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Things to know about the habilitation at TU Graz



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Preface

In academia, the habilitation – the highest academic qualification and a path to obtaining a *venia docendi* (authorisation to teach) – is still highly important. When strategically planning an academic career, it is therefore advisable to consider habilitating as a goal in the postdoc phase.

This booklet aims to clarify what habilitation means in practice, focusing on which actions to take as well as which legal and institutional frameworks to consider with regard to the process at TU Graz, and thus contributes to a comprehensive presentation of the habilitation procedure at TU Graz. This core information is supplemented by valuable, practical tips for the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees as well as firsthand experiences from researchers who have successfully earned their habilitation degree at TU Graz and have shared their insights in interviews conducted for this brochure.

It is thus intended as a comprehensive early guide and help in planning a habilitation. We hope that this will support you in your academic career and encourage you to pursue a habilitation at TU Graz

Your Human Resource Development department

MOTIVATION FOR HABILITATION

Motivation for habilitation

What is a habilitation?



The habilitation – from the Latin word “habilitare”, meaning “to enable, to qualify” – is the procedure by which the **highest academic qualification** is achieved. The procedure is intended to evaluate a candidate’s ability to teach (facultas docendi) in the academic subject applied for and, if successful, to certify this ability by notice.^[1, p. 76]

In Austria, successful habilitation also earns the candidate the right to teach (venia docendi in Austria or venia legendi in Germany, for example). According to § 103 (1) of the Universities Act 2002 (UG), a person who is awarded a habilitation degree and thus a venia docendi has the right to the free exercise thereof at the university in question, using its facilities, and to the supervision and assessment of academic theses.

The habilitation can therefore be viewed as a **professional qualification and authorisation for research-led teaching**. The most important right associated with it is the **right to independent supervision and assessment of doctoral theses**. Habilitated researchers thus have the responsibility to support, guide, motivate and inspire junior researchers for their subject.

Habilitation is a widespread procedure not only in Austria, but also in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic as well as in Denmark and Finland, to name just a few countries.^{[2][3]}

Habilitation also has a long tradition at TU Graz. Here, the first official engineering and scientific authorisation to teach was awarded as early as 1872. Carl Moshammer was awarded a venia docendi for the subject of projective geometry. The first woman to be awarded a habilitation degree at TU Graz was Ulrike Wirsching in the field of petrography in 1982.

Today, the legal framework for habilitation in Austria is regulated in **§ 103 UG**. Within this general framework, each university can define more precise regulations. This booklet thus summarises the most important information from both the Universities Act and the **guideline regulating the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees** at TU Graz, as well as useful additional information. The provisions of the General Administrative Procedure Act (AVG), the statutes of TU Graz and the Senate’s rules of procedure also apply to the procedures for awarding habilitation degrees and the expiry of the authorisation to teach.

Motivation for habilitation

What is a habilitation?

It is important to note that conferring a *venia docendi* does not change or establish an employment relationship with the university.^[4] Researchers who have been awarded a habilitation degree are called **non-tenured associate professors** (Privatdozent*in).^[5] Furthermore, researchers who are appointed to a university professorship are automatically awarded a *venia docendi* in the subject of that professorship, regardless of whether they had previously achieved a *venia docendi* through habilitation.^[6]

However, if the *venia docendi* was earned through appointment to a professorship, the authorisation to teach expires at the end of a fixed-term employment contract. For non-tenured associate professors, the *venia docendi* may expire through renunciation or after four years of unfounded inactivity, among other things.^{[7][8]}

It should also be mentioned at this point that the details – i.e., recommendations with regard to writing a monographic or cumulative habilitation thesis, number and type of publications, etc. – can differ between faculties and from subject area to subject area.



Motivation for habilitation

Goals in the postdoc phase

If you decide to pursue an academic career after completing your doctorate, it is important to **enhance your academic profile** to the greatest possible extent. Even if habilitation is not (yet) your goal, an individual plan for your career path can be helpful, for example, to assess opportunities and to work in a structured manner in your postdoc phase. In order to set your goals, it can be helpful to check the evaluation criteria for tenure track professorships, for example at RWTH Aachen University or the Technical University of Munich, as well as the goals in a Qualification Agreement at TU Graz. However, it should be noted that tenure track positions and other postdoctoral positions are usually difficult to plan individually, as only few are advertised and awarded competitively (see also page 17f.).

Regardless of whether you are undertaking a habilitation for a tenure track position or not, it is the highest possible academic qualification and can thus become your long-term career goal. To demonstrate the necessary academic qualifications, you will need to prove excellence in your academic field in such a way that it is recognised by members of the global scientific community via relevant publications.

In addition, accompanying measures such as strengthening your own visibility in the scientific community, expanding your teaching experience or setting up a working group can be helpful.

In any case, it is essential that you take action yourself and conduct your own academic work proactively. It is important to take advantage of opportunities to exchange ideas and gain experience, to connect with relevant people and to build a network that is indispensable for academic work.

Tip:

To develop strategies and plans for your academic career path, TU Graz also offers support via career planning workshops, coaching and mentoring.

>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/career-postdocs



Motivation for habilitation

Why should you habilitate?

In addition to greater **independence in research and teaching**, a successful habilitation can also improve your chances of an appointment to positions at the university.^[9] The phase as a non-tenured associate professor is often seen as a trial for a professorship^[10] and the habilitation is an essential criterion in the Qualification Agreement for tenure track positions that lead to associate professorships.

