FAQ – Specific Application Requirements

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GPA

How important is my GPA? What is the minimum requirement to join the program?

- You first university degree that qualifies you for a profession (e.g. Bachelor) needs to be passed with a final grade that is equal to "good".
  In the German system this is equivalent to a "2" (out of 4; 1 being the best, 4 being the worst passing grade), i.e. everything below and up to 2 would be considered sufficient to start in the program
- You may convert your grade into the German system using the Bavarian Formula for Grade Conversions (Bayrische Formel zur Notenberechnung):
  https://www.tum.de/en/studies/application/application-info-portal/grade-conversion-formula-for-grades-earned-outside-germany/

Application Procedure

Which steps do I need to take to get into the DTP?

- Find an MCLS member who is willing to issue an MCLS Recommendation Letter for you OR take part in the pre-screening period (more info in the "necessary documents" section below)

Provide all necessary documents via the Online Application Tool (see below for details)

  - MCLS Recommendation Letter (issued by prospective supervisor; if you do not have one yet, indicate that you want to participate in the pre-screening period in the online application tool)
  - Reference letter (issued by previous professor or similar, i.e. someone holding at least a doctoral degree and whose research is related to the Learning Sciences)
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Master's degree
  - Curriculum Vitae (CV)
  - Research proposal
  - Motivation letter
  - Proof of English proficiency

If you are an international applicant: Provide all necessary documents for the International Office and send them to the DTP Office (Check general FAQ and the application requirements for more info) as certified copies and certified translations (hardcopies!)

Application Interview

- If the selection committee considers you to be a good candidate after the document review, you will be invited to an interview.
- The interview is conducted by at least two MCLS professors.
- You will be asked to present your Master Thesis project and your intended project for your doctoral studies. Further instruction will be included in the interview invitation.
- Depending on your performance in the interview, you will be accepted or rejected as a doctoral candidate within the DTP.

Necessary Documents

MCLS Recommendation Letter

Please note that having an MCLS Recommendation Letter is the most important criterion for your application. There are two ways to obtain the document:

1. **Directly get in touch with potential supervisors** who may be interested in your research (i.e. your research interests match) and try to come to an agreement with one of them. In this case, please also discuss your degree choice (PhD or Dr.) with him/her. Then you need to ask him/her to upload an MCLS Recommendation Letter through the online application tool (i.e., add their contact information in the respective fields)
2. **Participate in the pre-screening period**. If you did not manage to find an MCLS member who was willing to provide you with an MCLS Recommendation Letter in time, you may participate in the pre-screening period by submitting your application earlier then the final deadline (for exact dates, please check the timeline here). MCLS professors will have access to your application during this period.

Will the Program Coordination help me find a potential supervisor?

- Unfortunately, we cannot assist you in finding a supervisor directly.
- However, you find the list of MCLS professors here: http://www.en.mcls.uni-muenchen.de/aboutus/organisation/index.html and structured in expertise teams, here: http://www.en.mcls.uni-muenchen.de/research/expertise_teams_/index.html if you want to get in touch with them directly
- Additionally, during the pre-screening period all potential supervisors can access the current applications and the coordination tries to make professors aware of potentially matching candidates.

If I want to contact professors directly, how should I approach them?

- If you want to contact professors, please formulate e-mail that are
    - polite (i.e., address the professor with his/her title and full name, have a greeting including your full name in the end)
    - individualized (i.e., tailor each e-mail to a specific professor – DO NOT use the same standardized e-mail for multiple professors!)
    - short/precise (i.e., condense the information to the necessary information and select a meaningful mail subject)
- Please contact only those professors whose research interests match with yours and attach the following documents :
    - SHORT presentation of your personal background (maybe also information on how you fund your doctoral studies, e.g., scholarship)
    - Curriculum vitae (CV)
    - Research proposal (that matches the research area of the contacted professor!)

I contacted an MCLS member with a request to be my supervisor/to write me an MCLS Recommendation Letter. It's already been three days and I still haven't heard back. What should I do?

