

## Guidelines for the selection of external reviewers

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**In the case of dissertations the assessment is carried out by reviewers that are proposed upon application and require approval by the director of the doctoral study programme (DSPL) and the Studienpraeses.**

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Status: January 2026

### General information

The proposed reviewers must be **formally and professionally qualified** to evaluate the dissertation. This should be evident from the documents submitted. Doctoral candidates and their supervisors only have the **right to make proposals** but have no claim to the proposed individuals. The **decision on approval is made by the Studienpraeses** based on the recommendation of the respective director of the doctoral programme.

### Application process

Together with the form “Assignment of a thesis to reviewers (BSP/D3)”, the application should include short academic CVs in German or English and lists of publications of the proposed persons (as PDF files).

The application for assignment (including approval) should be done before the dissertation is uploaded for plagiarism check in order to avoid delays, meaning **at least two weeks in advance but no earlier than six months prior to thesis submission**. The dissertation can only be forwarded to the reviewers after approval in HoPla (completed plagiarism check).

Generally, **three reviewers should be proposed**; since 2024, in exceptional cases only two reviewers may be proposed.

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### Formal criteria

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Section 15 para. 15 of the [Statutes of the University of Vienna – Study Law](#) stipulates which persons are eligible to act as reviewers. Persons who are permitted to supervise in accordance with Section 15 para. 2 and para 5 of the Statutes of the University of Vienna – Study Law may, in principle, act as reviewers.

It is essential to ask the proposed reviewers in advance whether they are available as such. However, the dissertation or parts of it should not be submitted in advance. An abstract should be sufficient for this purpose.

The reviewers must fully understand the language in which the dissertation is written; the reviews have to be done in German or English.

Ideally, reviewers should be habilitated (or have an equivalent teaching qualification) and proven expertise in the research area covered by the dissertation. At least one of the reviewers should come from the specialist field/subject area of the dissertation; the other reviewers may also come from a related discipline, if this is appropriate to the topic.

Supervisors may only be proposed as reviewers in justified cases. For quality assurance reasons, supervision and assessment of the doctoral thesis should remain separate. If a supervisor is to be approved as a reviewer, a second external reviewer with proven expertise in the field must be consulted.

To ensure quality, external persons should primarily be asked to serve as reviewers. **External usually means that they are employed at universities other than the University of Vienna.**

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## **Group of persons**

### **from which reviewers can be proposed**

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- University professors at the University of Vienna
- Habilitated staff members at the University of Vienna
- Associate university professors as well as assistant professors according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff of the University of Vienna
- Persons authorized to teach at a recognized post-secondary educational institution in Austria or from abroad pursuant to section 51 para. 2 sub-para. 1 of the Universities Act
- Persons authorized to teach at a university-coordinate establishment for the supervision and assessment of a doctoral thesis if their authorization to teach is equivalent to section 103 of the Universities Act, for example “(senior) lecturers” at Anglo-Saxon higher education institutions (if they are equivalent to university professors)
- Habilitated Academics (who do not work in academia) may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Honorary professors are one example of this.

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## Reasons for exclusion

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The reviewers **must not be biased**. There must be no significant reasons that could cast doubt on their impartiality. Reviewers must NOT have any close academic or personal relationship with the supervisors or doctoral candidates. They must be free of personal, financial and professional dependencies on the supervisors and doctoral candidates.

### Examples

- Former doctoral students or PostDocs of the supervisor cannot act as reviewers.
- Persons who are working on a joint research project or in close cooperation cannot be assigned either.
- Members of the doctoral candidate's Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) should not be proposed as reviewers.
- If there have been joint publications in the past, the respective director of the doctoral study programme shall determine how long ago these must have been. Five years can be used as a guideline; this is customary practice among scientific publishers.