As demonstrated by the experiences of people who have completed their habilitation at TU Graz, a habilitation is a great demonstration of your teaching skills, which are also important for applications for professorships or postdoctoral positions. At the same time, the documents required for a habilitation application often have **synergies** with those for job applications, e.g. your CV or your research profile. Therefore, preparing for one can also be helpful for the other.

As reasons for their choice, habilitated researchers also mention the visible documentation of their own work during their postdoc period (also as a final consideration, for example in order to switch to industry), the opportunity to establish their academic profile and position themselves in

their research field, further development of their academic ability, and an opportunity for self-appraisal and reflection of their academic career.

At the same time, those who have recently completed their habilitation have also observed how their position in the scientific community has changed as a result of obtaining the authorisation to teach and notice greater involvement in committees, etc. Their habilitation is proof that they can assess doctoral theses not only at their home university and are thus more likely to be invited to assess doctoral theses at other universities.



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Motivation for habilitation

Application requirements



In addition to proof of a completed doctoral degree, the candidate must be able to provide evidence of **outstanding scientific or artistic qualification as well as didactic abilities** in the form of repeated teaching activities.^{[1][12]}

The **respective faculties and subject area** can provide more detailed recommendations. In their [Hints for a Successful Habilitation](#), the Faculty of Electrical and Information Engineering cites, among other things, recommendations including more than 15 publications after completing the doctoral degree and an H-index on Google Scholar of more than 10 as typical characteristics of successful habilitations. The procedural process should also be known. The regulations on habilitations at TU Graz are detailed in the guideline regulating the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees at TU Graz (see page 12ff.). A colloquium speech is usually recommended before submitting an application, however, some faculties prefer, for example, a smaller lecture to which the members of the faculty with a *venia docendi* are invited.

To obtain this information, it is recommended that you contact people who have recently received their habilitation degree, professors and the Dean of your faculty, as well as other people involved in the habilitation procedure.

Many of them will have been in similar situations, so it is helpful to approach people openly and have conversations with as many of them as possible.

At the same time, please bear in mind that some of these people (e.g., professors with a relevant research field as well as academic staff who have habilitated in the research field) may be asked to write statements as part of the habilitation procedure. It can therefore be an advantage to inform them in advance about your own intention to habilitate.

Especially for those candidates who are not employed at TU Graz, it is important to keep in mind that at some point during the procedure, the head of the institute to which the habilitation candidate is to be assigned must write a statement indicating whether the requested academic subject falls within the scope of the institute. If you have not previously taught at TU Graz, it is also possible that the Dean of Studies of the relevant faculty may have to write a statement on the future use of the *venia docendi* at TU Graz based on the concept you submit with your application. It is therefore advisable to coordinate with these people at an early stage.



Motivation for habilitation

Monographic vs. cumulative habilitation thesis

When submitting the application for a habilitation degree, the most important document, in addition to documents such as a list of publications and a CV, is the habilitation thesis. The habilitation thesis can be written in either German or English as a monographic (“traditional”) habilitation thesis or as a cumulative habilitation thesis.^[12, p. 3f.]

In contrast to a monographic thesis dealing with a single aspect of an academic subject, a **cumulative habilitation thesis** is made up of **various individual publications and works accepted for publication**. This type of thesis requires the inclusion of an introduction providing a thematic classification in the subject area and the existing literature on the topic, as well as the connection between the selected publications and the habilitation candidate’s own contributions to works with several authors. Furthermore, the candidate will have to show how state-of-the-art research in the field has been substantially expanded through their work.^[12, p.4]

There are no special regulations for the structure of a **monographic thesis** that go beyond the general requirements for academic works.^[13] Beyond publication via the university

library, international publication of the monographic thesis may increase the habilitation candidate’s visibility in the scientific community.

According to § 103 (3) UG, the thesis submitted must **be of impeccable methodological quality**, must **contain new scientific insights** and demonstrate the candidate’s **command of his/her habilitation subject** and **ability for its advancement**. The evaluators must provide their opinion in the form of written reports based on these criteria, and all criteria must be assessed positively for a positive report.^[11, p. 6.]

Most importantly, the habilitation must make a significant contribution to the academic subject for which the candidate is to be awarded a habilitation degree. There is no specified minimum or maximum number of pages for the habilitation thesis. The appropriate length or number of publications depends on the topic and subject area.

KEY ASPECTS REGARDING THE HABILITATION PROCEDURE

Key aspects regarding the habilitation procedure at TU Graz*^[12]

*The English translation of the guideline in this brochure is provided for your assistance. Please note that the German version is the legally binding version.

DECISION TO HABILITATE

RECOMMENDATION: COLLOQUIUM SPEECH

§ 1

APPLICATION FOR A HABILITATION DEGREE

§ 2

ESTABLISHMENT OF A HABILITATION COMMITTEE

§ 3

CONSTITUTION OF THE HABILITATION COMMITTEE

§ 4

APPOINTMENT OF THE ASSESSORS

§ 5

SUBMISSION OF THE REPORTS

PUBLIC TRIAL LECTURE

§ 6

FINAL MEETING OF THE HABILITATION COMMITTEE

§ 7

ISSUANCE OF THE OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION CONCERNING THE VENIA DOCENDI

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Max. 6 months

GUIDELINE PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING HABILITATION DEGREES^[12]

RECOMMENDATION PRIOR TO THE START OF THE PROCEDURE

PUBLIC COLLOQUIUM SPEECH: **One year before submission of the application**, public with non-public feedback from invited members with a *venia docendi*. Presentation should include outline of the candidate's academic career, the planned habilitation thesis with own contributions to the state of knowledge, the habilitation subject and planned advancement of the subject.

