



FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

A. Dissertation Title and Language

Can I change the title of my dissertation later?

The title provided at the time of admission is considered a provisional working title and may be adjusted as long as the topic of the dissertation remains unchanged. Any changes must be communicated to the Graduate Officer via email; the new title will then be recorded in the doctoral database. Once the doctoral procedure has been officially opened, title changes are no longer possible. If a substantially different topic is to be pursued, an application for a topic change must be submitted to the Doctoral Committee.

Can I write my dissertation in another language?

According to the current doctoral regulations (2013, §5 paragraph 2), a dissertation may be written in English with written approval from the supervisor; other languages require approval from the Doctoral Committee. Under the previous doctoral regulations (2002, §6), a dissertation could be written in another language if approved by the Dean.

B. Supervision

I have been accepted for primary supervision but do not yet have a second supervisor. I would still like to be admitted to the doctoral program. What can I do?

Submit your application for admission to the doctoral program along with all required documents. The Doctoral Committee may grant admission on the condition that a second supervisor is appointed within one year and approved by the Committee.

Can I change my supervisor?

A change is possible. You must complete an “Application for Supervisor Change” and submit a new supervision agreement. The proposed supervisor must meet the requirements of the applicable doctoral regulations. The Doctoral Committee decides on the application.

C. Evaluation / Review

Are my supervisors automatically also the reviewers of my dissertation?

In general, supervisors also act as reviewers of the dissertation. The final determination of the reviewers lies with the Doctoral Committee, which ensures that the proposed reviewers meet the requirements specified in the doctoral regulations. In individual cases, the Committee may appoint additional or alternative reviewers to ensure the academic quality and independence of the evaluation.

Can an emeritus professor act as a reviewer?

Yes, upon application and approval by the Doctoral Committee.

D. Defense and Examination Committee

Where must the dissertation defense take place?

In-person defenses must take place at the University of Potsdam; hybrid participation is possible.

Can the defense take place entirely online?

Yes, in exceptional cases this is possible.

Can I make changes to my dissertation after the defense for publication purposes?

Changes are allowed but must be approved by the reviewers. Afterwards, an informal application with the reviewers' approvals must be submitted to the Doctoral Committee.

How is the examination committee composed for the defense?

Members of the examination committee may include professors, adjunct professors, honorary professors, or habilitated private lecturers of the faculty; external professors may also be included upon request. The examination committee usually consists of four people: the chair, all reviewers, and one person from outside the field (assistant member). Suggestions for the committee can be made when the dissertation is submitted. Please clarify in advance whether the suggested individuals are willing to serve, subject to approval by the doctoral committee. The final decision is made by the doctoral committee. The doctoral committee may deviate from your suggestions.

E. Types of Dissertations and Cumulative / Publication-Based Works

What is the difference between a monograph and a publication-based (cumulative) dissertation?

A monograph provides a comprehensive treatment of a clear research question, examined from multiple perspectives and concluded with a synthesis. It is authored by a single person and integrates complex subject areas. A publication-based dissertation consists of multiple individual publications (articles), usually at least three, with at least one authored solely by the doctoral candidate. The publications must be logically and coherently connected, preceded by an introduction that explains the overarching research question and how the individual publications contribute. The dissertation must place the work in the scientific context and include a summary and conclusion. The articles must be submitted to established, peer-reviewed journals recognized for their quality. Further specifications are provided by the respective subject groups.

Can I earn a doctorate with a monograph and then publish parts in journals?

No, pre-publication of parts of a monograph is not permitted; this is only possible with a cumulative dissertation.

What are the requirements for cumulative dissertations?

Please consult the guidance document for cumulative dissertations. Additionally, subject-specific rules may apply, so always check with your supervisors and subject group. Subject group contacts:

- Political and Administrative Science: Prof. Dr. Thomas Sommerer
- Business Administration: Prof. Dr. Uta Herbst
- Sociology: Prof. Dr. Jürgen Mackert
- Economics: Prof. Dr. Rainald Borck
- Economic and Technical Education: Prof. Dr. Vera Kirchner

Is an application required for revising articles before publication in a cumulative dissertation?

No.

How is copyright handled for mandatory copies of cumulative dissertations?

Doctoral candidates are responsible for ensuring compliance with copyright and other rights for mandatory copies. Before submission, it must be verified that publication of previously published works in the mandatory copies is permitted. Open-access publications generally pose no issues. For other publications, the regulations in the publishing contracts must be

observed. Typically, authors retain copyright while granting the publishers a simple right of use. Any questions regarding rights should be clarified directly with the publishers in advance.

F. Completion and Doctoral Certificate

Can I receive a provisional doctoral certificate?

Yes, if a publication contract is in place, a simple application can be submitted. This entitles the holder to use the title Dr. des. (doctor designatus).

I will receive the doctoral certificate once the publication requirements are fulfilled. Is there something I can receive beforehand?

Yes, upon request, a confirmation with your name, dissertation title, defense date, and grade can be issued.

When will I receive my doctoral certificate?

The doctoral certificate is issued after proof of publication of your dissertation. The University Library provides confirmation of publication, after which the certificate is sent to you by registered mail with return receipt. Please ensure that your current address is correctly recorded in the doctoral database.

G. Other Organizational Questions

Are there formatting requirements for the dissertation?

No, but the use of the template for the title page is recommended.

I am getting married soon and will change my name, but my dissertation will be submitted afterward. What should I do?

Please inform the Graduate Officer and submit a copy of your marriage certificate.

Does a withdrawal from the doctoral program need to be reported?

Yes, a brief notification to the Graduate Officer and your supervisor(s) is sufficient. Exmatriculation is handled through the Student Services Office.