

Frequently Asked Questions concerning the PhD Program at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG)*

What is the Doctoral School for the PhD Program?

At the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG) there are two separate Doctoral Schools, one administering the PhD program, the other the artistic research program (Dr. art.). For the PhD program, there is a mandatory curriculum, and the by-laws of the Doctoral School in some cases concretize and elaborate the regulations laid down in the curriculum. A Coordinating Team, which according to the by-laws consists of the head of the Doctoral School, the head of the appropriate Curricular Commission, the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, the Vice Rector responsible for scholarly research, two representatives of the scientific faculty, and one student, is responsible for setting up regulations regarding the internal organization of the Doctoral School.

Please make sure to read the curriculum! (-> download from the website of the DS_PhD)

Which requirements do I have to comply with in order to be admitted to the PhD program?

Regarding formal requirements please read the **APPLICATION FORM** (-> download from the website of the DS_PhD). In particular, the Dean of Studies will check whether you have successfully completed a suitable MA program.

Who can act as my supervisor?

A supervisor needs to hold a chair (full professor) in one of the academic fields represented at KUG or have the status of Habilitation (post-doctoral qualification to lecture at universities). A list of potential supervisors including their respective fields of expertise can be found on the website of the DS_PhD.

What is the obligatory counseling Interview?

After you have discussed your research project with the desired supervisor, you shall present it to your Doctoral Committee in the course of a counseling interview. The interview will be based on the documents you have submitted including two scholarly papers, a list of university courses you have successfully taken, and, in particular, a five-page exposé plus abstract outlining your project. In order to provide a clear picture of your research project, this exposé shall address the following issues:

- outline of your project stating your research questions
- summary of existing research indicating relevant studies on your topic already published and the relevance of your study in relationship to current discourse in your field
- outline of the intended procedure: methods, order of required work steps
- your personal qualifications for a successful treatment of the chosen topic (for example specialization in your MA studies, other specific previous knowledge)
- short list of publications of relevant literature on the chosen subject

The minutes of this interview will contain a dissertation agreement as well as an outline of KUG's open access strategy regarding PhD theses.

Who is the Doctoral Committee?

The Doctoral Committee consists of your supervisor, a co-supervisor (usually from the KUG), an advisor (usually external) as well as the head of the Doctoral School. The external advisor will be chosen in agreement with supervisor and the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School's Coordinating Team will recommend the makeup of your Doctoral Committee to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs who needs to approve it. In well-founded cases an external instead of an internal expert may serve as co-supervisor.

* last update Dec. 15, 2020

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When can I start my studies?

If you submit all required documents in time and the presentation of your dissertation project is evaluated positively by the Doctoral Committee, you may start either in a winter or a summer semester. Regarding deadlines please refer to the **APPLICATION FORM** (-> download from the website of the PhD-Doctoral School)

Which courses do I have to attend?

You have to successfully complete the following courses during your six-semester studies:

- each semester (= 6 x) the **COLLOQUIUM FOR DOCTORAL CANDIDATES** offered by your supervisor
- each semester (= 6 x) the **DOCTORAL FORUM** (To facilitate your scheduling it will always take place in calendar week 3 and 24 respectively.)
- **DOCTORAL FORUM – PRESENTATION**. Once per year (= 3 x) you will have to give a progress report on your research project as part of the doctoral forum.
- the course **PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES**. It will usually be offered once a year.
- the course **SCIENTIFIC ENGLISH**. It will usually be offered once a year.
- the course **GENDER- UND DIVERSITÄTSKOMPETENZ**. It will usually be offered once a year.
- **Additional courses** can be prescribed individually within the counselling interview.

What is expected of a presentation?

1st presentation at the doctoral forum

- **WHAT?** What is your object of study, what is the current state of research in this area of studies, and what are your research questions?
- **HOW?** Which methods are you going to employ in your research?
- **WHO?** Which personal prerequisites do you bring to your project and which preliminary studies have you carried out already?
- **WHY?** In which way will your work contribute to gaining new scholarly insights and substantial scientific progress?
- progress report:
 - What have you achieved since you entered the Doctoral Program?
 - Which difficulties or new considerations have you encountered?
 - Did you have to modify or readjust your original topic?

2nd presentation

- Which progress have you achieved since your first presentation?
- Have new considerations come up which have led to a modification of your topic?

3rd presentation

- What are the results of your thesis?
- Looking back how has your thesis evolved?
- Have the chosen methods proven to be appropriate?
- To what extent have you been able to answer your research questions?
- in the case of research based on hypotheses: Have you been able to verify your hypotheses?
- in the case of explorative research: Which conclusions can be drawn from your study for further research?
- What are the fundamental new insights gained through your study for the relevant branch of science and possibly beyond?

What is the interim evaluation?

After your first year of study, i.e., usually at the end of the second semester, you shall summarize and present the progress of your work to your Doctoral Committee. They will discuss it with you in a personal interview and evaluate your achievements. If necessary, a re-focusing of your topic can be agreed upon. An excellent evaluation is a prerequisite for certain measures of support for doctoral candidates (see below). Well before this discussion you should submit a two to three sided progress report to all members of your Doctoral Committee, which shall include a description of the progress as well as information regarding potential modifications of your original topic. If possible the external member of the Committee shall be present in person, otherwise via video conferencing.

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What information on my PhD project do I have to submit?

Ongoing PhD projects are presented on the Doctoral School's website. For this purpose you must submit:

- your CV in English
- the exposé you submitted for the counseling interview, if necessary in revised form
- the abstract in English (1 page)
- the slides of your three presentations at the doctoral forum

Please send these documents to the office assistant of the DS_PhD as soon as possible.