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS WITH A VENIA DOCENDI: Submission within a month on whether the habilitation subject concerns an entire academic subject within the sphere of action of TU Graz.

§ 1 APPLICATION FOR A HABILITATION DEGREE

§ 1 (1), (2) and (3) **SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS** in digital form as PDF:

- Application for a habilitation degree
- Written habilitation thesis (*optionally a printed copy for publication by the library*)
- CV
- List of academic publications and lectures as well as the publications themselves
- List of teaching activities carried out to date at recognised post-secondary educational institutions (incl. co-supervision of academic theses)
- Brief description of the subject of the habilitation thesis (*ENG – approx. one page*)
- PhD certificate or equivalent studies (*copy*)
- List of the degree programmes and faculties affected by the habilitation subject
- Outline of the academic subject for which the habilitation degree is to be awarded, including previous and planned work that covers the subject in research and teaching (*<10 pages in the language the thesis is written in*)
- Three suggested topics for the trial lecture
- For a cumulative habilitation thesis: outline of own contributions to papers with several authors
- No teaching activities at TU Graz: concept for the future use of the *venia docendi* at TU Graz (*<5 pages*)
- Declaration of consent for viewing the assessors' reports on the habilitation thesis

TIPS & TRICKS

The application and all other required documents must be submitted to the Rectorate via the Registrar's Office at least 5 weeks before the subsequent Senate meeting in order to be dealt with there.
>> Senate meeting dates

The use of a “CRedit (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) author statement” is recommended to demonstrate your own contribution to joint publications.

The suggested topics for the trial lecture must be within the requested habilitation subject. However, they must not be directly related to the written thesis.^[12]

GUIDELINE PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING HABILITATION DEGREES^[12]

§ 1 (7) ACCELERATED PROCESSING OF THE HABILITATION PROCEDURE

Advance registration of the habilitation application (inkl. planned date of submission) in justified special cases (e.g., assistant professors with Qualification Agreement).

§ 2 (1) and (2) ESTABLISHMENT OF A HABILITATION COMMITTEE

Once the Rectorate has examined and forwarded the application for a habilitation degree, the Senate establishes a habilitation committee competent to make a decision.

The habilitation committee usually consists of five members (three representatives of the professors, and one representative each for the academic staff and the students).

§ 3 (2) and (5) CONSTITUTION OF THE HABILITATION COMMITTEE

The immediate superior of the habilitation candidate is not permitted to serve as chairperson of the habilitation committee. The committee must agree on a timeline for further proceedings so that the official notification is issued within six months of receipt of the application.

§ 4 (1), (2) and (3) SUGGESTION AND APPOINTMENT OF THE ASSESSORS

- Appointment of three external assessors (must not be employees at TU Graz, must have a *venia docendi* or comparable qualification at their home university).
- Professors in the relevant subject area suggest suitable assessors.
- Professors of the Senate select the assessors, taking into account internationality and the most balanced gender ratio possible.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you have the opportunity to serve on a habilitation committee beforehand, it definitely makes sense to take advantage of this opportunity.

Please keep in mind that the habilitation thesis should be written in such a way that it “meets” the assessors where they are. Thus, it is recommended to consider who the assessors might be when writing the thesis. Also see page 28

GUIDELINE PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING HABILITATION DEGREES^[12]

§ 5 (1), (2), (4), (5), (6), (7), (9) SUBMISSION OF THE REPORTS

- The reports with an assessment of the **scientific qualifications** of the candidate should be submitted within six weeks (two-week grace period).
- At least two members of the habilitation committee (including at least one student) write statements on the candidate's **didactic qualifications** based on previous teaching/lecture work or work carried out as part of the procedure → *results from course evaluations and co-supervision of academic theses as well as proof of completed training/further education in didactics, etc. are considered proof of didactic skills*
- The chairperson of the habilitation committee obtains a written statement from the head of the institute to which the candidate would like to be assigned. The statement should detail whether the habilitation subject applied for falls within the institute's sphere of action. If necessary, a statement can also be obtained from the Dean of Studies of the faculty on the submitted concept for the future use of the *venia docendi* at TU Graz.
- Professors of the subject area and academic staff with a habilitation degree of the subject area who have a permanent employment relationship with TU Graz must be invited to access and comment on the anonymised reports with a two-week notice period.
- The habilitation committee examines and justifies which reports and statements it wants to follow and which it does not.
- During a habilitation committee meeting, there will be a discussion with the candidate (assessors may be invited).

§ 5 (3) PUBLIC TRIAL LECTURE

- A public trial lecture (approx. 45 minutes) must be held with committee members present – preferably as part of an existing course, ideally a compulsory course in a bachelor's degree programme; otherwise, the habilitation committee select a topic suggested in the application.
- The candidate must have prior notice of three to six weeks to prepare the lecture.

TIPS & TRICKS

Other relevant academic works or a teaching portfolio incl. information on candidate's teaching philosophy, teaching practice (course concepts and documents, examination questions and results), etc. may also be submitted.

Habilitation candidates are also allowed to view the reports and submit a statement. This right of inspection can be used, for example, to prepare for critical comments and questions that could arise during the discussion or to address possible deficiencies in the reports.

GUIDELINE PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING HABILITATION DEGREES^[12]

§ 6 (1), (2), (3) and (6) FINAL MEETING OF THE HABILITATION COMMITTEE

- Based on the reports and statements, the habilitation committee must decide whether the candidate has outstanding **academic qualifications** and **didactic abilities**. Consideration must also be given to the academic works presented as well as to the insights gained during the discussion and the trial lecture.
- Positive conclusion of the procedures: decision on the *venia docendi* for the academic subject applied for and proposal for assignment to an academic organisational unit. Negative conclusion of the procedures: separate decision and reasoning.
- The entire dossier must be submitted to the Rectorate at most ten working days after the final meeting.

