

# Guideline for dissertations in the WU PhD Label Economics

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## 1. General Description

The WU PhD Label Economics offers a full range of graduate level courses in economic methods as well as advanced topical courses on subjects at the frontier of current research. It is a broad economics PhD program (instead of a specialized program in a particular field of economics) and is based on high international standards.

The program has three pillars: Applied microeconomics and industrial organization, macroeconomics and international economics, and economic policy in the broader fields of public economics, labor economics, political economy, the economics of digitalization, and behavioral economics. These pillars have a strong common support in empirical methods.

As prerequisites of admission to the PhD Label in Economics we demand advanced courses in microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics which are taught in the new scientific track master program in economics at WU (or equivalent courses from outside). The course program begins with two basic courses in mathematics and statistics. Thereafter, students choose from a variety of courses, especially topics courses that cover subjects at the current research frontier and prepare students for independent research of their own. These courses include microeconometrics, macroeconometrics, industrial organization, labor economics, international economics, international macroeconomics, game theory, applied econometrics and behavioral economics. A small number of courses taught by distinguished visiting professors will complement the course program, and students are allowed to take additional selective courses from outside of WU.

The Principal Investigators (PIs) are currently 10 full professors at the Department of Economics and currently four associate professors who comply with the current criteria of habilitation.

PhD Students in the program are usually employed in the position of "Teaching and Research Associate" (pre-doc, employee subject to the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff - Angestellte/r gemäß Kollektivvertrag für die Arbeitnehmer/innen der Universitäten) with an employment extent of 30 hours/week)

The label PhD Economics is based on the Curriculum for the PhD program in Economic and Social Sciences (Studienplan PhD in Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften). The general rules of the [Curriculum](#) apply, but some parts are specified further.

After a student has successfully completed her/his PhD studies (including the specifications of the PhD label) WU issues a graduation certificate confirming the completion of the examinations of the PhD Program in Economics and Social Sciences, - Economics" and it awards the academic degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

The program is fully taught in English.

## 2. Course Structure and Criteria for the PhD dissertation

The program consists of a course phase (3-4 semesters) and a dissertation phase (up to 6 semesters). To complete the research-oriented course work, students have to take a total of 13 courses, including at least 5 field courses. Students are allowed to take additional courses on a voluntary basis.

Students must have extensive master level education in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Advanced Econometrics. This level of students (1) must be obtained from the scientific track of WU's Economics Master Program, or (2) must be evidently equivalent to the level in (1), as obtained from another university, or (3) must be obtained by completing the courses in (1) during the first year of the program.

The Department also holds a research seminar for PhD-students each semester. As part of the program, students have to participate in these at least 2 times. A student's research proposal — within the 1st year of the program — and the 3 research articles each have to be presented at least once in one of the research seminars for PhD-students (RS Micro/Macro). PhD-students will regularly participate in the research seminar of the Department of Economics for external researchers, and in the equivalent seminar for internal researchers.

### 2.1. Course Structure

The following courses are **necessary prerequisites** in order to be admissible to the PhD Program:

- Advanced Microeconomics I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS)
- Advanced Macroeconomics I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS)
- Advanced Econometric Models and Methods (4 ECTS)

or equivalent courses.

The PhD Label Economics has the following course structure, see appendix A for the assignment of courses to the current "PhD program in Economic and Social Sciences ("PhD-Studium der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften an der Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien)

(1) The following compulsory modules of in sum 42 ECTS have to be successfully completed:

	<b>Compulsory modules</b>	<b>Weekly hours</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
1.	Mathematics	2	6
2.	Statistics	2	6
3.	Topics in Econometrics	2	6
4.	Research proposal		
5.	Research seminar Microeconomics	2	6
6.	Research seminar Macroeconomics	2	6
7.	Internal/external Research seminar	2	6
8.	Defensio		6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>42</b>

- (2) Additionally, students have to successfully complete **5 field courses** of choice of in sum 30 ECTS. These field courses begin with **“Topics in ...”** if offered by our department and are offered e.g. in game theory, microeconometrics, macroeconometrics, industrial organization, labor economics, trade, international macroeconomics, public economics, inequality or behavioral economics etc.
- If a student wants to choose courses offered by one of our cooperation partners (CEU and University of Vienna) or another department or university, students have to clarify the eligibility for receiving credits first with their supervisor, the head of the PhD label Economics and the doctoral office .

A maximum of two field courses out of the five field courses can be taken from outside the courses offered by our department, with the exception of our cooperation partners CEU and University of Vienna where three field courses can be taken in total.

