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for the Study of Culture



Giëßener Graduiertenzentrum  
Kulturwissenschaften



International PhD Programme  
Literary and Cultural Studies

JLU

NEUE WEGE. SEIT 1607.



# Your application at the GCSC

Lena Nüchter

## Extended script contents:

1. Your Application: Requirements, Formalities, Tips
2. GCSC Scholarship vs Membership
3. Other Funding Options: External Scholarship or Job?
4. Support for International Members at the GCSC



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# Your Application: Requirements, Formalities, Tips



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# Formal criteria

- No more than 1 year of work on your PhD project
- Fluency in German OR English  
During the membership you are expected to learn / improve the other language
- Final university transcript/certificate until 30 September 2024 at the latest



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# Criteria of evaluation

- Quality of research proposal
- Fit of project with GCSC research profile
- Excellent marks in a two-year research-track MA programme (equivalent to German 2,0 and up)
- Interdisciplinarity of project
- International orientation of project
- Can be supervised at JLU



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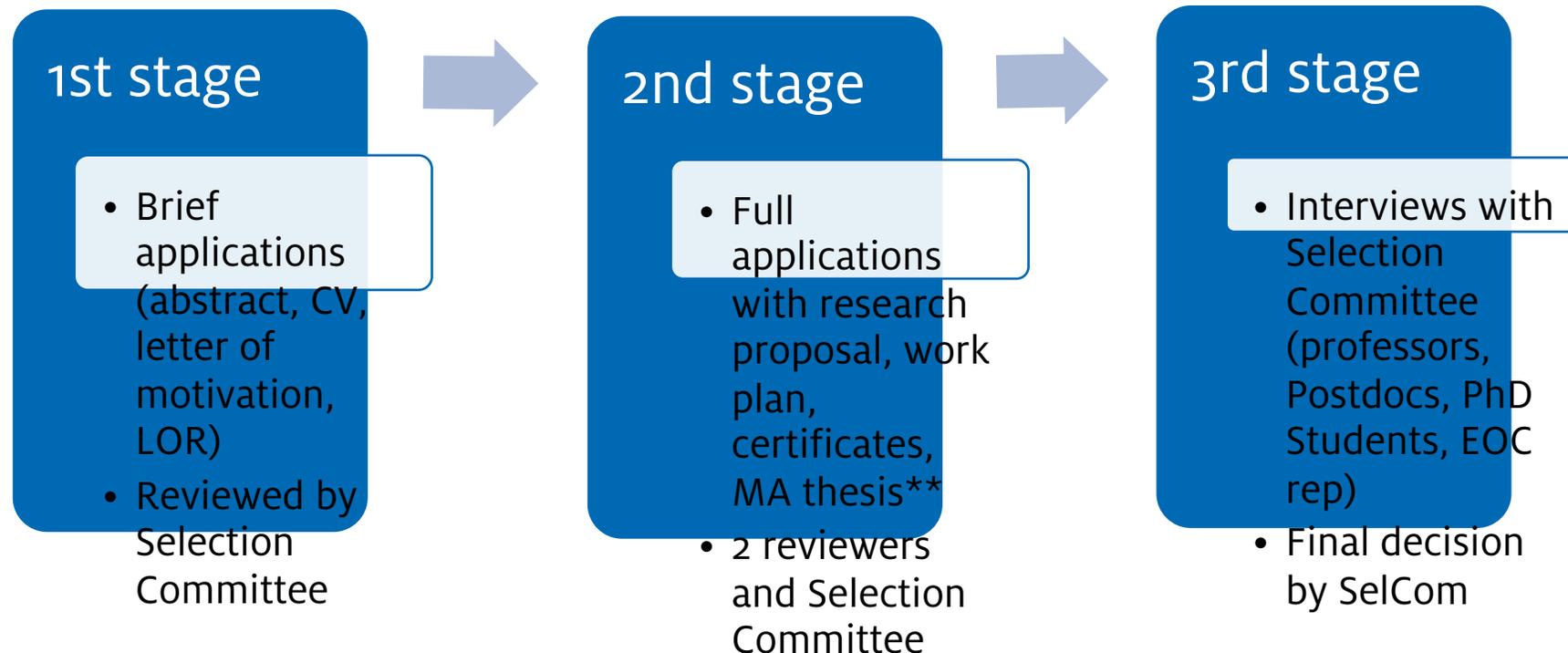


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# Scholarship application process



**\*\* For MA theses written in languages other than English or German, please submit your original thesis as well as a summary (2 pages, see FAQ).**



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# The Selection Committee

12 members, some by office and some elected.