§ 7 (1) and (2) ISSUANCE OF THE OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION CONCERNING THE *VENIA DOCENDI*

- The Rectorate checks whether all essential principles of the procedure have been adhered to and, if that is the case, issues an official notification on the application for a habilitation degree.
- The Dean of the responsible faculty sends out invitations to the keynote speech of the candidate no later than six months after successful awarding of the habilitation degree.

§ 8 (1), (4), (5) and (7) SHORTENED HABILITATION PROCEDURE

University members with an active employment relationship at TU Graz can, upon request, be granted a *venia docendi* for an academic subject for which they have already been awarded a habilitation degree at another university. After submitting the required documents (acc. to § 1 as well as copies of any existing reports), the committee decides on the recognition of previous and, if applicable, subsequent habilitation achievements. (*Proof of a previous professorship for the same subject at another university is not sufficient as submission and assessment of a habilitation thesis is a legal requirement for awarding of a habilitation degree.*) If no further reports need to be obtained, the committee makes their decision based on the documents submitted as well as any trial lecture and discussion.

TIPS & TRICKS

The secretariat of the Rector contacts the habilitation candidate to arrange an appointment for handover of the official notification concerning the *venia docendi*.

“A habilitation degree is an important step in an academic career. It offers the opportunity to demonstrate one’s experience and, as the highest possible university examination, it is essentially the crowning glory of academic qualifications.”

(Assoc.Prof. Milena Stavric)

HABILITATION, ASSOCIATE PROFESSORSHIP AND SUPPORT SERVICES



Habilitation and associate professorship

Habilitation and tenure track positions

For academic staff members on tenure track (or in other justified cases), it is possible to seek accelerated processing of the procedure for awarding of habilitation degrees (*see also page 13*). In such cases, the assistant professor must submit an application to the Rector for the preparation of appointment of a habilitation committee as well as a brief description of the academic subject and plans for representing and promoting it; additionally they must submit the planned title of the habilitation thesis incl. an abstract and indication of the institute to which they are to be assigned, and a list of affected fields of study to the Rector via the Registrar's Office. Subsequently, all documents (in acc. with § 1 of the guideline) must be submitted to the Rectorate via the Registrar's Office within four months.^{[11, p. 4][14, p. 6]}

By registering the habilitation application in advance, it is possible to prepone the necessary preparations such as nominating habilitation committee members and selecting assessors, parallel to completing the habilitation thesis. However, the habilitation committee is only legally appointed once the habilitation thesis has been submitted.^[14, p. 9]

A Qualification Agreement (QA) stipulates a submission deadline for the habilitation thesis.^[15]

Further information

Assistant Professors are researchers who hold a tenure track position and have signed a QA with the Rector. The goals specified in the QA must be defined in such a way that they are achievable within four years under normal circumstances.^[14, p. 7]

The habilitation degree is a key component of a QA as part of the **qualification goals in research** (see also page 18). The QA further includes agreements^[14, S. 7ff.] on:

- **Experience abroad**
Stay abroad for six months
- **Teaching**
Independent teaching, Basic and Advanced modules (Teaching Academy), etc. (see also page 18)
- **Leadership and collaboration**
Three sufficiently specified goals, Management Development Programme (Human Resource Development)

Upon fulfilment of the QA, the academic staff member on tenure track becomes an associate professor with a permanent employment relationship at TU Graz.^[14, p. 12]

Habilitation and associate professorship

Habilitation and tenure track positions

Qualification Agreement (QA)^[15] [14, p. 7ff.]

Research

The habilitation project must be agreed upon in the QA, briefly described and must be consistent with the institute's goals. For this purpose, the content of the habilitation thesis and the academic subject which the habilitation thesis is expected to address must be briefly outlined in the QA.

Leading up to or complementary to the habilitation project, a maximum of three specified research goals must be defined within the framework of the QA. These research goals should support the habilitation project.

Teaching

The goals for independent teaching in accordance with § 49 of the Collective Contract for University Staff must also be agreed in the QA. Furthermore, a maximum of three goals must be set which, if possible, favour and promote the achievement of a *venia docendi* by way of the habilitation project. In addition to completing the one-day workshop "Teaching at TU Graz" from the Basic module, completing at least five days from the Advanced Teaching Academy module must be included as a mandatory goal in the Qualification Agreement.

Tip:

Experience has shown that becoming an academic staff member on tenure track is easier if the applicant has already gained some experience in the postdoc phase prior to the start of the tenure track employment relationship, e.g., with regard to publications, acquisition of third-party funding, stays abroad, teaching, leadership skills, etc.

"It is important to keep a close eye on your goals (in the Qualification Agreement) and to try to advance them evenly, i.e., to maintain a good balance between acquiring projects and writing publications."

(Assoc.Prof. Regina Kratzer)



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Habilitation and associate professorship

Habilitation and tenure track positions

6-YEAR TIMELINE

In first 6 months of ER

Recommended start of habilitation project already in onboarding phase

In first 24 months of ER

Outline of plan for habilitation project in QA and signing of QA

14 months before end of ER at the latest and
max. 4 months before submission of thesis

Application to the Rector for the preparation of
appointment of a habilitation committee

10 months before end of ER at the latest

Submission of habilitation thesis and all other documents

12 weeks before end of ER at the latest

Written request for QA evaluation to the Dean and head of institute

8 weeks before end of ER at the latest

Written final report and all documents (incl. habilitation notification,
etc.) to Dean and head of institute

Final evaluation and recommendation to Rectorate by Dean and head
of institute

ER: employment relationship

QA: Qualification Agreement

[14, p. 6ff.]

