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# Orientation for Doctoral Students



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- 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

# Structure

Research Proposal

Courses

Dissertation

please see curricula  
for details

Defensio Dissertationis

- **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

- 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, eg. 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/Co-registration

## 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](mailto:anerkennung@wu.ac.at)

## Co-registration / Mitbelegung:

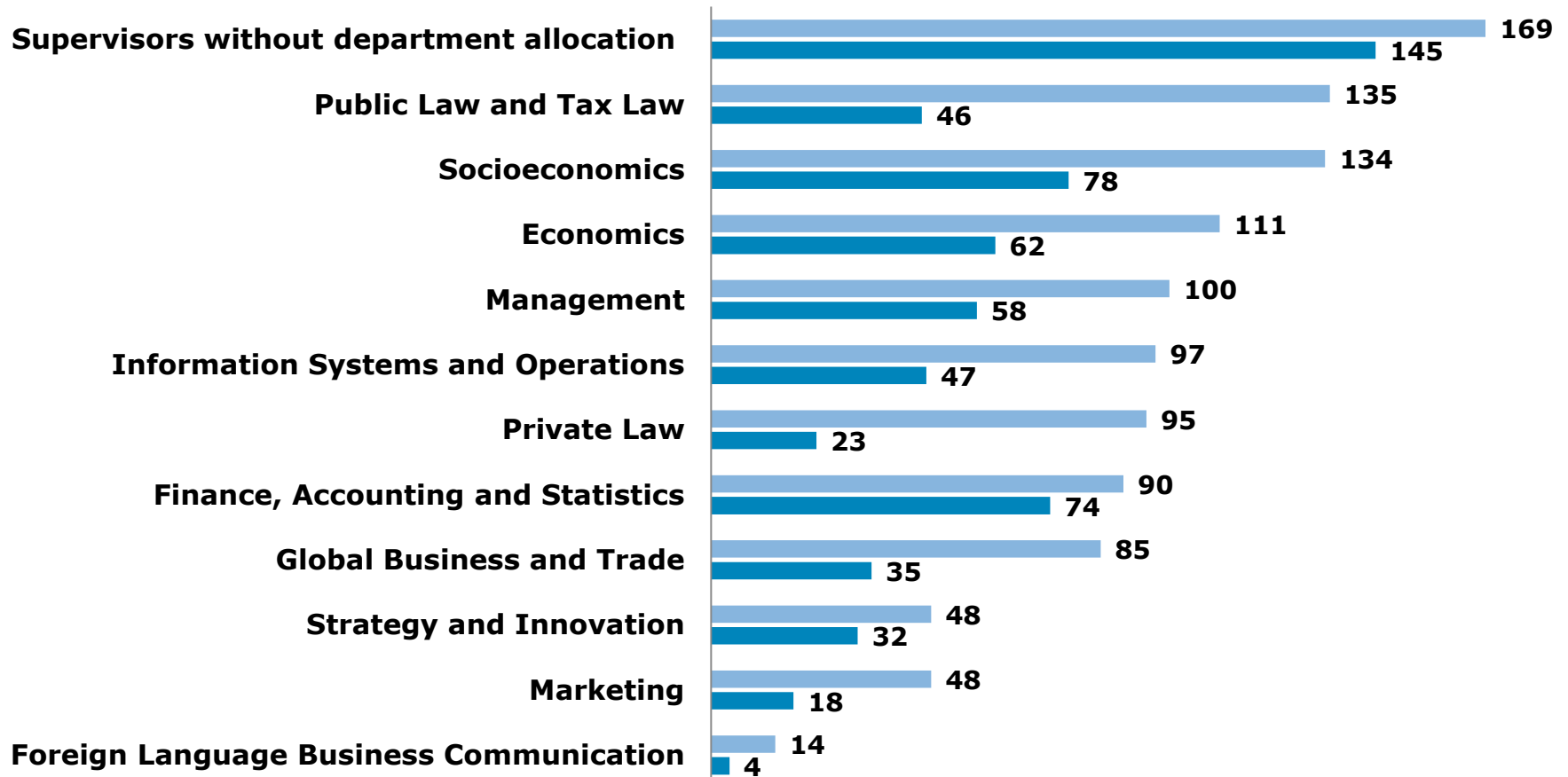
- doctoral courses attended at another **Austrian** university as “Mitbeleger” can be transferred to your WU curriculum
- -> please write to [doktoratsreferat@wu.ac.at](mailto:doktoratsreferat@wu.ac.at) **before** the course starts, as this has to be approved of in advance

# 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

■ preliminary supervisions ■ approved supervisions



# 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...)

## ■ 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 / Antonia Lanner / Svetlana Kim: 313 36/4025 or 4696; E-Mail: [doctoraloffice@wu.ac.at](mailto: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!**