- Usually it takes at least one week until you hear back from any professor at all. It might also take two or three weeks. If you did not hear back within this time, we recommend trying to contact him/her again.

I could not find an MCLS member who is willing to provide an MCLS Recommendation Letter for me. What should I do?

- If you could not find an MCLS member who definitely confirmed that he/she will provide an MCLS Recommendation Letter by the end of the application period for you, we highly recommend to participate in the pre-screening period.

How does the pre-screening period work?

- In case that you want to participate in the pre-screening period, please submit your otherwise complete application (only the MCLS Recommendation Letter missing) through the online application tool by the earlier deadline. The timeline is available here.
- The applications will be made available to all MCLS members, who are allowed to supervise doctoral students.
- During this period, the potential supervisors can look at all applications and see if there are any potentially interesting applications for them.
- In case someone is interested in an applicant, he/she will upload an MCLS Recommendation Letter.
- In this case, you will be informed and invited to an interview.
- In case that no MCLS Recommendation Letter was provided, we will inform you asap.

I already have a supervisor in my home country and I want to join the DTP. Is this possible?

- Theoretically yes (PhD only), however this has not happened so far and is not recommended. In this specific case you would need to find two MCLS members to be your second and third supervisor and write your PhD according to our study regulations.

There is more than one Professor within the MCLS, who fits my research interests. Is it possible to contact them simultaneously?

- Yes. As it is hard to find a supervisor and all the steps involved take some time, we recommend contacting more than one professor simultaneously, **given they match your research interest well.** This increases chances of finding a supervisor in time. Alternatively/additionally, you can participate in the pre-screening period.

I already have a Supervisory Agreement from an MCLS professor. Do I additionally need to provide an MCLS Recommendation Letter?

- No. You may replace an MCLS Recommendation Letter by a Supervisory Agreement (Betreuungszusage) from any doctoral degree choice.

How do I provide the MCLS Recommendation Letter?

- **The MCLS Recommendation Letter must be submitted by the potential MCLS supervisor him/herself.**
    - If you got in touch with a potential supervisor and he/she agreed to provide an MCLS Recommendation Letter (or Supervisory Agreement), enter the contact information of the intended prospective supervisor in the online application tool. This automatically generates an email to the professor with further instructions. **Please note that you MUST contact your prospective supervisor prior to entering the contact information in the application system.**
      You will receive a confirmation about the successful upload via e-mail. If you did not receive it 5 days before the applicable deadline, please make sure to send a reminder to your potential supervisor!
    - If you participate in the pre-screening period and a potential supervisor is interested in your studies, he/she will upload the MCLS Recommendation Letter directly within the application tool. We will inform you about the results asap.

Reference Letter

Who can write my reference letter?

- It is recommended to get a reference letter from a previous professor. However, anyone who holds at least a doctoral degree and whose research is related to the Learning Sciences can write the letter for you. **It must not be your potential supervisor (who issues the MCLS Recommendation Letter), though!**

I have two referees. In the online application tool I can only enter the contact details of one referee, who can then upload a reference letter. Can I upload the second letter differently?

- No. You need only ONE recommendation letter from ONE referee. This is absolutely sufficient for the application. Only one reference letter is considered for the application, so it does not make sense to upload more than one. If you have more than one referee, decide which one fits the program's focus (Learning Sciences) better.

How do I provide the reference letter?

- **The reference letter must be submitted by the referee him/herself**. Applicants have to enter the contact information of the intended referees in the online application tool. This automatically generates an email to the referee with further instructions. **Please note that you MUST contact your referee prior to entering the contact information in the application system.**
  You will receive a confirmation about the successful upload via e-mail. If you did not receive it 5 days before the applicable deadline, please make sure to send a reminder to your referee!

A certified copy of the Bachelor's certificate (or equivalent) and of the Transcript of Records

- If issued in any language other than English or German, a certified translation is necessary
- The diploma needs to prove that you graduated at least with a "good" (more information under GPA above)

A certified copy of the Master's certificate (or equivalent) and of the Transcript of Records

- If issued in any language other than English or German, a certified translation is necessary
- Applicants who have not yet finished their Master's studies are required to upload a letter from their university, confirming the expected date of graduation

Curriculum Vitae (PDF)

Please provide your CV with up-to-date information as PDF

Is there a standard document for the CV?

