

HABILITATION DIRECTIVE

Department of Strategy and Innovation Specification of the Senate Habilitation Directive

This document is intended to specify the general directive on cumulative habilitation theses (habilitation by publication) issued by the Senate. For the sake of clarity, the relevant parts of the Senate Habilitation Directive are quoted verbatim below, and the key elements are subsequently operationalized in detail.

0. Senate Habilitation Directive (Annex 6 of the By-Laws of WU Vienna, § 1 [5] item e, version dated June 18, 2025)

*For applications for a *venia docendi* in the field of business administration or in one of the subjects represented at the business administration-related departments, the "written academic papers" to be submitted mean either a habilitation thesis in monograph format or a collection of academic papers related in topic to the habilitation subject (cumulative habilitation thesis), in addition to the other required academic papers. To be considered worthy of a *venia docendi*, a cumulative habilitation thesis must comprise a series of excellent academic contributions by the applicant that have been published or accepted for publication. The quality of the contributions shall be assessed based on the quality standards of the respective international scientific community. Excellent quality of an article can be assumed if the article has been accepted by a periodical regarded as very good by the scientific community. The evaluation should be based on department-specific journal ratings or other widely accepted rankings. The clear focus of a *venia docendi* in business administration should be on publications in periodicals dedicated to business administration in a broad sense.*

After consulting with the Senate, the individual Department Committees, acting in the name of the Senate, can adopt interpretation guides to specify the exact procedures required. In the subject of business administration (item e), the Convention of Business Administration-Related Departments must be consulted before consultations are held with the Senate. The interpretation guides are to be published in the WU Bulletin.

1. "A series"

A total of at least five academic papers is expected for a cumulative habilitation thesis, as specified below. This number can be reduced in exceptional cases (see for instance items "Groundbreaking scholarly articles" and "Authorship" below).

2. "Excellent academic contributions"

Publications can only be considered excellent if they have been subjected to the usual journal review process, meet appropriate scientific standards, and are considered by the relevant scientific community to constitute a significant advancement in academic progress in the respective field. They can be interdisciplinary in nature. The papers must give reason to expect that they will

generate direct or indirect benefits for the business world, the economy, and society in the medium or long term.

3. “Periodicals regarded as very good”

There is no complete and regularly updated list of those periodicals that are considered to be very good and held in high regard by the scientific community.

A journal’s performance in rankings can serve as an indicator of its status as a very good periodical: In any case, it is justified to assume that a journal meets the quality standards indicative of a very good periodical if it is rated A+ or A in the current VHB Rating (in one of the area ratings) or if it is included in other internationally recognized journal ratings, e.g. the Financial Times top 50, the WU Journal Rating Star List, or journals rated A+ or A in the BWL 2023 meta-rating ([meta-rating-bwl.org](https://www.meta-rating-bwl.org)). A B rating in one of the journal rankings listed above or in similar rankings is usually also indicative of a very good periodical.

However, there are also other very good high-quality periodicals aside from the journals mentioned above. The habilitation candidate is expected to provide convincing arguments to confirm the high quality of any such other periodicals by presenting appropriate proof. In such cases, journal quality is to be assessed primarily by analogy, based on other valid journal rankings. The candidate must provide proof confirming the validity of the rankings in question (in particular the quality of the methodology used and the transparency of the ranking) and their acceptance as ratings indicative of the views of the relevant scientific community.

These ratings are not binding, but they can serve as a frame of reference for the habilitation candidate and the Habilitation Committee. Ultimately, it is up to the Habilitation Committee to decide whether a periodical is “regarded as very good,” based on the papers in question.

4. Groundbreaking scholarly papers

Papers that are of outstanding quality or have had an exceptional impact on the scientific community can be counted double. A paper can be assumed to be groundbreaking if it is published in a journal recognized as one of the best worldwide by the business research community (e.g. A+ journals in the VHB Rating) or if it has had a well-documented exceptional impact on the scientific community.

5. Authorship

The papers should demonstrate the habilitation candidate’s ability to carry out independent academic research. In any co-authored articles submitted for the habilitation thesis, the habilitation candidate’s contribution should be major.

At least one of the five papers mentioned above must therefore be a single-author article or a paper co-authored with no more than one other person. None of the other papers should exceed the standard number of authors that is common in the discipline (roughly two to three authors). For any exceptions from this rule, the habilitation candidate must provide detailed reasons to justify higher author counts. For co-authored papers, the habilitation candidate is required to specify the scope of their own contribution. Upon request by the Habilitation Committee, the co-authors must confirm the information provided by habilitation candidate.

If the habilitation candidate submits several single-author publications, two single-author papers shall be counted as equivalent to three co-authored papers.

6. Time frame

The five academic papers included in the habilitation thesis should have been accepted for publication no longer than 10 years ago. Older papers shall be downgraded at a rate of one to three.

7. Transitional provisions

The legitimate expectations of applicants who can prove that they have relied on the validity of previous regulations shall be protected.

8. Regulations for non-cumulative (monograph) habilitation theses

Candidates who, following approval by their supervisor, write a monograph thesis, should also publish papers in academic journals in addition to their monograph thesis.

In contrast to cumulative habilitation theses, however, a smaller number of papers published in business research journals regarded as very good periodicals by the international scientific community is sufficient in such cases, e.g. in the form of preprints. The specifications described above apply analogously.