



Doing a doctorate in social work at GJU

Information for supervisors

In February 2026, the Hosted PhD Program in Social Work will officially start at the SAHSS faculty. All active professors in the Department of Social Work are eligible to supervise a dissertation together with a professor from the University of Hamburg. As part of a close cooperation, several professors from the Faculty of Social Work at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW) are also available to join the supervisory teams (see: **List of Supervisors**). As an international and cooperative PhD program in which students from Jordan and the MENA region will pursue their doctorates, it is essential that one of the supervisors is from GJU and is thus familiar with the Jordanian and regional professional and social context and can share this knowledge during the supervision process.

The supervision process can be divided into four phases: (1) Counselling interested PhD students, (2) the application for admission, (3) supervision during research, (4) the assessment and examination phase. Supervisors have specific tasks in each phase, which are outlined below.

- ➔ The Faculty of Education at University of Hamburg has an office for doctoral affairs with its own website.¹ You can get detailed information there. There you will also find all the doctoral regulations, unfortunately not always in English. Applications for admission can be submitted monthly. (Promotionen.EW@uni-hamburg.de)
- ➔ The SAHSS website provides further information and guidelines about the PhD program and the supervision process, including a list of supervisors, general information about the program, the study plan, information about the application process, and guidance on writing an exposé. It is recommended to read these supplementary documents. (<https://www.gju.edu.jo/content/graduate-programs-14377>)

Phase 1: From the idea to the application for registration

You know how it is: a master's graduate asks you for an initial consultation about a possible doctorate. Or you have supervised a very good master's thesis that could be developed into a dissertation. If the topic does not fit in with your main areas of work or you do not have

¹ <https://www.ew.uni-hamburg.de/forschung/akademische-karrierewege/promotionsphase.html>

the capacity to supervise it, then refer the person to the PhD program coordinator for further advice.

If the topic fits in with your main areas of work and you are interested, you should first refer the candidate to the information materials on the PhD program website. Ask the student to outline the idea on 1-2 pages and then discuss the content and topic with the student in a longer conversation. You should also point out a few formal aspects at this early stage:

(1) The University of Hamburg (UHH) sets the following requirements for admission to doctoral studies in Social Work (see: **Study Plan**): A regular bachelor's degree and a regular master's degree in related topics with Social Work, both with a minimum rating of good, and with a total of 300 ECTS. In addition, English (or German) language competences (C1 according to the CEFR). If the student does not meet these requirements, ask him or her to speak to the program coordinator and take a preliminary check.

(2) As mentioned, it is essential to find a supervisor at University of Hamburg who joins into the team of supervisors. He needs to recommend the candidate for admission to the doctorate and then supervise him/her until the end. It is also possible to include an additional supervisor from HAW who is knowledgeable about the PhD topic. This is particularly advisable if the topic does not exactly fall within the expertise of the supervisor at the University of Hamburg. If you know a colleague of the University of Hamburg who would be a good fit for the project in terms of subject matter and/or methodology, you are welcome to suggest them or even write to them yourself so that the student does not have to take on the role of a supplicant (feel free to forward the outline that the student has prepared for the project). If you do not know anyone suitable, please ask the program coordinator for advice.

(3) The person will probably soon point out the financial aspects of the doctorate to you. The University of Hamburg charges enrollment fees of around 300 Euros per semester. The GJU charges significantly higher fees. Since it is a hosted PhD program, it is not necessary to live in Germany. Nevertheless, most students are dependent on a scholarship. The program coordinator can also advise you on this.

(4) There are basically two ways to do a doctorate:

(a) *a monograph* (a book), comparable to a master's thesis, only more comprehensive and with more data and broader theoretical reflection. After completion of the doctoral process, the monograph must be released by a Publisher House or made available via Open Access;

(b) *a cumulative doctorate*: in this case, the PhD student publish intermediate steps or results of the research project in reviewed journals, e.g. the literature review, the method design tested with pilot surveys, the data analyses. Hamburg University expects three or four such publications. These texts must be summarized from a theoretical perspective in a "framework text" (*Manteltext*) of around 50 pages.

It is up to the student to decide which route choose, but he or she must indicate this when applying for admission.

➔ Once it has been clarified whether formal acceptance is possible, the two supervisors have been found, the topic has been determined, and a decision has been made as to whether a monographic or cumulative dissertation will be chosen, then the admission process can be initiated.

Phase 2: Application process

The PhD candidate must apply for admission to the doctoral program to the Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Hamburg. Various documents must be submitted for this purpose, e.g., CV, certificates and degrees, declarations, exposé (see **Guidelines for Admission**).

The PhD candidate requires three documents from the supervisors:

A. Confirmation of supervision

This letter only needs to be written by the professor of the Faculty of Education at the University of Hamburg. It must already be included with the application for admission.

B. Supervisory Agreement

In this document, the team of supervisors and the PhD candidate set out the rules for their collaboration: What are the roles and tasks of the supervisors in the hosted PhD program? How often should supervision meetings take place? What format should the meetings take? (Online, in person, one-on-one, or always with all three together, if possible, etc.) How should conflicts be handled? There is a form for this purpose, which must be signed by all parties and attached to the application for admission: [betreuungsvereinbarung.ew.pdf](#)

Possible points of reference for the supervision meeting

1) Doctoral project

- How can the doctoral candidate be supported in planning their doctoral project?

(Forms of written doctoral work, preparation of a work and time schedule, involvement of the co-supervisor, etc.)

