your supervisor or the general Ph.D. advisor in your department. They can generally answer many of your questions and get in touch with Ms Ehinger on your behalf. For further questions, Ms Ehinger may be contacted directly; oral communication will typically be conducted in German but you are welcome to bring someone to translate for you.
- How often does the central doctoral examination committee meet?  
Monthly (except in August).
- What does that mean for the processing of applications and application decisions? You will not necessarily receive a decision on your application within four weeks, but you should hear results within 2-3 months of your submission. Please be aware of these time constraints when applying (see more below about the admissions process).

## Admissions process

- How long does the admissions process take?

The decision process can only begin once your application is complete. Generally, the admissions process will take less than three months from this point. For more information, see the information sheet about the admissions process as Ph.D. candidate.

- What format should my documents be in (e.g., CV, exposé, certified documents)?

All documents must be submitted in hard copy. There is no set format for the CV, but a German-style tabular CV (*tabellarischer Lebenslauf*) of no more than two pages is recommended.

There is also no set format for the exposé, but it should be discussed in advance with your supervisor. One page is generally enough, but be sure to detail the exact steps that will be taken and the time they will take (broken down into units no larger than six months). The plan should be specific to your proposed topic.

Transcripts and degrees must be officially certified; see more information on the information sheet about the admissions process.

- Can I sign the documents electronically?

All documents must be submitted in paper with a physical signature. However, documents that are submitted online may include a scanned signature, as long as the original copy is received shortly after.

- Will I receive confirmation when my documents are received?

This is currently not possible.

- What do I need to consider if I want to have an external second supervisor who is not a member of the University of Freiburg?

Be aware of the difference between a second supervisor (*Zweitbetreuer:in*) and a second reviewer (*Zweitgutachter:in*). A supervisor guides you through the process of your dissertation over many years; a reviewer reviews your dissertation when it is finished and gives it a grade. Your supervisor need not function as your reviewer and vice versa; these two roles can be separated and sometimes must be.

Supervisors (first, second or third; internal or external) must sign your application at the time it is submitted. The decision the central doctoral examination committee takes on your application then automatically includes a decision on (external and internal) supervisors. See more information about Ph.D. supervision here: ([https://www.geko.uni-freiburg.de/promotion/PromO2016/betreuung\\_info.pdf](https://www.geko.uni-freiburg.de/promotion/PromO2016/betreuung_info.pdf))

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If you want an external second reviewer, you must submit a written request in accordance with §3 (2), sentence 1 in the doctoral degree regulations. This request must be submitted at least three months before you plan to submit your finished dissertation.

See more information about Ph.D. supervision here: ([https://www.geko.uni-freiburg.de/promotion/PromO2016/betreuung\\_info.pdf](https://www.geko.uni-freiburg.de/promotion/PromO2016/betreuung_info.pdf))

- What do I need to consider if the topic of my dissertation has a cross- or interdisciplinary nature, or cannot clearly be assigned to one particular Ph.D. subject (*Promotionsfach*)?

First, you should speak about this topic with your supervisor and with the general Ph.D. advisor in your department. Advisors in faculties other than the Philological and Philosophical faculties are discussed in §6 (1) of the doctoral degree regulations (*Promotionsordnung*). Interdisciplinary dissertations should have at least two supervisors.

- Is it possible to submit a “cumulative” thesis, i.e. several article publications instead of a monograph?

Yes, but only in the following Ph.D. subjects: English Linguistics, German Linguistics, (general) Linguistics, Political Science, Slavic Studies and Sociology. For more information, see §8 (3) in the doctoral degree regulations and the further information on supervision and grading here: ([https://www.geko.uni-freiburg.de/promotion/PromO2016/betreuung\\_info.pdf](https://www.geko.uni-freiburg.de/promotion/PromO2016/betreuung_info.pdf))

## During the Ph.D. process

- How can I change the topic of my dissertation?

You can change the topic of your dissertation in a brief letter to the central doctoral examination committee, in which you give the old topic, the new topic, and the major reasons for the change. Together with this, you must submit a new doctoral supervision agreement (*Promotionsvereinbarung*).

NOTE: You need not involve the doctoral examination committee in case of minor adjustments in the wording of your dissertation's title. If the new title clearly relates to the same topic, then minor adjustments are not considered a change of topic. Do make sure, though, that these changes in the title have the support of your supervisor(s).

- Is it possible to change my supervisor?

Yes, you can terminate the agreement in your original doctoral supervision agreement (*Promotionsvereinbarung*) and submit a new one. This is the case whether you want to change the first or second supervisor (or both). For the exact regulations, see part 9 of the doctoral supervision agreement.

- How do I change from the old doctoral degree regulations to the new (March 2016) regulations?

When you fill out the form for the doctoral examination process (*die Eröffnung des Promotionsverfahrens*), use the new forms rather than the old ones (see §7 in the doctoral degree regulations from 31 March 2016).

NOTE: If you select the new forms, you have to follow all regulations in these doctoral degree regulations (e.g., the requirement of a supervision agreement). Before making this decision, speak to the central Ph.D. advisor of your Ph.D. subject or department and/or the office of the doctoral examination committee to ensure you are aware of the consequences.

- Can I withdraw my status as a Ph.D. candidate?

Yes, you can terminate your doctoral supervision agreement (*Promotionsvereinbarung*), see point 9 in that document.

- I want to change to a different university, what do I have to do?

In this case, you will need to terminate your supervision agreement, with or without agreement from your supervisor(s) (see Point 9 in the supervision agreement form). You will receive written confirmation that your doctoral candidacy at the University of Freiburg has been cancelled. You will then have to go through the process of being accepted as a Ph.D. candidate at your new university, following their rules and requirements. A transfer of your Ph.D. admission at the University of Freiburg to the new university is not possible. For questions about leaving the university (*Exmatrikulation*), contact the Student Service Center (*Studierendensekretariat*).

### **Doctoral examination period**

- What do I need to do, if I notice that I won't be able to submit my dissertation within the maximum allotted time of six years?

If it seems like you won't be able to submit your dissertation and begin the examination process before the end of the six-year limit, you are strongly encouraged to apply for an extension as early as possible. The application for an extension should be accompanied by an explanation of the circumstances that require the extension as well as a letter from your supervisor. In cases where it is deemed appropriate, the doctoral examination committee can grant up to two years extension. Legal protection times (e.g., during pregnancy) as well as official leaves of absence (see §20 of the doctoral degree regulations) do not count towards the six-year maximum. If you apply for the final examination process before the end of the six years, there is no need for requesting an extension.

sgd.

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