Support services

Individual and needs-oriented offers

In addition to support from the head of the institute and other people with a *venia docendi* at the faculty, the following services are recommended:

- **Treffpunkt Habil event**
Information and networking event
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/treffpunkt-habil
- **Career planning workshop**
Workshop to determine your current position and explore career options
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/career-planning-postdocs
- **Appointment training**
Workshop to assist in preparing for appointment process
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/appointment-training
- **Individual coaching**
Limited-time support offer focused on personal and professional situations, for example for individual support in challenging work and leadership situations
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/coaching
- **Workshops and group coaching for postdocs to address professional requirements**
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/career-postdocs

Multiple attendances in different phases recommended! Useful for exchanging ideas and learning from other people's experiences.

- **Management Development Programme**
(mandatory for academic staff on tenure track)
Programme to develop essential competencies for growing leadership responsibilities
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/management-development-programme
- **Teaching: Basic and Advanced module**
(mandatory for academic staff on tenure track)
Courses designed to impart didactic skills
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/teaching-academy
- **TU Graz-Mentoring**
(mandatory for academic staff on tenure track)
Informal knowledge of structures, processes and habits at the institute/faculty; personal and professional development with the help of an experienced (TU Graz) mentor
>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/tu-graz-mentoring

*"Throughout your career, I highly recommend taking advantage of accompanying support services such as mentoring or coaching. TU Graz has a wide range of great offerings available."
(Assoc.Prof. Daniela Fuchs-Hanusch)*



Support services

Contacts and service points

In addition to the relevant TU4U page (tu4u.tugraz.at/go/habilitationsverfahren), the following contacts and service points are available.

▪ Applications

Registrar's Office

✉ habilitationen@tugraz.at

▪ Habilitation committee

Senate

Eva-Maria Schmidt-Hasewend

✉ e.schmidt-hasewend@tugraz.at

▪ Course evaluations

Quality Management, Evaluation & Reporting

Manuela Berner

✉ manuela.berner@tugraz.at

▪ Stays abroad

International Office – Welcome Center

✉ international@tugraz.at

>> tu4u.tugraz.at/en/bedienstete/meine-karriere/work-related-stays-abroad-teaching-research-and-training

▪ Personal and professional development

Human Resource Development

✉ personalentwicklung@tugraz.at

>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/personalentwicklung

Languages, Key Competencies and
In-House Training

✉ ssiw@tugraz.at

>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/interne-weiterbildung

Teaching Academy

✉ teachingacademy@tugraz.at

>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/teaching-academy

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Additional information

Application acc. to § 13 (7) and (8) AVG

The application for a habilitation degree can be withdrawn until the official notification is issued. Furthermore, the application can also be changed, however, any changes to the application must not affect the nature of the matter or the subject matter and local jurisdiction. A change to the habilitation subject for which the *venia docendi* was applied for therefore requires submitting a new application.

Official notification acc. to § 73 (1) AVG

Unless otherwise stipulated in the administrative regulations, authorities are obliged to issue notices on applications from parties (§ 8) and appeals without unnecessary delay, at the latest six months after they have received the application in full.

Plagiarism check

All habilitation theses are subject to a plagiarism check. For this purpose, the habilitation thesis is submitted to the Rectorate via the Registrar's Office. This submission initiates an automated plagiarism check, the results of which are then forwarded to the habilitation committee for further assessment.

Expiry of the *venia docendi*^[8]

The *venia docendi* may expire by renunciation or after four years of unfounded inactivity – i.e., not holding courses, etc. – or due to a conviction that would result in the loss of office for a civil servant in acc. with § 27 of the Criminal Code (StGB). Therefore, researchers with a *venia docendi* must teach at least once within four years or, if asked, give a valid reason for failing to do so.

Fee charging acc. to § 14 Fees Act (GebG)

An application for a habilitation degree as well as the issuance of the official notification after completion of the procedure requires payment of fees. The habilitation candidate will be informed about the fee once the application for a habilitation degree has been received.