By Office	Elected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 members of the GCSC Executive Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 professorial members from the GCSC PIs</li> <li>1 Postdoctoral member</li> <li>2 current doctoral students</li> </ul>
<p>„By elected office“:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 deputy of the (elected) Equal Opportunities Committee</li> </ul>	



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# First stage: Deadline 1 February 2024

- Fill in the online application form
- Upload documents in PDF format:
  - Abstract
  - Letter of Motivation
  - CV
  - Letters of Recommendation



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# Your letter of motivation

- Introduce yourself
- Why are you applying **at the GCSC?**
- How does your project contribute to the GCSC's research profile?
- Watch out for language and style



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# Your abstract

- Ca. 500 words
- Working title and research question / aim
- Methodology and theory
- Succinct and clear
- Well-structured
- Make us curious about your project!



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# Your CV

- **Tabular**
- **Well-structured**
- **No unexplained gaps**
- **Up-to-date**
- **Includes date**

## It should include:

- academic and employment history
- final examinations (incl. grade)
- international experience
- volunteer / community engagement

## It may include:

- personal data (date of birth, family status)
- additional qualifications (if applicable)



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# Your letters of recommendation

## Formalities:

- Official stationery with contact information of referee
- At least 1 letter from a full professor (holding a chair); second referee PhD+
- Must be up-to-date!

## Content:

- How do they know you?
- Assessment of your ability to work academically, your aptitude and experience in your subject
- No need to comment on your PhD project



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# Second Stage: Deadline 12 March 2024

Send as PDFs to [gcsc-application@gcsc.uni-giessen.de](mailto:gcsc-application@gcsc.uni-giessen.de):

- Certificates: high school (e.g. A levels) and university (certified copies not necessary)
- Research proposal (max. 10 pages plus bibliography)
- Detailed work plan and schedule, ca. 1-2 pages
- MA thesis / final thesis



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# Your research proposal

## Working Title / Topic

1. Research objective
2. Literature review / state of research
3. Methodology and method
4. Preliminary structure
5. Situating your project within the GCSC research profile
6. Bibliography



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# Criteria for excellent research proposals

- Innovative research question(s)
- Familiarity with the subject area/topic
  - Situates project within current scholarship
  - Knowledge of relevant sources and literature
- Interdisciplinarity / relevance for GCSC's research profile
- Well-thought-out and plausible argument
- Clear structure
- Knowledge of academic style and language



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# The research objective

# 1.

- Central and innovative research question
- Succinct summary of project aims and goals
- Describes topicality, impact, and ‚added value‘ of project
- Feasibility in 3 years
- Catch your readers’ interest!



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# The literature review

## 2.

- Concise, targeted presentation of relevant scholarship and current literature
- Highlight connections to your own project
- Demonstrate ‚added value‘, impact, topicality
- Highlight new research directions



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# Methodology and method

## 3.

- How are you approaching your topic and why did you choose this way/method?
- Brief introduction of core methods and theories for your project
- Potential and limitations of these methods in the context of your project



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# Preliminary structure

## 4.

- More detailed explanation of individual steps in accordance with work plan
- Justification of source selection, sample, object of investigation
- Concrete examples illustrating main hypotheses or arguments
- Goal-oriented (research) questions



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## Situating within GCSC profile

5.

- Which research areas, ETRGs, AGs etc. does your project contribute to?
- How does it engage with concepts, theories, methods already employed within research being conducted at the GCSC?



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# Your work plan

- Covering 3 years
- Ideally 2-4 months per item
- Most important steps in keywords
- Including planned field trips / stays outside Germany
- Ca. 1-2 pages
- Not incorporating the GCSC curriculum



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# Third stage: Interviews

Successful candidates will be invited to a  
**30-minute online interview.**

**Dates: 2 and 3 May 2024**



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# Interview Procedure

You decide whether the interview takes place in German or English.

You may be asked a question in the other language.

