

# Guideline for dissertations in the WU Doctorate Program in Economics (DPE)

Vienna, December 5th, 2019

## 1. General Description

The WU Doctorate Program in Economics (DPE) 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. DPE 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 and labor economics. These pillars have a strong common support in empirical methods.

As prerequisites of admission to the DPE 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 all (currently nine) full professors at the Department of Economics and all (currently three) faculty members who comply with the current criteria of habilitation.

## 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 2 basic courses and at least 5 topics 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 DPE:

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

or equivalent courses.

The DPE has the following course structure, see appendix A for the assignment of courses to the current “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 focus modules of choice of in sum 30 ECTS. These choice modules begin with “Topics in ...” and are offered e.g. in game theory, microeconometrics, macroeconometrics, industrial organization, labor economics, trade, international macroeconomics, public economics, inequality or behavioural economics.

	<b>Choice module</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>

Finally, students have to successfully complete 2 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.

(3) 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 or 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 an international expert (working for a non-Austrian institution) 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 three persons, two of which must be PIs (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 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 international expert in the field of research or (2) two non-WU international experts in the field of research. All member 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 DPE students is an important quality signal and preparing students for the job market is another focus of the training at the DPE. 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 DPE benefit from the network of international partners of WU and the members of the Department of Economics.

### **5. Current Principal Investigators**

The PIs of the program are:

1. Badinger, Harald: Applied Econometrics, International Economics
2. Berger, Ulrich: Microeconomics, Game Theory
3. Crespo-Cuaresma, Jesus: Applied Econometrics, Macroeconomics
4. Gugler, Klaus: Industrial Organization
5. Kubin, Ingrid: International Economics
6. Oberhofer, Harald: Applied Econometrics, Industrial Organization, Trade
7. Rabitsch, Katrin: Macroeconomics
8. Sausgruber, Rupert: Behavioral and Experimental Economics, Public Economics
9. Scüzs, Florian: Industrial Organization
10. Weber, Andrea: Applied Econometrics, Labor Economics
11. Weiss, Christoph: Industrial Organization

**Appendix A: Assignment of courses to the “PhD-Studium der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften an der Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien”**

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

Abbreviations

FM	“Forschungsmethoden”
RS	“Research Seminar”
MT	“Methodologie und Theorie”
FÜ RS	“Fächerübergreifendes Research Seminar”
WS	“Wissenschaftliches Schreiben”
WF	“Wahlfach”

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

“Dissertationsvereinbarung”

“PhD-Programm der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften”

“§ 8 des Studienplans idgF”

Focus “Economics”

Date:

Main supervisor:	
Student:	
Number of immatriculation:	
Year of study:	

(Working-) Title/topic of dissertation:

--

Agreement on prerequisites and courses:

<p>The following courses are necessary prerequisites in order to be admissible to the DPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Microeconomics I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS)</li><li>• Macroeconomics I (4 ECTS) and II (4 ECTS)</li><li>• Advanced Econometric Models and Methods (4 ECTS)</li></ul> <p>or equivalent courses.</p>
---

The following courses must be taken in the year of study 2019/20:

<p>The following courses are “Focus” courses in the WS 2019/20 and SS 2020:</p> <p>WS 2019/20</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Topics in Behavioural Economics</li><li>2. Topics in Labour Economics</li></ol> <p>SS 2020</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Topics in Industrial Organization</li><li>2. Topics in Econometrics</li></ol>
--

This agreement binds the supervisor ("PI"):

- To fulfill the guidelines for the "Focus in Economics";
- To hold at least 2 meetings per semester with the student;
- To help the student if a change in concept is necessary if the original proposal is not realizable anymore;
- To inform the student on relevant conferences and workshops;
- To help the student to publish the papers of the dissertation.

This agreement binds the student:

- To fulfill the guidelines for the "Focus in Economics";
- To aim at finishing the dissertation within the agreed upon time frame;
- To realize the scheduled meetings with the supervisors;
- To report on the progress of the dissertation especially on delays and interruptions;
- To immediately inform the supervisors if the topic of the dissertation is put back or the study is broken off;
- To present the dissertation in adequate form (e.g. on conferences, in research seminars,...);
- To write an annual report of progress which covers the main results of the past study year and the planned next steps of the following study year.

The dissertation agreement must be sent to the "Doktoratsreferat".

**Date of the next dissertation agreement:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature student

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature speaker Focus "Economics"