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Orientation for Doctoral Students



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- Overview and short introduction
- Facts & figures
- Curriculum structure
- What is a dissertation?
- FAQs
- Resources

A few facts & figures

- Doctoral programs – about 1000 people ,in the system`
 - Social and Economic Sciences/Economic and Social Sciences
 - Business Law
 - PhD Finance and International Business Taxation
- In the academic year 2021/2022, 106 students started their doctoral studies at WU
- Admissions winter semester 2021/22
 - 24 Doctoral program Social and Economic Sciences
 - 29 Doctoral program Business Law
 - 25 PhD Economic and Social Sciences
- PhD WiSo: only for WU's academic staff
- About 70 persons successfully complete their studies per year
- Admission: only with preliminary confirmation of supervision and synopsis

Structure

Research Proposal

Courses

Dissertation

please see curricula
for details

Defensio Dissertationis

- New curriculum Social and Economic Sciences
October 2022
- Research Proposal:
 - Submission within 1 year of admission
 - Graded by the Supervision Team (Main Supervisor and at least 2 more members)
- Dissertation Agreement
- Dissertation and defense are graded by a
Doctoral Committee consisting of 3 members
(all with habilitation, at least one not from WU)

Dissertation Agreement

[according to §34 (2) of the WU by-laws]

- Written agreement between students & their supervisor covering
 - requirements for the dissertation (monography/cumulative, paper requirements, ect.)
 - planned next steps & expectations
 - (courses to be completed)
- Submission
 - within the first year of studies together with the Research Proposal

What is a dissertation?

- **Original** academic work, support by Supervision Team
- (at least temporary) participation in academic discourse
- Playing by the rules of...
 - science
 - the subject/discipline
 - WU
 - the Supervision Team
- More than just an extended diploma/master thesis

Withholding access to the dissertation

- § 86 of the Universities Act 2002 governs the publication for academic dissertations
 - If the student establishes that his/her legal/business interests would be materially endangered by permitting access, it is possible to withhold the access to the dissertation for a **maximum of 5 years**.
 - „I would not have been granted access to the data had I not promised to withhold access“ or „If access is not withheld, some other party might exploit my data for commercial purposes“ are not a good reason to withhold access!
- **Withholding access stands in stark contrast to WU's open access policy!**
- Integral part of academic practice is that research findings are available to the scientific community – no „secret knowledge“
- Should sensitive data be shared with everyone? No – it is reasonable to keep original data private **BUT**
- results of doctoral thesis must become part of public discourse as soon as possible!
- Make sure at an early stage that you have permission to publish data, or that at least the scientific conclusion drawn from data can be made available

- Can I study the doctoral program beside my job?
- What are the chances for students from abroad/from other universities/from universities of applied science?
- Can I spend a research stay abroad?
- What are the critical points in a doctoral program?
- I have to „explain the world“ in my dissertation?
- How do I know if it would be better to abandon the dissertation project?

- Doing a doctorate: Studying should have priority
- Time requirements
 - 180 ECTS in total = 4500 working hours in the course of 3 years
 - in 3 years: about 30 hours/week
 - in 4 years: about 20 hours/week
 - dissertation itself: about 15 hours/week
 - Continuity is important – intermissions may have negative consequences
 - Plunging into another (mental) world
- Checking your resources
 - intellectual, temporal, social
 - financial
- It is possible to work on the side
- Good intentions alone are not enough...

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Other universities

- No formal barriers
- Where required: additional courses for degree holders of other disciplines, f.e. psychology
- As a tendency, it is easier for WU students, as they are known to professors

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Exchange Programs for PhD/Doctoral Students

As a doctoral/PhD student at WU, you are eligible for the doctoral-level exchange programs Administration by International Office (contact person stephanie.weber@wu.ac.at)

■ Full exchange semester

- At WU partner university with Erasmus+, WU mobility grant (Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, North America, Latin America, Israel, UK), Swiss-European Mobility Program
- Requirements
 - submitted research proposal
 - letter of recommendation from WU supervisor
 - proposed supervising professor at the host university
 - If you are employed at WU: approval of the personnel office
 - Very high administrative effort -> please schedule at least 6 months between application & planned start of your exchange semester

- NEURUS (Network of European and US Regional and Urban Studies)
 - Grant for working at dissertation abroad
 - 1 year program: one semester at WU, one semester at selected US schools (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of California at Irvine).

- Marshall Plan Scholarship
 - Academic exchange program between Austria & US
 - The prerequisite is a research project with a **focus on technical sciences**
 - Minimum stay: 3 months
 - Funding: €4000 - €10,000

- Mobility grants for doctoral/PhD candidates (short term stay)
 - intended as help to cover travel expenses and encourage mobility
 - amount of up to €2000 per applicant (depending on yearly budget)
 - Managed by Doctoral Office

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Critical point: supervision

- Before admission: Finding a supervisor
 - Who is a potential Main Supervisor?
 - Any WU professor with a habilitation
 - External supervisors: only as a further member of the Supervision Team or Doctoral Committee
 - How to go about the search
 - independently
 - Academic Director does NOT allocate supervisors
 - Job vacancies at WU – job advertisements
- What do I need when looking for a supervisor?
 - idea
 - synopsis
- What are the chances?

Number of supervisions per department



Critical point: supervision

- Main Supervisor
- Supervision Team
 - On submission of the Research Proposal
 - Confirmed by the Academic Director
 - Proposed by the student, usually after consulting the Main Supervisor
 - Usually from WU, external professors possible

Critical point: Research Proposal

- First phase of dissertation project:
 - What is the project's contribution to academic discourse?
 - How will the dissertation answer the research question?
- Three goals
 - Orientation
 - Mutual commitment
 - Initiation
- Accessible to all WU professors via the Intranet
- Comments from the Supervision Team
- Attendance of Academic Writing-course recommended
- Please submit early (within one year)

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The dissertation and the world

- Scientific progress is a collective effort – we are standing ,on the shoulders of giants`
- A dissertation is a (usually small) contribution to academic discourse
 - In Germany alone, there are about 25.000 dissertations per year (all disciplines)
 - WU-Journal ratings (A+, A, B): 521 journals – about 10.000 articles per year
 - Journals not ranked: multiplied by 4
- That`s a relief...

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Indicators in favour of abandoning the dissertation project

- Realizing that resources are not sufficient
 - resources = time, money, energy, intellect, ...
 - Synopsis as a first test
 - Introductory courses as a second test
- Unsuccessful search for a supervisor
 - ‚make or break‘-point
- Framing important: not a dropout („failure“), but a decision taken after an exploration phase
- The earlier the better (most of the time...)

■ Website

for persons interested in a doctoral/PhD program:

<https://www.wu.ac.at/studium/doktorat-phd/>

For doctoral/PhD students:

<https://www.wu.ac.at/studierende/mein-studium/doktorat-phd/programmuebergreifende-informationen/>

■ Doctoral Office:

- Barbara Bauer / Daniela Eder / Stephanie Weber: 313 36/4025 or 4696; E-Mail: doctoraloffice@wu.ac.at

■ ÖH-WU

- <https://www.facebook.com/StV.Doktorat.WU>

■ Consultation hours of the Academic Director

- By appointment, registration via the Doctoral Office

**All the best for your
intellectual journey!**