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Master of Science (MSc) Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy

THE + PLUS + EXPERIENCE
+ ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & HANDS-ON IMPACT
+ THE BIG-PICTURE PERSPECTIVE



**ENGLISH-
TAUGHT
MASTER'S
PROGRAM**

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Make a Difference

THE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

SEEP is an innovative, fulltime, two-year MSc programme attracting students from around the globe. Its theoretical foundations encompass heterodox economics, philosophy of science, international and European law, as well as behavioural and institutional perspectives. Students gain the ability to think critically about today's multiple crises, while importance is placed on both theory and application as essential aspects of policy intervention. There is no pretence that the programme provides solutions to the world's problems, but rather an interdisciplinary understanding of value conflicts, societal complexities and barriers to and opportunities for a social-ecological transformation.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Rapid environmental change, poverty, and social exclusion are interrelated processes that challenge human concepts of development and progress. Traditional disciplinary approaches to analysis and policy formulation are no longer enough to address these complex issues. Instead, alternatives are needed that come from learning to think "outside the box." The SEEP program presents a theoretically well-grounded approach to understanding social, ecological, and economic crises. Students are encouraged to question current mainstream economic approaches to development and the associated policy 'solutions.' The issues of systemic change and transformation then become key.

The program focuses on the interfaces between environmental, economic, and social challenges. The interdisciplinary approach includes training in social and economic analysis, covering theory, philosophy of science, heterodox economics, law and public policy. The theory courses

include soft skills in reading and writing on contemporary policy challenges. Training in combined qualitative and quantitative methods helps students understand why both are necessary and how they can complement each other in critical social science research. Policy challenges are analyzed on the basis of explanatory, descriptive, and institutional aspects (including conventions, norms, rules, and regulations) and legal frameworks. By specializing in two concentration areas, students learn how to apply conceptual and theoretical approaches to specific objects of study. Concentration areas can be chosen from the following 4 options:

- › Social Ecological Economics
- › Globalization and Multi-Level Policy
- › Globalization and Social Policy
- › The Political Economy of Inequalities

FIRST YEAR

Initially, you will be focusing on global challenges and social economic theories. In addition to research and writing skills, SEEP will provide you with a solid foundation in the philosophical underpinnings of the natural and social sciences. You will become familiar with how to analyze the concepts and assumptions behind the paradigms many economic policies are based on and which are reproduced by institutional agents. Topics covered include: growth theories and concepts of development; behavioral economics and individual action; and international and European legal frameworks, institutions, and governance. During the second semester, you will start on your chosen two concentration areas.

WHY SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS AND POLICY?

Here, students learn not just individual perspectives but a holistic approach to socio-economic challenges. This is based on a solid foundation that offers a mix of sound specialist knowledge and a high degree of practical orientation.

“SEEP is a unique programme teaching critical thinking about the triple conjuncture of global crises and the transformative responses required.”

Sigrid Stagl
Academic Director



PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Introductory Courses

Introduction to Research & Writing on Contemporary Policy Challenges Part I (PI)	Introduction to Research & Writing on Contemporary Policy Challenges Part II (PI)	History and Philosophy of Science: Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology (PI)
4 ECTS credits	7 ECTS credits	2 ECTS credits

Theory Courses

Growth, Well-Being and Development (PI)	International and European Law, Institutions and Governance (VUE)	Actors, Behaviour and Decision Processes (PI)
8 ECTS credits	8 ECTS credits	8 ECTS credits

Methods Courses

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods I (PI)
10 ECTS credits
Quantitative and Qualitative Methods II (PI)
10 ECTS credits

Research Courses

Service Learning I (FS)
2,5 ECTS credits
Service Learning II (FS)
2,5 ECTS credits
Thesis Colloquium (AG)
5 ECTS credits

Advanced Topics

choice 2 out of 4: › Social Ecological Economics (2×PI) › The Political Economy of Inequalities (2×PI) › Globalisation and Multi-Level Policy (2×PI) › Globalisation and Social Policy (2×PI)
2×15 ECTS credits

Master's Thesis

20 ECTS credits



For further details see:
[wu.at/seep](https://www.wu.at/seep)

AT A GLANCE

Program type	Full-time degree program
Duration	4 semesters
Language of instruction	English
Credits	120 ECTS credits (incl. 20 ECTS credits for the master's thesis)
Degree awarded to graduates	Master of Science (WU), abbreviated MSc (WU)

SECOND YEAR

In the second year, you will advance to specialized courses and applications. In this phase, the main courses are in the concentration areas and methods. You will develop and hone your research skills through coursework and gain practical experience through service learning. In the final semester, attention turns to writing your thesis, where you will be working closely together with a supervisor on your chosen topic.

CAREER PROSPECTS

The program provides students with the necessary understanding of today's multiple crises, an ability to work in interdisciplinary teams, and sound training in socioeconomic concepts and methods.

SEEP graduates are:

- › Equipped with the theories, methods, and empirical approaches necessary for an in-depth understanding of social, economic, and environmental policy issues
- › Aware of the variety of ethical issues and policy conflicts arising from sustainability
- › In possession of interdisciplinary skills
- › Well-versed in teamwork and the critical and analytical abilities needed to address and develop public policy responses to the social-ecological transformation of economies

The MSc program prepares graduates for:

- › Employment as policy analysts, program managers, consultants, civil servants, project managers, and advisors with the skills to foster better understanding and support decision-making processes related to sustainability issues
- › Positions in national and international governments and NGOs, unions, consultancies, and research institutes, where interdisciplinary skills and expertise in social-ecological transformation and economic issues are needed

- › Doctoral studies in the critical social sciences, including heterodox economics, social policy, ecological economics, planning, political science, and human geography

APPLICATION AND ADMISSIONS

The prerequisites for this master's program include:

- › A relevant degree worth a minimum of 180 ECTS credits
- › Examinations in economics and/or social sciences worth at least 16 ECTS credits
- › Sufficient proficiency in English
- › Proof of aptitude

Selection interviews

The best candidates will be invited for individual interviews, where the following criteria will be assessed:

- › Communication and social skills
- › Prior knowledge of social and ecological issues and heterodox economics
- › Program fit
- › International orientation

Please see the Application Guide for detailed information on the required documents. The application process takes place online. It is possible to apply before completion of the relevant degree program.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

WU employs a rolling admissions policy, allowing students to apply from the beginning of September until spring, with the following three priority deadlines: October, January, and March. We strongly advise all candidates to apply at the first priority deadline.



For detailed information on the admission requirements and the application procedures, please see: [wu.at/applicationguide](https://www.wu.at/applicationguide)

The + PLUS + Experience

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MORE THAN JUST A DEGREE

Studying at WU Vienna means studying at one of the top 1% of business and economics universities worldwide. In addition, you benefit from excellent job prospects, an award-winning campus, state-of-the-art teaching where theory meets practice, a wide selection of master's programs, small cohort sizes, and one of the most livable cities in the world: Vienna.



The picture outline shows the silhouette of the Teaching Center (TC) building on Campus WU.

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EXPERIENCE

Information and contact

To find out more about the Master's Program in
Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy, please visit:
wu.at/seep

For content-related questions, please e-mail:
seep@wu.ac.at

Academic Director of the Master's Program in
Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy:
Sigrid Stagl



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Arriving by public transport:
Subway: U2 stations "Messe-Prater" or "Krieau"
Bus: 82A, "Südportalstraße" stop

2025/10