

**14 March 2022**

# Orientation for Doctoral Students



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14.03.2022



- 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 2020/2021, 187 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?
- 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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# 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](mailto: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!**