



University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

## **Curriculum**

# **PhD BOKU University**

Date (of entry into force): 1 October 2024

# CONTENTS

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| § 1 Qualification profile ..... | 3 |
| § 2 Admission requirement ..... | 3 |
| § 3 Doctoral project.....       | 3 |
| § 4 Dissertation.....           | 5 |
| § 5 Doctoral Examination .....  | 6 |
| § 6 Academic Degree .....       | 6 |
| § 7 Entry into force.....       | 6 |

## **§ 1 QUALIFICATION PROFILE**

The PhD BOKU University serves to further develop the ability to carry out independent scientific work as well as to train and promote young scientists in the fields of competence at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.

The PhD BOKU University offers a scientific education at an international level. The dissertation may be written in German or English.

### **1a) Knowledge, skills, personal and professional competences**

Graduates of the PhD BOKU University have acquired a systematic understanding of their research discipline. They have the competence to independently plan and carry out research work in accordance with international standards and thus make a contribution to the development of the international knowledge society.

Graduates of the PhD BOKU University are qualified to publish their own research work in relevant journals and to independently present scientific findings as well as to analyse in detail and critically discuss their own and other people's scientific results and concepts with experts and audiences from outside the field.

Students acquire the ability to analyse scientifically and to evaluate and link complex concepts and ideas. They are trained to identify issues from research, business, industry, politics and civil society and to develop innovative solutions.

The international and interdisciplinary orientation of the PhD BOKU University promotes the mobility of students and sharpens their view beyond the boundaries of their own field of study.

The PhD BOKU University also develops transferable skills (project and time management, organisational and communication skills, ability to work in a team, leadership skills, flexibility and creativity), enabling graduates to adapt their professional competence to rapidly shifting requirements and changing professional fields.

### **1b) Professional fields**

Graduates of the PhD BOKU University are particularly prepared for highly qualified professional activities in industry, business, public service, NGOs and scientific organisations as well as for teaching and research activities at universities and other educational and research institutions.

## **§ 2 ADMISSION REQUIREMENT**

The requirement for admission to the PhD BOKU University is the graduation from a subject-related diploma programme or Master's programme or a different course of studies with an eligible related subject that is at least of an equivalent level of higher education and has been completed at a recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institution. Evidence of at least 300 ECTS credits in one or more degree programmes must be provided.

## **§ 3 DOCTORAL PROJECT**

- (1) The PhD BOKU University comprises at least 180 ECTS credits, of which 162 ECTS points are for the dissertation and at least 18 ECTS points are doctoral courses. The topic of the dissertation shall be selected from a scientific subject which is represented at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna by a university lecturer with a major authorisation to teach.
- (2) After admission to the PhD, the student must register the doctoral project with the Dean of Studies within one year. The doctoral project must be presented to the university before registration (e.g. in seminars at the institute/department or on the website).

The registration of the doctoral project includes the following points:

- a) The synopsis approved by the supervisor must contain the working title and a description of the content of the dissertation as well as a time, work and resource plan.

The description of the content includes the research objective, the research question and hypotheses, the theoretical background, the presentation of the planned methods and literature sources on the current state of knowledge. The resource plan regulates the use of infrastructure, materials, etc., that are necessary for the realisation of the doctoral project.

- b) Together with the supervisor, the student must draw up a plan on the form and scope of the dissertation; in the case of a cumulative dissertation, also on the planned publications and the framework publication.
- c) The Advisory Team consists of at least two people. One of the persons must hold the major authorisation to teach. At least 3 members of the supervisory team must have a relevant doctorate; they accompany the progress of the doctoral candidate.

The Advisory Team advises and provides feedback on the progress of the doctoral project. It meets at least once a year with the student and the supervisor, as well as optionally with the co-supervisors. Together with the supervisor, the student issues an invitation to the annual meeting. The meeting can also take place online. The student provides the Advisory Team with a report on progress over the past year prior to the meeting. The student presents the results achieved so far at the meeting. The Advisory Team's perception of the progress of the doctoral project is recorded by the Advisory Team and kept on record by the supervisor. A copy remains with the student.

- d) Optionally one or two co-supervisors, but these must hold at least a doctorate.

- e) Courses:

The course "Principles and challenges of research in socio-economics, natural resources and life sciences" is mandatory. The other courses must be applied for in consultation with the supervisor.

The programme guide gives an opinion on the suitability of the courses. The courses are then officially finalised by the Dean of Studies and may only then be completed.

A stepwise application (partial determination) of the courses is possible.

As long as a complete exposé has not yet been submitted, up to 6 ECTS credits can be applied for in addition to the compulsory courses by registering a dissertation title approved by the supervisor.

In justified cases, the courses can be changed until the submission of the dissertation. The change requires a change of the official notification by the Dean of Studies. Courses for which an examination has already been taken can no longer be changed.