	<b>Field courses</b>	<b>Weekly hours</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
1.	Focus 1 [...]	2	6
2.	Focus 2 [...]	2	6
3.	Focus 3 [...]	2	6
4.	Focus 4 [...]	2	6
5.	Focus 5 [...]	2	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>

- (3) Finally, students must successfully complete two **courses of their choice** from outside WU of in sum 6 ECTS. The courses must have a relation with regard to contents to the topic of the doctoral dissertation.

Courses from outside WU

	<b>Choice module</b>	<b>Weekly hours</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
1.	Choice module 1 [...]	2	3
2.	Choice module 2 [...]	2	3

## 2.2. Criteria for the PhD dissertation

Students who graduate should have presented their work at least twice at a well-established international conference, such as the annual EEA-ESEM meetings, the ASSA meeting, the annual ASSET meetings, or equivalent. This requirement may be relaxed if one of the papers is already published or accepted for publication in a journal with at least Handelsblatt ranking 0.1 or higher. Students should have written at least three papers, which should be judged to be good enough to be evaluated as publishable in a good international journal (journals with point equivalent of 0.1 of higher according to the Handelsblatt ranking). At least one paper must be written in single authorship.

The student should present his or her dissertation work in a public defense in front of a committee consisting of the main supervisor and at least two other members, at least one of which is a non-WU external (preferably international) expert in the field of research.

### 3. Supervision and Grading of Students

#### 3.1. Supervision Committee

Each student will be supervised by a committee (“supervision committee”) consisting of a minimum of three persons, one of which must be a PI (“Principal Investigator”, see 5.). The main supervisor must be a PI. All members of the supervision committee must have the habilitation or must fulfill the current habilitation criteria of the Department of Economics.

A provisional assignment of the main supervisor will be made upon entry into the program. Until the second semester the student writes the **research proposal** which must be approved by the supervision committee and must be submitted to the doctoral office. At this stage, the final assignment of PIs into the supervision committee should also be agreed upon to possibly improve the fit. At this point, students also start to present their research projects at conferences and seminars in Austria and abroad.

The main supervisor is the first contact person in all matters concerning the PhD program. Supervisors and students meet on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the student’s PhD studies in general and the dissertation project in particular. During the dissertation phase students will repeatedly present their research in the internal seminars. This structure enables students to receive feedback from other faculty members, the supervision committee, and fellow students. Knowing about the specific characteristics of the field, faculty members also talk about writing skills in their topics courses and seminars.

Students will be offered a five-year contract. Progress will be monitored at regular intervals during the period of study. After one year, each student is supposed to have passed successfully the first year’s course work. At the beginning of every year, doctoral students submit a **progress report (“Dissertationsvereinbarung”)** to his/her supervision committee (see appendix B for a template dissertation agreement). This progress report will form the basis for the yearly meeting with the first supervisor where also career development possibilities are discussed (“Jahresgespräch”). On the one hand, the progress report ensures that the student and the advisors take time to discuss the research progress made, to reflect on the last semester, to plan the upcoming semesters and to agree on the targets to be reached. On the other hand, these reports allow verification whether a doctoral student is in good standing or not. During the course phase, good standing is defined in terms of grades obtained in the required classes. During the dissertation phase, good standing requires timely completion of the three papers that will eventually constitute the thesis.

A student can initiate a meeting with the speaker when (s)he has difficulties with the supervisors. In this case, the speaker intermediates between the student and the supervisors and finds other supervisors, if necessary.

#### 3.2. Doctoral committee

The doctoral committee grades the dissertation. The grading of the dissertation is separated from supervision. The doctoral committee consists of the main supervisor and (1) either another PI and one non-WU external (preferably international) expert in the field of research or (2) two non-WU external (preferably international) experts in the field of research. All members of the doctoral committee must either be PIs and/or fulfill the current habilitation criteria of the department of economics.

### 4. Placement Supports

The placements of students of the PhD Label Economics is an important quality signal and preparing students for the job market is another focus of the training at the program. Prior to the summer

break, students who are close to finishing present their job market paper to the Department's entire faculty. Faculty members offer extensive support towards improving the presentation and interview performance: they schedule individual mock-interviews and provide specific training to guarantee an optimal preparation — e.g., for the Spanish, British or transatlantic job market.

During their PhD, WU strongly promotes participation in the discourse of the research community, e.g., by paying travel allowances for attendance of international scientific conferences and short term research visits at scientific institutions. Students of our PhD Program benefit from the network of international partners of WU and the members of the Department of Economics. In addition, they are supported by a placement officer.

