

## I) Guide for Prospective PhD Candidates

This guide covers the period up to the point when a professor at the Department of English has agreed to supervise your thesis and you've been formally admitted to study for a PhD at the University. (See the "Guide for Accepted PhD Candidates" on the steps that come after.) Please note that these are just guidelines and that some of these steps may look a little different depending on which professor you ask to be your supervisor.

### RESEARCH OUR PROFESSORS' FIELDS OF INTEREST:

If you're planning to apply to study for a PhD in our department, the first step is to send in a proposal of your project. This should be sent to the professor whose fields of interest most closely overlap with your own. You can check the research expertise of the department's professors [here](#). If your research topic is very different from any of their research interests, it's recommended that you look elsewhere for PhD supervision – it's highly unlikely that anyone here would be in a position to supervise you.

### PREPARE A PHD PROPOSAL:

If you're confident that your research topic aligns with the interests of one of the department's professors, prepare a PhD proposal to send to that professor for their consideration. Normally, your proposal will need to contain:

- a CV
- an abstract (500 words)
- an outline describing the theoretical and methodological basis of the proposed thesis (a minimum of 2500 words)
- a bibliography (a minimum of 25)
- a copy of your MA dissertation
- a letter of recommendation from one of your professors
- applicants from outside Switzerland who do not come from a country in which English is a primary language need to submit one of the following English Language Test Certificates: IELTS 7.0 or Internet TOEFL 100.

Note, however, that professors may ask for a somewhat different set of materials, so be sure to get in touch with them before you prepare your proposal to ask what the required materials are.

Once the professor has examined your proposal, they'll be in a position to inform you whether they're willing to supervise your thesis and, consequently, whether you should formally apply for admission to the university. You'll have to wait until a formal application is processed before you're officially admitted to study for the PhD in our department. However, you should discuss the terms of your PhD with your supervisor already at this stage, as well as things like any involvement in a research project of theirs or employment at the department that they may have in mind for you.

### **ADMISSION:**

In order to officially become a PhD candidate at the University of Bern, you need to take care of a few administrative matters:

1. Fill in the online application form on the University's [Admissions Office webpage](#). On the same page, you'll find the Confirmation of Supervision form (*Doktoratsbestätigung* in German). There are two versions: one for students who hold an MA from a Swiss university and one for those who don't. You'll need to submit a signed hard copy of the Confirmation of Supervision to the Admissions Office.
2. Send a Doctoral Agreement (*Doktoratsvereinbarung*) that sets out the terms agreed with your principle supervisor (or "first supervisor") to Ms Manel Boulfernane ([manel.boulfernane@histdek.unibe.ch](mailto:manel.boulfernane@histdek.unibe.ch)) in the Dean's Office no later than three months after you've been formally admitted. You can use the university's [Employee Appraisal Interview](#) (*Mitarbeitergespräch*, or MAG) form for doctoral students for the Doctoral Agreement (the PDF called "Form doctoral candidates"). Note that you'll need to be connected to the university network – either on site or via VPN – to access this. More information on Doctoral Agreements is available on the same webpage, in a separate PDF called "Information concerning Doctoral Agreements".

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### **USEFUL LINKS AND ADDRESSES:**

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

[https://www.philhyst.unibe.ch/about\\_us/regulations\\_and\\_guidelines/index\\_eng.html](https://www.philhyst.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](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](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](mailto: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](https://www.philhist.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/finanzielle_unterstuetzung/index_ger.html)