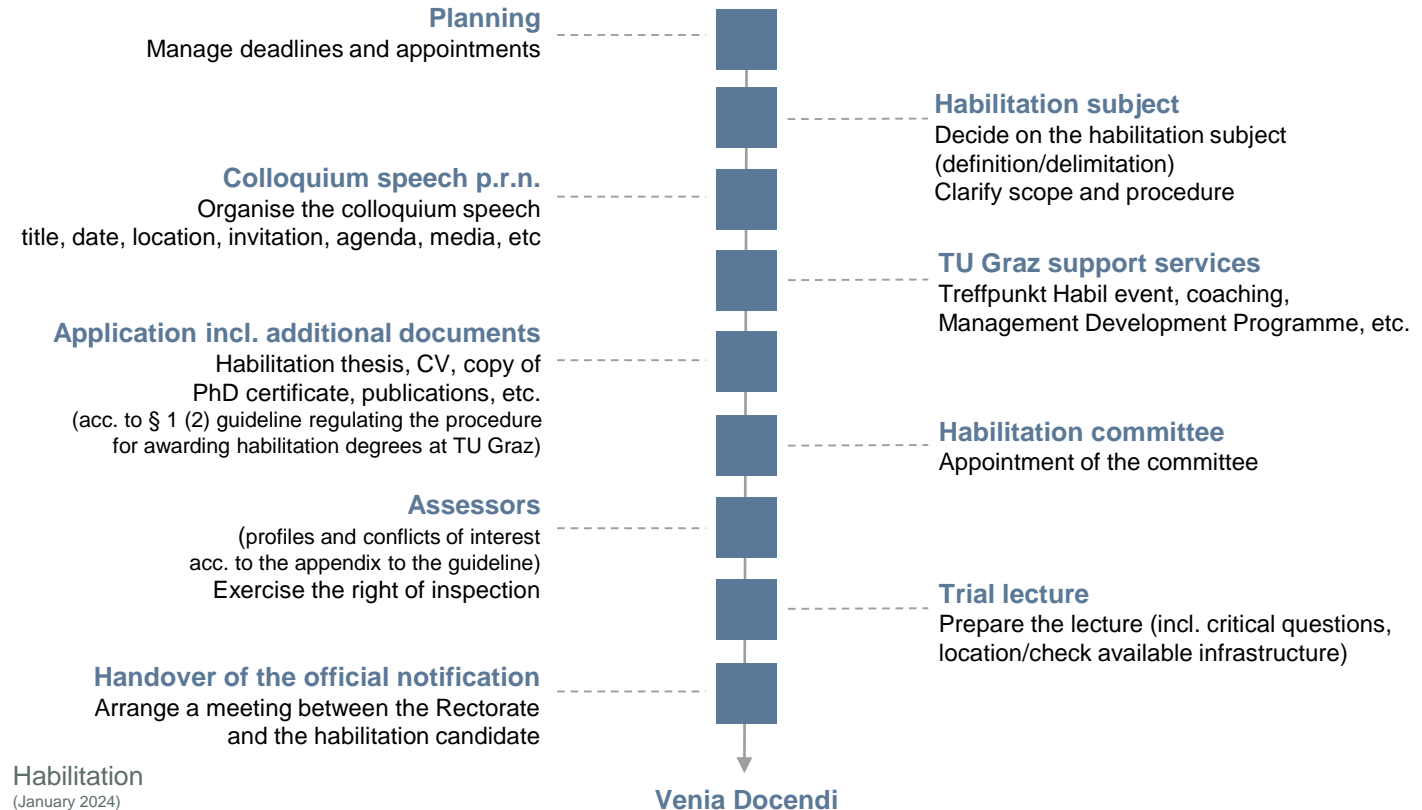
*“Once you have made the decision to apply for a *venia docendi*, you shouldn't delay the process any further. It doesn't get any easier with time and my tip is to complete it as quickly as possible, e.g., consciously take a summer to do it.”*

(Univ.-Prof. Thomas Pock)

Additional information

Overview

It is advisable to keep an eye on expanding the knowledge of the scientific community when planning to habilitate. To do this, it is advisable to plan your academic work accordingly and select research topics that can be expected to produce internationally recognised results.



Additional information Checklist

Schedule	Creation of a concept with a focus on several years of high-quality research	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Clarification of deadlines and appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habilitation thesis	Choice and definition of the habilitation subject	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Clarification of scope and specifications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colloquium speech (at least one year before submitting the application)	Title, content, order of events	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Location and technical requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Invitations from the Dean, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Written statement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support	Head of the institute and members of the faculty with a <i>venia docendi</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	TU Graz-Mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Support services by TU Graz	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Private support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considerations regarding committee members and assessors		<input type="checkbox"/>
Feedback and proofreading		<input type="checkbox"/>
For academic staff on tenure track: if necessary, <u>application for the preparation of appointment of a habilitation committee</u>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Application submission (digitally in PDF format) Submission to Registrar's Office FOA the Rectorate	<u>Application for a habilitation degree</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Habilitation thesis (optional: printed version)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	CV	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Copy of PhD certificate or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
	List of publications and lectures + publications themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>
	List of teaching activities carried out to date	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Description of the habilitation topic (English, approx. one page)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Name of the relevant degree programmes and faculties	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outline of the academic subject incl. coverage in research and teaching (max. ten pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Three suggested topics for a trial lecture	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If necessary, concept for the future use of the <i>venia docendi</i> at TU Graz (max. five pages)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If necessary, outline of own contributions to publications with several authors	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<u>Consent form</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercise of the right of inspection		<input type="checkbox"/>
Appointment to hand over the official notification and schedule the keynote speech		<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional information

FAQs



- **What are the most important timelines and deadlines?**^[12]^[16]
 - Approx. 1 year before application submission: holding of the colloquium speech; 1-month deadline for statements
 - 5 weeks before the next Senate meeting at the latest: submission of the application for consideration
 - From submission of the application along with all other required documents: 6-month deadline for issuing the official notification by the Rectorate
 - After informing the relevant Senate groups: 10 working days to nominate the members of the habilitation committee (grace period: 5 working days)
 - 6-week deadline for written reports by the assessors (grace period: 2 weeks)
 - 2-week period for written statements after receipt of the reports
 - 3-6 weeks' time for habilitation candidates to prepare the trial lecture
 - At the latest, 10 working days after the final meeting of the habilitation committee, transmission of the entire dossier to the Rectorate

- After positive conclusion of the procedures: keynote speech within 6 months
- As an academic staff member on tenure track: see also page 19

- **What is a suitable habilitation subject?**

The habilitation subject should be neither too “broad” nor too “narrow” (not covering a “broad” academic subject sufficiently may result in a negative conclusion of the procedures; a “narrow” academic subject, on the other hand, may be disadvantageous in applications). The habilitation subject must fall within the sphere of action of TU Graz and cover essential aspects of research and teaching in sufficient depth. The classification of scientific branches by Statistics Austria and the OECD can provide initial orientation when selecting a subject. In addition, it may be helpful to check to which fields positions for university professors have been allocated or to search for habilitation subjects of other researchers at (several) international universities and at TU Graz, as well as for the names of relevant scientific societies or journals. Furthermore, it should be possible to assign several existing courses from relevant fields of study to a habilitation subject.^[17 among others]

