COMPREHENSIVE EXAM 2025

Doctoral School of Sociology and Communication Science

**Sociology and Communication Doctoral Program**

**General Information**

The first phase of your doctoral studies (Year 1 & 2) concludes with the comprehensive exam. The exam consists of two parts:

1. a theoretical part assessing the theoretical-methodological preparedness of the student; and
2. a dissertation part assessing the progress of the research.

**The following criteria need to be met in order to take the exam:**

* **Submission of the application form for the exam.**
* **Supervisor’s written evaluation and recommendation;**
* **Obtaining a minimum of 120 credits** in the education and research phase of the doctoral program, as certified by the University Doctoral Office;
* **Submission of the Research Plan to the CDS;**
* **Recording the student’s publications in the MTMT Database**.

**General rules of the comprehensive exam:**

* The comprehensive exam is organised once a year, during the spring semester exam period.
* The comprehensive exam is taken publicly, before an examining committee that consists of three members. At least one of the members is not employed by the university. The members of the committee are appointed by the Head of the DS and are approved by the Doctoral Council of the University.
* The supervisor must evaluate the doctoral student’s work prior to the exam (in written form).
* The comprehensive exam consists of two main parts: the theoretical part and the dissertation part. In the first part the student's theoretical-methodological preparedness is assessed ("theoretical part"), in the second part, the student reports on his/her research progress (“dissertation part”).
* The exam results are announced on the day of the oral exam.
* If either of the parts is unsuccessful, the exam may be retaken once, at the end of the given exam period (i.e., August 2023).

**The "theoretical-methodological part" of the comprehensive examination:**

* **Doctoral students need to compile a bibliography for two topics (with at least 15 items each), which are approved by the supervisor**. The bibliographies are then assessed by the head of the examination committee, and if necessary, are sent back to the student for revision. The doctoral student cannot be admitted to the comprehensive exam if the bibliographies are not accepted by the DS.
* The theoretical-methodological part of the exam is conducted orally. The examining committee formulates a question or a thesis for each of the two topics. The examinee then offers a short, argumentative presentation to demonstrate their knowledge of the literature and responds to any further questions of the committee. The aim of the committee is to assess that the student is proficient in a wide range of methodological and scientific knowledge related to their research and has the ability for academic debate. The members of the examining committee evaluate the theoretical-methodological competence of the student in writing (*passed/failed*).

**The second "dissertation part" of the comprehensive examination:**

* The examinee gives a presentation to demonstrate their familiarity with the literature, presents their research findings and the research plan with respect to the second phase of the doctoral programme, presents the expected results and proposes a feasible schedule for the publication of findings on the basis of the **20-30 page Research Plan (minimum of 55,000 and a maximum of 75,000 characters including spaces)** that has been submitted to the CDI prior to the exam.
* Parts of the research plan:
  + Title,
  + Table of contents,
  + Introduction (personal reason for the choice of topic, relevance, social, economic, environmental context),
  + Literature review,
  + Research question/goal, (detailed, supported by literature)
  + Research methods,
  + Significance of research, implications,
  + Schedule,
  + Bibliography,
  + Appendices.
* Format:
  + A/4 size,
  + 2.5 cm margin,
  + spacing: 1,
  + font: 12 TNR,
  + paragraphs separated by tabs,
  + the pages are numbered in the lower right corner.
* Following the presentation the committee can raise questions about any part of the presentation for further clarification.
* The supervisor also has the opportunity to evaluate the student’s work and to declare whether they find the student suitable for the successful completion of the doctoral training, and whether they consider the schedule and the publication plan realistic.
* The examining committee then evaluates the theoretical-methodological and the dissertation part of the exam separately, qualifying them each as *passed/failed*. The comprehensive exam is successful if the majority of the committee members deem both parts of the exam to be successful (*passed*). It is unsuccessful if either of the exam parts is evaluated as *failed*.

**Important Dates**

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| ***Task*** | ***Deadline*** |
| Application for the comprehensive exam | 24th February,2025 |
| Submission of the **bibliography proposals for the 2 topics** assigned to the theoretical part of the examination, accepted by the supervisor, to the University Doctoral Office (On TEAMS – Teams group will be created by the Doctoral Office) | 31st March, 2025 |
| **Documents to be submitted:**  1. Final version of the 2 topics and bibliography  2. Research plan  3. Presentation  4. Supervisor’s evaluation  **Documents to be uploaded to TEAMS / FILES.** | 14th May, 2025 |
| **Conducting the Comprehensive Exam** | Tuesday, 03 June, 10:00-14:00  2025 |
| **Retake of the Comprehensive Exam** | 2025, end of August |