- No. You can write it in the form that is common in your home country. However, it should document your professional life without gaps.

Research Proposal (PDF)

Guidelines on how to write the research proposal can be found here:
http://www.en.mcls.lmu.de/study_programs/dtp/documents2/guidelines_proposal.pdf

Is has to be provided online as a PDF file.

Letter of Motivation (PDF)

Guidelines on how to write the motivation letter can be found here:
http://www.en.mcls.lmu.de/study_programs/dtp/documents2/guidelines_motivation.pdf

Is has to be provided online as a PDF file.

Degree Choice

After having participated in the DTP, will I be awarded with the Dr. or the PhD?

- This depends solely on your decision in the beginning. You can obtain either the Dr. or the PhD Learning Sciences. Please discuss this decision with your supervisor.

What is the difference between the Dr. and the PhD?

We tried to list the most important differences between the degree choices in the following table.

Postgraduate Academic Degree (PhD Learning Sciences) – RECOMMENDED FOR INTERNATIONALS	**Doctoral Degree (Dr.)**
Internationally recognized title for the completion of doctoral studies	Particular tradition within the German speaking countries; the exact degree choice depends on your subject – please get in touch with your supervisor More information on the Dr. phil., Dr. rer. nat., Dr. med.,
Fixed number of compulsory courses to be passed before you submit your dissertation: - Two Methodology courses - Two Key Qualification Courses - Two content-Related courses - Two Colloquia - Two Retreats With these courses you automatically fulfill the requirements to obtain the DTP certificate.	**Dr. phil**.: Compulsory course participation to be negotiated with the supervisor – no official requirement for submission of the dissertation **Note: To obtain the DTP certificate, doctoral candidates need to attend at least the following courses:** - Two Methodology Courses - Two Key Qualification Courses - Two Content-Related Courses - Two Colloquia
In the PhD, the formulation of a Target Agreement stating the objectives for the whole time of the doctoral study period is compulsory. The doctoral candidate's progress is to be evaluated every 2nd semester based on the objectives from the Target Agreement.	**Dr. phil.:** The formulation of a Target Agreement and formal evaluations of the doctoral candidate's progress are recommended though optional and to be discussed with the supervisor **Dr. rer. nat., Dr. med., …:** please check the links above for regulations
Grading system based on ECTS points (courses have a pass/fail policy; dissertation and defence are graded); grading scale: 1.0 – 4.0	**No courses. Final grade determined by dissertation and defence grades; grading scale: summa cum laude – rite**
Dissertation thesis (monography) or cumulative dissertation	**Dr. phil.:** Dissertation thesis (monography) or cumulative dissertation **Dr. rer. nat., Dr. med., …:** please check the links above for submission options
Awarded Title: PhD Learning Sciences (you may use "Dr." instead of PhD)	Awarded title: Dr. phil/Dr. rer.nat./Dr. med./… in your chosen subject
The DTP is the structured program that allows you to join the PhD Learning Sciences. For enrollment you need the "Promotionsberechtigung" (permit	The DTP is not involved in your doctoral studies directly, they are an individual endeavor. It does provide guidance and support, but all

to do your PhD) from the program. With this you enroll either in the International Office (international students) or in the Registrar's office (German students and Bildungsinländer).	official steps are handled by the examination offices (e.g., Dr. phil: application for acceptance as doctoral candidate): https://www.pags.pa.uni-muenchen.de/promotion/promotionsordnungen/promotion_2016/index.html

Residency

Is it necessary to live in Munich for the duration of the program or is it possible to be an external doctoral candidate in this program?

- This needs to be clarified with the supervisor. On the part of the study program administration it is no problem, as long as you provide all necessary documents by the stated deadlines and you have the possibility to attend the required courses.