Additional information

FAQs

- **How can I show that the entire academic subject is covered?**

The Faculty of Electrical and Information Engineering as well as recently successful habilitation graduates recommend selecting a textbook/handbook that is considered standard in the field explaining how your research and teaching activities cover each of the chapters in the book. In addition to a textbook, renowned conferences or journals their Call for Papers topics can also be considered. It is not necessary to cover all sub-areas of a subject, instead the title of the habilitation thesis should indicate which sub-area of the subject is the focus of the thesis.^[17 among others]

- **Why do I have to give the colloquium speech in advance?**

Holding the colloquium speech in advance gives habilitation candidates the chance to receive constructive feedback before submitting their application for a habilitation degree. Members of the faculty with a *venia docendi* can provide detailed feedback, suggestions and advice on, among other things, the suitability of the chosen habilitation subject, and judge whether previous research/teaching activities, etc. are sufficient. As these people will be invited to submit statements later in the habilitation

procedure, it makes sense to take their feedback seriously and make full use of this opportunity.^{[12 among others][17]}

- **How do I have to structure my habilitation thesis?**

Siehe also page 9. Exchanging ideas with researchers who have recently been awarded a *venia docendi* in related fields can be highly beneficial as it offers an opportunity to learn from their experiences and to see how they approached their habilitation theses. Habilitation theses can also be borrowed from the university library. For a first impression, it can also be beneficial to attend the public colloquium speech of a current habilitation candidate. Ultimately, the goal is to find inspiration and your own approach to the process

- **How can I demonstrate that I have supported junior researchers if I am not allowed to supervise doctoral candidates directly?**

Even if supervision of doctoral theses is not possible, the ability to guide junior researchers to success can be demonstrated informally, for example through collaborations and co-authorships or through research work as part of third-party funded projects. Furthermore, doctoral graduates can assess and supervise master's theses.

^{[17 among others][18]}

Additional information

FAQs



- **Which and how many publications should be used for a cumulative habilitation thesis?**

This varies greatly from subject area to subject area, which is why it is essential to consult with people who have recently been awarded a *venia docendi* and those who research in the same field. In principle, any publications to which a habilitation candidate has made a significant contribution should have been peer-reviewed and published in high-quality international journals. In some areas, contributions to renowned conferences, patents, etc. may also be relevant. In general, it is important that the habilitation candidate themselves is satisfied with the number, type and quality of the publications. In any case, the principle should be quality over quantity.

- **Can evaluations of collaborative courses and those from other universities be incorporated?**

Yes. In the case of joint courses, the habilitation candidate's own contribution must be clearly stated, along with the official evaluation documents. Sometimes it is possible to identify the contributions made by individual lecturers from evaluations, for example if they are clearly named. Courses taught at other universities may also be included. In such cases, it makes sense to provide an explanation of the evaluation system.

- **What criteria must assessors meet?**

Assessors must not have an employment relationship with TU Graz. They must have a *venia docendi* or comparable qualification^[12, p. 5f.] – i.e., they have the right to independently supervise and assess doctoral theses according to their national university system. In addition, they must have demonstrated their academic excellence and, at the same time, have the ability to assess the habilitation thesis, i.e., be active in a related field. When selecting assessors, possible conflicts of interest or bias must also be taken into account (see appendix to the guideline regulating the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees at TU Graz).

- **According to which criteria do assessors write their report?**

They must assess whether the submitted thesis is of impeccable methodological quality, contains new scientific insights and demonstrates the candidate's command of his*her habilitation subject and ability for its advancement.^{[11] [12, p. 6]} The content of the publications and the habilitation thesis, publication locations, prestigious grants or the number of citations provide clues for determining outstanding achievements. When writing their report, the assessors focus on the quality of the academic content and its relevance for the scientific community.



Additional information

Food for thought

The following questions can serve as suggestions and inspiration if you are considering whether to earn a habilitation degree or are already working towards it.

General

- Do I want a career in university research and teaching?
- Does a habilitation degree represent a prerequisite or a benefit for a career in my field?
- Do I have the motivation and skills to support junior researchers?
- Who can support me, give me strategic advice and feedback on the content? Who is available to me as a mentor?
- How do I manage working intensively on my habilitation thesis professionally and privately?

Qualifications and requirements

- Do I have enough teaching experience?
- Can I maybe provide additional proof of my didactic skills (e.g., course evaluations, didactic training/further education)?
- How do I demonstrate my ability to promote a academic subject?

- How do I demonstrate the required outstanding academic qualifications? What qualifications do I already have and what am I still missing?

Habilitation subject and written thesis

- How broadly or narrowly should my habilitation subject be defined to be considered suitable?
- Does the planned subject correspond to (international) standards in my field?
- What special regulations exist in my field or faculty? Is it more common to write a monographic or a cumulative habilitation thesis?
- Where or from whom can I get relevant habilitation theses for initial orientation?

Visibility in the scientific community

- How can I make my achievements visible within the university/scientific community?
- Where do I publish to generate international visibility for my work?
- Where and in what language do I publish my monographic thesis to be visible internationally?