The following applies to the selection of courses:

- The courses can be selected from the range of courses offered by all recognised domestic and foreign universities as well as post-secondary educational institutions that offer a doctoral programme, provided that a record of achievement can be issued for them.
- The content of the courses must correspond to that of the doctoral programme.
- A maximum of 6 ECTS credits may be chosen by the supervisor for it.
- A maximum of 6 ECTS credits may be selected for the acquisition of transferable skills.
- Students who have not completed a Master's degree programme at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna or whose supervisor is not employed by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna must complete courses worth at least 12 ECTS credits at the University of Natural Resources

and Life Sciences, Vienna.

- (3) The doctoral project is deemed to have been accepted after approval by the Dean of Studies or can be prohibited by notice within four months of receipt.
- (4) A change of supervisor or topic is possible in justified cases. The doctoral project must be registered anew and a statement must be obtained from the previous supervisor. This statement must be provided within six weeks. The new supervisor is appointed within four months with the notice from the Dean of Studies. In the event of changes to the courses, the partial list must be changed.

#### **§ 4 DISSERTATION**

- (1) The dissertation is the scientific work that serves to demonstrate the ability to independently deal with scientific issues.
- (2) A monograph is a comprehensive and complete treatise on a single subject. A monograph comprises an introduction with a problem statement, a derivation of research questions or hypotheses, a presentation of the theoretical and methodological framework, a results section, a discussion and conclusions, a summary and a bibliography and/or list of sources. A monograph may not be composed of chapters that each have the character of an independent journal article.
- (3) With the consent of the supervisor, it is permissible to include several already published works that have a subject-related connection ("cumulative dissertation") in the dissertation instead of a paper dedicated to a specific topic ("monograph"), provided that the assessors can evaluate the independent scientific contribution of the doctoral candidate on this basis. A cumulative dissertation consists of at least two scientific articles already accepted for publication with first authorship in corresponding peer-reviewed journals with an impact factor in the subject area of the dissertation. Equally contributed authorship is permitted for one of the two publications. All publications included must be clearly related to the topic of the dissertation and must be listed with the author's name, title and information on the completion status. In the case of publications created through the collaboration of several co-authors, the personal contribution must be declared. A summary of the papers ("framework paper") must be appended, which explains the relation of the papers to the selected scientific topic, the method as well as the scientific and, if applicable, practical relevance.
- (4) The completed dissertation must be submitted to the dean of studies for assessment. The dissertation must include a sworn declaration of authorship.
- (5) In the event of doubt, the Dean of Studies is responsible for deciding whether the submitted dissertation is to be deemed a monograph or a cumulative dissertation.
- (6) The Dean of Studies must submit the dissertation to two qualified university professors, who must review the dissertation within a maximum of two months. The assessors must neither be supervisors nor co-authors of publications relevant to the dissertation, but may be part of the supervisory team. At least one assessor must not be a member of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. The student is authorised to propose assessors from relevant disciplines.
- (7) In addition to evaluating the work, the assessors must also state in their report whether they rate the dissertation positively or negatively. They must also submit an assessment proposal (Very good, Good, Satisfactory, Sufficient or Unsatisfactory) in their report. In the case of a cumulative dissertation, a statement must also be provided as to whether the requirements for a cumulative dissertation have been met.
- (8) If one of the two assessors assesses the dissertation negatively, the Dean of Studies must consult a third assessor, who must come from at least one closely related subject. This person must assess the dissertation within two months.

## **§ 5 DOCTORAL EXAMINATION**

### **5a) First Part of the Doctoral Examination**

For the first part of the doctoral examination, the courses prescribed by the Dean of Studies must have been completed and the dissertation must have been positively assessed by two assessors. The overall assessment for the completed courses is calculated from the average value weighted according to ECTS credits, rounded to two decimal places.

### **5b) Second Part of the Doctoral Examination**

The second part of the doctoral examination is conducted in the form of a dissertation defence (defensio). The registration requires the positive completion of the prescribed supplementary examinations of the first part, as well as the positive evaluation of the dissertation.

If the dissertation is assessed positively, the Dean of Studies sets a date and the defensio commission for the second part of the doctoral examination. The defensio commission consists of two members with a major teaching authorisation and a chairperson with a major teaching authorisation, although the supervisor is excluded from the chairmanship. At least one member of the defensio committee must belong to a different department than the supervisor or come from an external organisation. The assessments are to be submitted to the entire defensio committee and the student one week before the defensio date.

The defensio is to be carried out publicly in German or English. The defence consists of a presentation of approx. 30 minutes and the defence of the dissertation. The total duration should not exceed 90 minutes. Questions from the auditorium are allowed.

The defensio committee assesses the dissertation on the basis of the assessments and the defensio based on the level of knowledge and skills acquired.

### **5c) Overall assessment**

If both the dissertation and the defensio were assessed as very good and the overall assessment of the courses is less than or equal to 1.50, the overall assessment is “passed with distinction”, otherwise the overall assessment is “passed”.

## **§ 6 ACADEMIC DEGREE**

Graduates of the PhD BOKU University are awarded the academic degree “Doctor of Philosophy”, abbreviated to “PhD”. A translation of the academic degree is not permitted.

## **§ 7 ENTRY INTO FORCE**

This curriculum takes effect on 1 October 2024.