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Orientation for Doctoral Students

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Overview

- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Proposal</th>
<th>Courses</th>
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<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>please see curricula for details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defensio Dissertationis</td>
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</table>
Curriculum

- 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, etc.)
  - 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
§ 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
FAQs

- 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?
Job and doctoral studies

- **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

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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Preliminary Supervisions</th>
<th>Approved Supervisions</th>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Business Communication</td>
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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)
FAQs

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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...
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?
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...)
Resources

- 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!