## **5. Current Principal Investigators**

The PIs (Principal Investigators) of the program are:

1. Arenas-Arroyo, Esther: Labour economics, Migration and applied Microeconometrics
2. Badinger, Harald: Applied Econometrics, International Economics
3. Berger, Ulrich: Microeconomics, Game Theory
4. Crespo-Cuaresma, Jesús: Applied Econometrics, Macroeconomics
5. Felbermayr, Gabriel: Theory and Politics of International Trade, Climate and International Trade, Labor Markets in Open Economies
6. Fellner-Röhling, Gerlinde: Microeconomics, Digitalization, Behavioral Economics
7. Gugler, Klaus: Industrial Organization
8. Halla, Martin: Applied Microeconometrics
9. Kartal, Melis: Political Economy, Behavioral and Experimental Economics
10. Oberhofer, Harald: Applied Econometrics, Industrial Organization, Trade
11. Prettner, Klaus: Macroeconomics
12. Rabitsch, Katrin: Macroeconomics
13. Scüzs, Florian: Industrial Organization
14. Weiss, Christoph: Industrial Organization

**Appendix A: Assignment of courses to the “ PhD-Studium der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften an der Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien (PhD Program in Economics and Social Sciences) ”**

		PhD SoWi	Weekly hours	ECTS
<b>Compulsory Modules</b>				
1.	Mathematics	FM; MT	2	6
2.	Statistics	FM; MT	2	6
3.	Topics in Econometrics	FM; MT	2	6
4.	Research proposal			
5.	Research seminar Microeconomics	RS I-II; WS	2	6
6.	Research seminar Macroeconomics	RS I-II; WS	2	6
7.	Internal/external Research seminar	RS I-II; WS	2	6
8.	Defensio			6
<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Field courses</b>				
1.	Focus 1 [e.g. Game theory]	RS I-II; FÜ RS; WS / FM; MT	2	6
2.	Focus 2 [...]	RS I-II; FÜ RS; WS	2	6
3.	Focus 3 [...]	RS I-II; FÜ RS; WS / FM; MT	2	6
4.	Focus 4 [...]	RS I-II; FÜ RS; WS / FM; MT	2	6
5.	Focus 5 [...]	RS I-II; FÜ RS; WS / FM; MT	2	6
<b>Total</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Choice module</b>				
1.	Choice module 1 [...]	WF I-II	2	3
2.	Choice module 2 [...]	WF I-II	2	3

Note: All regulations of the Curriculum for the PhD Degree Program in Economics and Social Sciences have to be met. At least one Interdisciplinary Research Seminar (FÜ RS, 6 ECTS) has to be taken.

**Abbreviations**

FM	“Forschungsmethoden” (Research Methods)
RS	“Research Seminar”
MT	“Methodologie und Theorie” (Methodology and Theory)
FÜ RS	“Fächerübergreifendes Research Seminar” (Interdisciplinary Research Seminar)
WS	“Wissenschaftliches Schreiben” (Academic Writing)
WF	“Wahlfach” (Choice Module)

Appendix B: Sample dissertation agreement (“Muster-Dissertationsvereinbarung”)

**Dissertation Agreement  
according to § 34 (2) of the WU by-laws**

PhD program in Economic and Social  
Sciences, Focus Economics



(Main) Supervisor:	
Doctoral / PhD student:	
Student ID No.:	
Academic year:	

(Working) Title of the dissertation:

Agreement on the preliminary course of the program / the dissertation project (cumulative/monography, requirements for the papers):



Time schedule (or modification of time schedule agreed on in the first year):

Courses to be attended in the next academic year (20\_\_/\_\_):

Specification of what is expected of student and supervisor in the course of the academic year 20\_\_/\_\_ :



By signing this Dissertation Agreement, the (main) supervisor agrees to:

- be available for a minimum of 2 meetings with the student each semester;
- support the student in modifying the concept if in the course of the research phase it turns out that the project initially agreed on cannot be realised;
- inform the student about conferences relevant to his/her dissertation project;
- assist the student with publishing the dissertation or journal articles.

By signing this Dissertation Agreement, the student agrees to:

- aim at completing the dissertation within the time frame agreed upon;
- complete the courses stipulated in this agreement, otherwise graduation is not possible;
- keep appointments with the supervisor;
- keep the supervisor informed about the progress of the dissertation project, including delays and interruptions;
- notify the supervisor if he/she discontinues the project or drops out;
- present his/her topic in a suitable form (for example on conferences, in research seminars,...);
- comply with the WU code of conduct

The Dissertation Agreement has to be forwarded to the Doctoral Office.

**Date of the next Dissertation Agreement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the (main) supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the student

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature Speaker PhD WiSo, *Focus Economics*