Additional information

Further reading

Legal basis

- § 103 Universities Act 2002
ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Erv/ERV_2002_1_120/ERV_2002_1_120.html
- General Administrative Procedure Act
ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Erv/ERV_1991_51/ERV_1991_51.html
- Guideline regulating the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees at TU Graz (The English translation of the guideline in this brochure is provided for your assistance. Please note that the German version is the legally binding version.)
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/public/Studierende_und_Bedienstete/Richtlinie_n_und_Verordnungen_der_TU_Graz/Habilitationsverfahren_Richtlinie_2024.pdf
- Employment Agreement on the Qualification Agreement
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Betriebsvereinbarungen/Qualifizierungsvereinbarung_BV_-_QualificationAgreement_Employment.pdf

Information in TU4U

Further information about the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees at TU Graz:

tu4u.tugraz.at/go/habilitationsverfahren

Further documents

- Excerpt of Statutes: expiry of the *venia docendi*
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/public/Studierende_und_Bedienstete/Satzung_und_Geschaeftsordnungen_der_TU_Graz/Satzungsteil_Erloeschen_der_Lehrbefugnis.pdf

- Application for a habilitation degree to the Rector
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Formulare/Antrag_zur_Erlangung_der_Lehrbefugnis.docx
- List of documents: attachments to the application for a habilitation degree
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Information/Meine_Karriere/Habilitationsverfahren/Habilitationsverfahren_Dokumente.pdf
- Declaration of consent for viewing the assessors' reports
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Information/Meine_Karriere/Habilitationsverfahren/Einverstaendniserklaerung_Einsichtnahme_Habilitationsverfahren.docx
- Application to the Rector for the preparation of appointment of a habilitation committee
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Formulare/Habil-Kommission_Antrag_zur_Vorbereitg_der_Einsetzung.doc
- Documents relating to the Qualification Agreement
tu4u.tugraz.at/bedienstete/meine-karriere/wissenschaftliches-personalmodell/unterlagen
- Presentation by Senate Chair Prof. Mütze and Vice Rector Prof. Vorbach as part of the “Treffpunkt Habil” event on July 4, 2023
tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Information/Meine_Karriere/Initiativen/Treffpunkt_Habil/Treffpunkt_Habil_2023_Habilitationsverfahren_Prof._Muetze_VR_Vorbach.pdf
- Hints for a Successful Habilitation – Faculty of Electrical and Information Engineering
www.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Fakultaeten/ETIT/PDF/Hinweise-Habilitation_10-2019

Reference list

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- [2] Kreckel, Reinhard (2015): Karrieremodelle an Universitäten im internationalen Vergleich. In: Akademie Aktuell. No. 3/2015, p. 36-40
- [3] Seeber, Marco; Mampaey, Jelle (2022): How do university systems' features affect academic inbreeding? Career rules and language requirements in France, Germany, Italy and Spain. In: Higher Education Quarterly. No. 76, p. 20-35
- [4] § 103 (11) UG
- [5] u.a. § 102 UG
- [6] § 98 (12) UG
- [7] § 98 (13) UG
- [8] Statutes of TU Graz (2010): Satzungsteil Erlöschen der Lehrbefugnis, Beschluss des Senats am 21.6.2010 (URL: tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/public/Studierende_und_Bedienstete/Satzung_und_Geschaeftsordnungen_der_TU_Graz/Satzungsteil_Erloeschen_der_Lehrbefugnis.pdf)
- [9] Gebhardt, Miriam (2016): Privatdozenten: Eine Frage der Lehre. In: Die Zeit. No. 33
- [10] Stuhlmann, Andreas (2017): Sackgasse Privatdozentur? Für neue Wege in die Wissenschaft nach der Promotion. In: Zeitschrift für Medienwissenschaft. Vol. 9, No. 17, p. 164-168
- [11] § 103 (2) UG
- [12] Guideline regulating the procedure for awarding habilitation degrees at TU Graz (2024) (URL: tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/public/Studierende_und_Bedienstete/Richtlinien_und_Verordnungen_der_TU_Graz/Habilitationsverfahren_Richtlinie_2024.pdf)
- [13] Wilde, Anke; Heil, Florian (2021): Habilitationsschrift und -gesuch: Was ist zu beachten? (URL: www.academics.at/ratgeber/habilitationsschrift)
- [14] Employment Agreement on the Qualification Agreement (2021) (URL: tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Betriebsvereinbarungen/Qualifizierungsvereinbarung_BV_-_QualificationAgreement_Employment.pdf)

Reference list

- [15] Sample copy Qualification Agreement (2021)
(URL: tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/redaktion/Formulare/Qualifizierungsvereinbarung_-_Qualification_agreement_sample_copy.pdf)
- [16] § 73 (1) AVG
- [17] Hints for a Successful Habilitation at Graz University of Technology / Faculty of Electrical and Information Engineering (2019)
(URL: www.tugraz.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Fakultaeten/ETIT/PDF/Hinweise-Habilitation_10-2019)
- [18] Statutes of TU Graz (2022): Satzungsteil Studienrecht der Technischen Universität Graz
(URL: tu4u.tugraz.at/fileadmin/public/Studierende_und_Bedienstete/Satzung_und_Geschaeftsordnungen_der_TU_Graz/Satzungsteil_Studienrecht_17.11.2022.pdf)

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Additions and corrections

For additions or corrections to this brochure, please contact the organisational unit Human Resource Development (personalentwicklung@tugraz.at).

Things to know about the habilitation at TU Graz

USEFUL INFORMATION for obtaining a *venia docendi*

Why should you habilitate?

Key aspects in the habilitation procedure

Habilitation and tenure track positions

FAQs and checklist

Support services and service points

... and much more!

TU Graz

Human Resource Development

>> tu4u.tugraz.at/go/personalentwicklung