- How can the doctoral candidate be supported in the further doctoral process?

(Discussing results, providing advice on the structure and presentation of the work, literature references, etc.)

2) Supervision meetings

- How often do meetings between the doctoral candidate and supervisor take place?

(Regularity, duration, etc.)

- What are the objectives of the supervision meetings?

(Reflection on the work process, planning future work steps, etc.)

- In what form do the meetings between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor take place?

(Working with material, additional advisor(s), preparation of meeting minutes, etc.)

3) Further opportunities for exchange and networking

- What other opportunities for exchange exist within the department/faculty?

(Colloquia, graduate programs, workshops, etc.)

- What opportunities exist for external networking and financing?

(Working groups at other universities, conferences, lectures, publications, etc.)

- Discussion of possible career prospects

4) Personal context and working relationship

- Is there a need to discuss the compatibility of the doctoral project with your personal situation?

(Childcare, financial situation, workplace, working hours for doctoral projects, etc.)

- What options are available in the event of a conflict between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor?

(Support from the vice dean's office, peer-to-peer counseling, mediation, etc.)

C. Letter of recommendation from the supervisor at the University of Hamburg

The PhD candidate must submit an exposé for the planned dissertation in German or English with the application for admission. The exposé should include the research question, an outline of the current state of research and the planned approach, as well as a schedule and work plan (see **Guidelines for writing an exposé**). The document should not exceed 20,000 characters [approx. 8-10 pages], including spaces and bibliography).

The supervisor of the University of Hamburg must write a statement on this. Since the Hosted PhD Program is an international cooperative doctoral program, the opinions and recommendations of the team of supervisors should be included (max. 2 pages) on the dissertation proposal: Brief notes on the context of the doctoral program (PhD program GJU/Hamburg; How long have you known the candidate? Does he/she have the necessary skills for academic work? Quality of the proposal, especially the methodological design; strong recommendation to admit the candidate. (Note: It is recommended that the two supervisors share their letters of recommendation with each other and discuss them).

Phase 3: Supervision until the dissertation is submitted

The dissertation should be completed within three years after admission, if possible. The supervisors' task is to accompany and support the research process during this period. There are various ways of doing this:

Regular consultation

Consultation is certainly the most important component of supervision. In the supervision agreement (see Phase 2), you have already established binding rules for cooperation with the team of supervisors and the PhD student.

Participation in the Study program

The Hosted PHD Program Social Work offers at the GJU a structured three-year online or in-presence *study program* consisting of lectures, workshops, field studies, small research projects, which prepares or accompanies the PhD students for the finalization of a doctorate, and in which they can obtain any missing Credit points or ECTS. Decide for yourself whether you, as a supervisor, would like to get involved in the study program: for example, by giving a lecture or offering a workshop from time to time, or by participating in the planning of the preparatory and accompanying program. This participation is not mandatory, but it contributes to the creation of a stimulating and supportive discussion environment for the PhD students.

Joint projects

You are welcome to invite the PhD student you are supervising to join your own projects. You can give joint lectures, publish articles, or write proposals. By doing so, PhD students can gain skills, knowledge, and experience in science management and academic culture.

Internationalization

The PhD program is, in itself, a contribution to internationalization in the academic world. The advantage is that PhD students can benefit from the support services offered by the three

universities and gain international experience. At the same time, bilateral study projects, exchanges, and participation in international conferences can intensify the acquisition of international experience for young scientists. Please encourage your doctoral students and support them with information on financing.

- ➔ You can find detailed information about the study program on the PhD Program Social Work website.

Phase 4: Evaluation and defense

Once the dissertation is completed, it must be submitted for evaluation. Ensure that the team of supervisors agree to the submission. Otherwise, conflicts may arise during the evaluation process.

At Hamburg University, the evaluation consists of two parts: A written evaluation and an oral examination. The University of Hamburg appoints an evaluation committee for the dissertation. The members of this committee may be proposed by the doctoral candidate. Typically, the evaluation committee consists of members of the supervisory team.

Report (written examination)

Two evaluators (typically supervisors) write detailed reviews of the dissertation and propose a grade. The reports are approximately five pages in length. They must be uploaded to Docata and are then made available to all faculty members for review for three to four weeks. If there are no appeals, the two evaluators determine the grade together with the other members of the evaluation committee.

Disputation (oral examination)

The evaluation process concludes with an oral examination, called *Disputation*, in which the PhD student must defend his or her dissertation: They prepare a presentation lasting approximately 20 minutes, followed by a discussion with the examiners. The defense is comparable to the colloquium for master's theses.

There are four grades, these are expressed using Latin terms: *summa cum laude* (outstanding), *magna cum laude* (very good), *cum laude* (good), *rite* (passed).

The final grade of the doctorate is calculated from the evaluation of the written thesis (it accounts 75 percent of the overall grade) and the rating of the Disputation.

In Germany, dissertations *must be published*. In the case of cumulative doctorates, universities have different regulations on how the framing text must be published. In the case of monographs, the book is either released by a publisher or online. Both methods generate considerable publication costs, around 3,000 to 5,000 Euros; 1500 - 2000 JD if edited in Jordan. Online publications may be free of charge. PhD students may be able to apply for a printing cost subsidy from a foundation.

Once the thesis has been published, the candidate will receive the doctoral certificate and the right to use the title "Dr. phil." in the name.

[Document's status: December, 2025]