- 5-min presentation of your project
  - Contribution to the GCSC's research profile
  - Situate yourself within the RAs / ETRGs
  - Method & methodology
- Selection Committee asks questions about your project
- Time for your own question(s)



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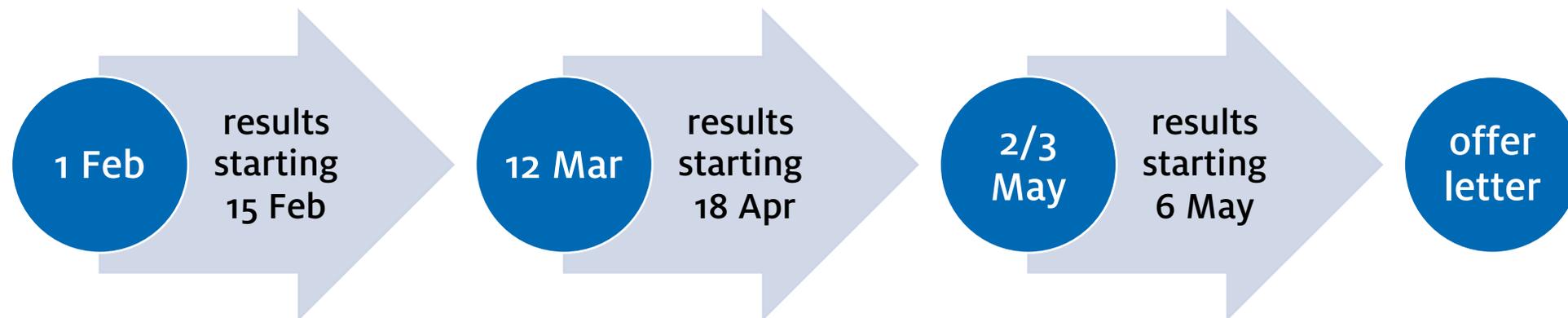


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# Deadlines overview



# GCSC scholarship vs membership: similarities and differences



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## GCSC Scholarship

Fully funded membership

- Up to 6 scholarships of 1.468 €/month (incl. 103 € flat material cost)
- For up to 3 years
- 1 additional year for children aged <12; +400 € for child <18, +100 € for each additional child
- Financial support for research trips and language courses

## GCSC Membership

Partially funded membership

- Financial support for research trips and language courses
- Scholarship advice



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# Both membership and scholarship entail...

- A multi-faceted research programme in the study of culture
- Interdisciplinary PhD colloquia
- Collaborative research with other doctoral students, professors, postdocs
- A broad international network
- Different publishing opportunities (On\_Culture, KULT-online etc.)
- International conferences and summer schools
- GCSC Teaching Centre: support in planning seminars and other didactic matters
- GCSC Career Service: preparation for further career

...and much more!



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# Requirements and expectations

All members, incl. scholarship holders:

- **Independent work on a PhD project** that makes a recognisable contribution to the GCSC's research profile and that can be supervised at Justus Liebig University (first supervisor)
- **Engagement in the GCSC's Research Areas** (initiation, co-ordination and documentation of collaborative research projects, e. g. conferences, workshops, publications)
- **Active participation in the GCSC's curriculum**

**Scholarship holders** are expected to play an **especially active part** in the coordination and documentation of activities within the Research Areas.



