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
  - Doctorate Social and Economic Sciences/ PhD Economic and Social Sciences
  - Doctorate Business Law
  - PhD Finance and International Business Taxation

- In the academic year 2022/2023, 140 students started their doctoral studies at WU

- Admissions winter semester 2023/24
  - 33 Doctoral program Social and Economic Sciences
  - 24 Doctoral program Business Law
  - 27 PhD Economic and Social Sciences

- PhD WiSo: only for WU's academic staff

- Per year about 70 persons successfully complete their studies

- Admission: only with preliminary confirmation of supervision and synopsis
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Defensio Dissertationis
Curricula

- 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 or equivalent, 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
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?
- Can I spend a research stay abroad/attend courses somewhere else?
- 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?
Can I study the doctoral program beside my job?

- 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 – interruptions may have negative effects
  - 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...
What are the chances for students from other universities?

- No formal barriers
- Where required: additional courses for degree holders of other disciplines, e.g. psychology
- As a tendency, finding a supervisor it is easier for WU students, as they are known to professors
Can I spend a research stay abroad/attend courses at another institution?

Exchange Programs
Administration by International Office (outgoing team)

- **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).

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
Credit Transfer:

• courses attended at another university / summer schools / workshops / conferences (when you presented a paper) can be accredited if certain criteria - formal ones (ECTS, doctoral level course) as well as with regard to contents (learning goals fit into the curriculum) - are met

• -> application for credit transfer after attending the event to anerkennung@wu.ac.at

Co-registration / Mitbelegung:

• doctoral courses attended at another Austrian university as “Mitbeleger” can be transferred to your WU curriculum

• -> please write to doktoratsreferat@wu.ac.at before the course starts, as this has to be approved of in advance
What are the critical points in a doctoral program?

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

- Supervisors without department allocation: 145 preliminary, 169 approved
- Public Law and Tax Law: 46 preliminary, 135 approved
- Socioeconomics: 78 preliminary, 134 approved
- Economics: 62 preliminary, 111 approved
- Management: 58 preliminary, 100 approved
- Information Systems and Operations: 47 preliminary, 97 approved
- Private Law: 23 preliminary, 95 approved
- Finance, Accounting and Statistics: 74 preliminary, 90 approved
- Global Business and Trade: 35 preliminary, 85 approved
- Strategy and Innovation: 32 preliminary, 48 approved
- Marketing: 18 preliminary, 48 approved
- Foreign Language Business Communication: 4 preliminary, 14 approved
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)
I have to „explain the world“ in my dissertation

- 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...
A dissertation is public!?

- § 86 of the Universities Act 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 good reasons...

- Withholding access is 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.
How do I know if it would be better to abandon 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...)

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Resources

- **Website**
  for persons interested in a doctoral/PhD program:  
  [https://www.wu.ac.at/studium/doktorat-phd/](https://www.wu.ac.at/studium/doktorat-phd/)

- **Doctoral Office:**
  - Barbara Bauer / Antonia Lanner / Svetlana Kim: 313 36/4025 or 4696; E-Mail: doctoraloffice@wu.ac.at

- **ÖH-WU** (currently no StV Doktorat)

- **Consultation hours of the Academic Director**
  - By appointment, registration via the Doctoral Office
Career prospects for PhDs
All the best for your intellectual journey!