How the program is set up: The 10 steps towards your PhD

- 1) talk with your desired supervisor
- 2) hand in all documents in electronic format to the office assistant of the Doctoral School
- 3) attend the counseling interview with your Doctoral Committee
- 4) if applicable, additional requirements such as attending certain courses or other obligations such as conference talks, paper publications etc. will be instituted
- 5) start your studies
- 6) take the required courses and work on your thesis
- 7) after the first year, submit a written progress report and discuss it with your Doctoral Committee
- 8) not later than three months before you intend to hand in the final version of your thesis, send a draft to the external advisor (and copies to the other members of your Doctoral Committee and to the office assistant of the Doctoral School)
- 9) after you have submitted the final version, the reviewers have a maximum of four months to write their reviews
- 10) final oral examination (Rigorosum)

What does the oral examination consist of?

The oral exam ("Rigorosum") will take place after you have successfully submitted your thesis and it has been approved by the reviewers. During the first third of the 90-minute exam you will "defend" your thesis, i.e. after you have given a short summary (10') the examiners will discuss your thesis with you. The remaining 60' will consist of an examination on other topics taken from your field of study. You should fix 1-2 topics with each of your examiners as soon as you submit the draft of your thesis.

Can I take a temporary leave from the PhD program?

It is possible to take a temporary leave. While on leave you must maintain the status of enrolled student, so you will still have to pay tuition fees. Please note that while on leave you are not entitled to take courses, to take exams, to hand in academic works or have them evaluated. You will find an application form on the KUG website.

What does KUG's open access policy imply for my dissertation?

We support endeavors to make scholarly publications and research findings freely available on the internet. Therefore, we require doctoral candidates to sign the following statement as part of the process of being admitted to the PhD program:

Open access policy for approved PhD theses

"The University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG) supports open access to the results of scholarly research. Therefore, when submitting the PhD thesis at the Registrar's Office, candidates have to sign the following statement which includes PhD theses completed in the KUG doctoral program:

I herewith grant the unlimited and gratuitous right to the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG) to archive the electronic version of my thesis (e.g., PhD dissertation, diploma thesis, MA thesis) according to current technical standards and to make it available online to an undetermined group of people free of charge and for an unlimited period. I am aware that in the case of data migration minor changes in form, length or presentation of the thesis due to technical reasons cannot be precluded from the outset and I have no objections to this.

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The following additional rules apply to PhD theses:

In the case of blocking the use for a maximum of five years in accordance with §86 UG (Austrian Universities Act) KUG will not publish the thesis in electronic form. Furthermore, KUG upon request will waive the publication of the electronic version once it has been demonstrably released by a publishing company within five years after approval of the dissertation. The request has to be submitted to the University Library, Archive, and Musical Instruments Collection together with suitable evidence.”

In case you want to make use of this blocking you should refrain from uploading a full-text version of your thesis in KUGonline, since we cannot block it on this platform.

KUG Funding for PhD Students

1) Research Grants

PhD students may apply for KUG research grants during their first year. The head of the Doctoral School will recommend suitable candidates to the Vice Rector in charge of scholarly research. The grant will be awarded for one semester. Candidates may submit their application to the head of the Doctoral School. The following principles apply:

- the candidate must be in the first or second semester of the PhD program
- the research project must meet the research grant requirements in terms of topic and personal qualifications
- the candidate must not be receiving additional financial support e.g., no third-party funding, no other scholarship, no substantial income)

2) Positions as University Assistants

For students beyond their first year in the PhD program, university assistant positions (up to three years) will be offered. Among the relevant criteria are

- successful completion of the required courses
- convincing progress report at the doctoral forum and excellent assessment by the Doctoral Committee in the course of the interim evaluation

3) Travel Allowances

PhD students may apply for financial aid to cover special costs for traveling or other such expenditures.

Applications should be submitted to the head of the Doctoral School. The following principles apply:

- proof of special circumstances (e.g., topic of thesis) that cause exceptionally high costs (e.g., particularly high expenses for the gathering of data)
- at an advanced stage of preparing the thesis, giving a paper at an international conference
- for PhD students who are University Assistants, travel allowance applications should be addressed to the Doctoral School, NOT to the Dept. of International Affairs (AIB).

4) English Language Publication Grant

PhD students who want to publish their thesis with an internationally acknowledged publishing house may apply for a grant to cover costs related to a revision of the approved dissertation or to English language proof reading. Please submit an informal application to the office of the Doctoral School. Requirements include:

- the publishing house needs to be internationally acknowledged;
- the publication must undergo a peer review process;
- the book must be published in English.

5) Best Practice Award for Paper Presentations at the doctoral forum

At the end of each doctoral forum which is held every semester, a prize of € 250 for the best presentation will be awarded to one PhD student. The following principles apply:

- The basic questions (see above under "Presentations") have been answered compellingly.
- Speaking freely rather than reading out a text is usually preferable.
- The presentation should be convincingly supported by media (i.e. Powerpoint, vivid illustrations and figures, audio-visual examples).
- The prize will be awarded to any one person only once.

The jury consists of those members of the Doctoral School's Coordinating Team who are present during the doctoral forum, one PhD candidate who has already won the prize, and potentially additional, coopted members. In order to enable awarding the prize immediately at the end of the event, the jury deliberates on the final decision during the breaks already.

At present, other funding is only possible as part of research projects financed by third-party funds.

Please address any further questions concerning the PhD program to the office assistant of the Doctoral School, Ms Hanna Gabl, BA.