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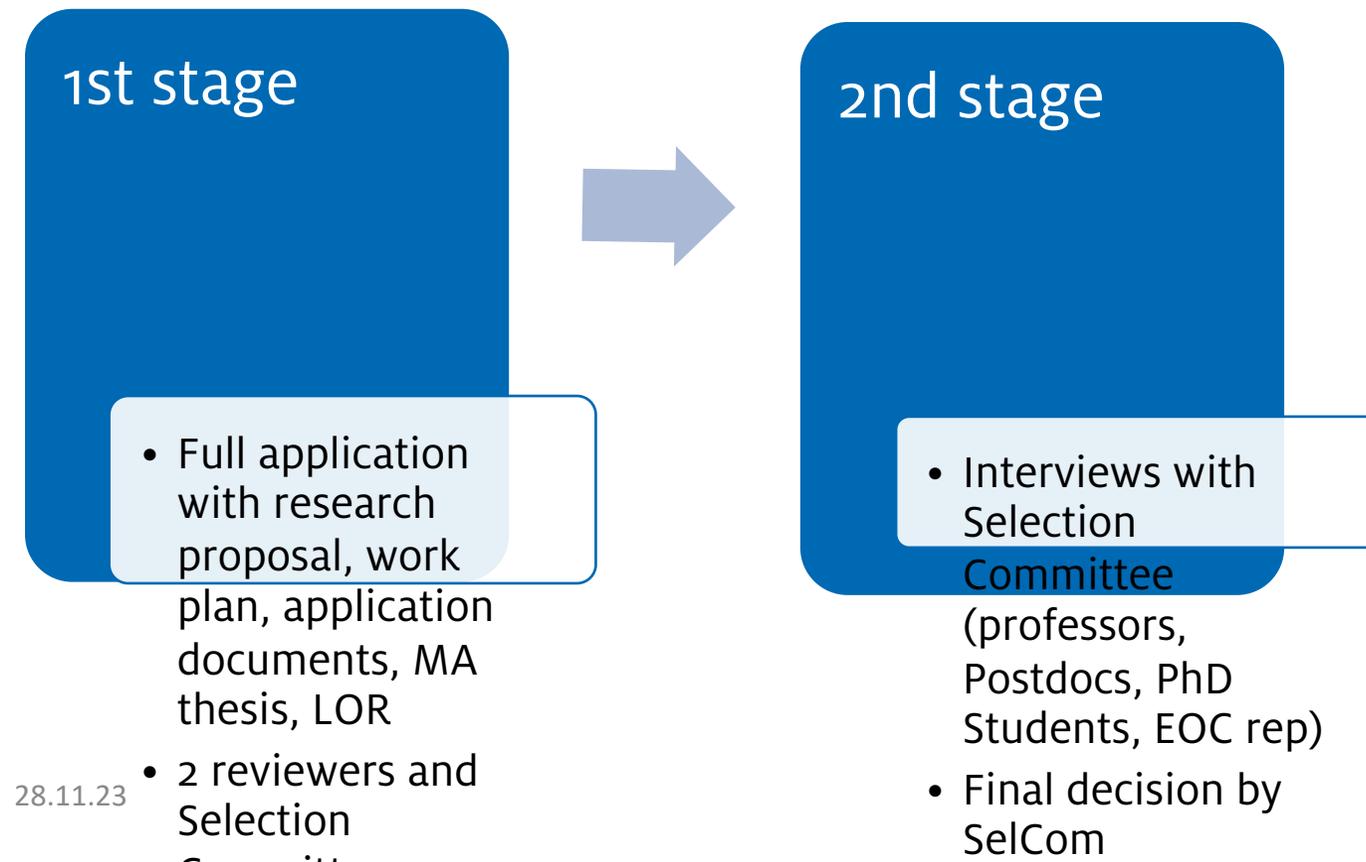


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# Direct application for membership-only: Deadlines 1 Mar and 1 October





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# Membership application

- GCSC online application form (see website) in English OR German
- Covering letter incl. your motivation for applying at the GCSC
- CV and copies of all transcripts and certificates
- Research proposal (max. 10 pages), which also situates your project within the GCSC's research profile
- Work plan covering 3 years
- **For JLU PhD students:** letter of recommendation from first supervisor, which comments on research proposal and work plan and explicitly endorses GCSC membership
- **For other applicants:** two letters of recommendation from professors at your home institution

**Submit via e-mail or snail mail.**

More information on the website under GCSC >> Doctoral Programme >> Membership.

Other funding options:  
external scholarships, employment



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# Other funding options

- **External doctoral scholarship**

GCSC members receive advice and support in their search for scholarships

- **Working in our outside of academia**

Less time for your PhD, but potentially holding a job you enjoy / that prepares you for your future career. GCSC members holding a job can extend their membership for up to one additional year.

- **Private funding**

Depends on your financial means...



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# External scholarships

## Financial support

Monthly grant covering living expenses

Additional money for research and family allowance often possible

Usually for 2 years (+ 1 year extension)

## Academic / ideational support

Summer schools / seminars, interdisciplinary colloquia

Workshops (e.g. career counseling & leadership skills)

Excellent research network, liaison lecturers / professors at universities

Peer network

Potential contacts in industry, politics, media



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# Types of scholarship providers

## Religious foundations

e.g. Cusanuswerk (kath.), Evangelisches Studentenwerk Villigst

## Foundations affiliated with political parties

e.g. Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, etc.

## Independent foundations

e.g. Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, FAZIT-Stiftung

## Subject-specific foundations

e.g. Gerda-Henkel-Stiftung

## Foundations for individuals in certain circumstances

e.g. Dr. Willy Rebelein Stiftung (for disabled and chronically ill students)

# Support for international GCSC members



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## We support international members...

- ... prior to arrival in Germany (together with JLU International Office)
- ... with university forms and applications
- ... with finding accommodation
- ... with funding for language courses

**We look forward to  
receiving your applications!**