



**BULLETIN**  
**OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ**  
60th special issue

Academic year 2015/16

Issued on 25 May, 2016

Issue 34 c

**Curriculum**  
**for the**  
**Doctoral Programme**  
**“PhD Law and Politics”**

**Publishing information:** Media owner, editor and producer: University of Graz, Universitätsplatz 3, 8010 Graz. Place of publication and production: Graz, Austria.

Address of editorial office: Rechts- und Organisationsabteilung, Universitätsplatz 3, 8010 Graz.

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Website: [https://online.uni-graz.at/kfu\\_online/wbMitteilungsblaetter.list?pOrg=1](https://online.uni-graz.at/kfu_online/wbMitteilungsblaetter.list?pOrg=1)

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Media owner: University of Graz, Universitätsplatz 3, 8010 Graz. Purpose of business: fulfilment of targets, leading principles and tasks according to §§ 1, 2 and 3 of the Federal Act on the Organisation of Universities and their Studies (Universities Act 2002), Federal Gazette 1 no. 120/2002 in the relevant amended version,.

Type and percentage of participation: 100% ownership

Principal objective: announcement of information according to § 20 para. 6 Universities Act 2002 in the relevant amended version.

# **Curriculum for the Doctoral Programme “PhD Law and Politics”**

at the Faculty of Law at the University of Graz

The legal basis of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” is the Universities Act 2002 (*UG*) in the amended version and the statutes of the University of Graz. On 18 May, 2016, the Senate enacted the following curriculum for the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” at the Faculty of Law according to § 25 para. 1 (10) *UG*.

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## **§ 1 Targets and qualification profile**

- (1) The doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” is a cross-faculty and multidisciplinary programme that brings together research and teaching of Law and Political Science at doctoral level. Problem-oriented comprehension of mutual relations between law and politics is prerequisite to the scientific advancement of theory and methodology in those disciplines and therefore enhances the advancement of basic research at university. Likewise, in terms of practical application, that approach is of enormous significance for scientifically sound legal and political consultation.
- (2) The doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” aims to provide young academics with a high level of education based on international standards. By actively participating in required and elective courses, students learn about and contribute to cutting-edge national and international research. In doing so, students receive a multidisciplinary and comparative academic education at the interface between issues that can be researched better when viewed from a legal and political perspective. Moreover, by developing the ability to think and reflect critically, students are prepared to formulate recommendations for an enhancement of public policies.
- (3) In the course of the doctoral programme, students learn how to independently discuss current questions relating to those disciplines and to implement them in concrete research projects in order to successfully partake in scientific discourse. To ensure that, students

attain comprehensive theoretical understanding and methodical competence in scientific research across and within different disciplines.

- (4) Graduates of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” are excellently qualified as young academics for national and international scientific research at universities and non-university research institutions as well as for political consulting in public administration, international organisations and the private sector. Having acquired comprehensive knowledge and capabilities on the overlap between law and political science and gained additional perspectives relating to the humanities, social and economic sciences, our students are ideally equipped to provide solutions to today’s complex multidisciplinary problems in the field of science, politics, economy and society. Hence, they are not only optimally qualified to undertake scientific tasks, but also to conduct scientific activities related to law and politics on an economic level for national and European administrative entities, international organisations and executive departments focussing on strategic management.

## § 2 Duration and structure of programme

- (1) Students of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” are required to earn 180 ECTS credit points, which consist of the following: completing a thesis, presenting and defending the planned research project before an examination board (10 ECTS), the Defence (10 ECTS) and completion of required courses (30 ECTS). Moreover, students are required to hold a course which is related to the topic of the thesis amounting to two contact hours (10 ECTS).

Required courses 30 ECTS

*3 seminars on theories and methods (SE) 15 ECTS*

*3 doctoral colloquia (DQ) 15 ECTS*

Teaching 10 ECTS

Presentation and defence of research project 10 ECTS

Defence 10 ECTS

**TOTAL 60 ECTS**

- (2) Duration of the doctoral programme is three years. It is not divided into study cycles.
- (3) Notwithstanding the duration of studies as specified in para. 2, it is possible to conclude the doctoral programme in a shorter time if all other achievements required for the programme have been completed.
- (4) The doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” is held in English. In justified cases (particularly for reasons related to the topic of the thesis), the examination board can determine a language other than English upon the student’s application.

- (5) The Dean of Studies shall appoint an examination board (§ 28 para. 6, Statutes Study Act Regulations) for each student of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” after receiving their application according to § 4 para. 1. The examination board shall comprise the Head of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” (chairperson), the supervisor, co-supervisor and the Dean of Studies of the Faculty of Law. For the Defence (§8), the Dean of Studies, upon the examination board’s proposal, shall call in an external reviewer who possesses expertise in the field of the research project and a teaching qualification pursuant to § 98 para. 12 and § 103 *UG*, either from a recognised Austrian or foreign university or from another recognised Austrian or foreign institution of equivalent academic status. Members of the examination board shall cast their votes based on majority rule (simple majority), the chairperson, however, shall cast his/her vote only after all other members of the Senate have done so. Should the examination board not arrive at a decision on the assessment, the assessments proposed by the members shall be added up, divided by the number of members and rounded up or down to the nearest whole number ( $\times 0.5$ ).
- (6) The Head of doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” shall be appointed by the Vice-Rector for Teaching.

### **§ 3 Admission**

- (1) The Rectorate shall, by way of admission letter, admit applicants to the respective programme at this university who fulfil admission requirements on the basis of their application (§ 60 para. 1 *UG*).
- (2) In order to gain admission to a doctoral degree programme, applicants must possess certification of a general university entrance qualification for doctoral degree programmes, according to § 64 *UG*, as follows:
- a. completion of a subject-related diploma or magister or master’s degree programme,  
or
  - b. completion of a degree programme at a recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institution that is equivalent to the programmes specified in subpara. a, or
  - c. completion of a subject-related bachelor’s degree programme according to § 64 para. 4a *UG*, or
  - d. completion of a degree programme at a recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institution that is equivalent to the programmes specified in subpara. c.

- (3) Graduates of a master's degree programme or diploma programme in Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences or Law with a special focus on Political Science, and, in any event, graduates of a diploma programme in Law or a master's degree programme in Political Science possess the required general university entrance qualification.
- (4) Should equivalency be principally given and only the odd supplement be needed to achieve complete equivalency, the Rectorate is authorised to determine equivalency amounting to a maximum of 30 ECTS credit points on condition that the necessary examinations are passed during the doctoral degree programme. Should equivalency not be achieved by the maximum amount of 30 ECTS credit points allotted on the aforesaid condition, admission to the degree programme is not possible.
- (5) Admission according to para. 2, subpara. c and d is granted according to the Rectorate's directives, in this case: "Evidence of general university entrance qualification for admission to a doctoral degree programme by completing a bachelor's degree programme" (as announced in Bulletin no.18, 10 February, 2010).

#### **§ 4 Enrolment to the degree programme**

- (1) After admission to the degree programme, students are required to submit written notification of their thesis topic in an application to the Head of the doctoral programme "PhD Law and Politics" by the end of their first semester at the latest. Upon receipt of application, the Head of the doctoral programme shall, in consultation with the student, arrange a date on which the student shall defend their research project before the examination board in accordance with para. 6 to 8.

The said application shall include the following:

- a. Working title of the planned thesis
  - b. Proposal of a supervisor and co-supervisor
  - c. Name of thesis subject
  - d. Presentation of proposals on the subject of thesis (according to § 28 Statutes "Study Act Regulations") in a research proposal
  - e. Supervision agreement (Appendix I).
- (2) The research proposal shall contain between 30,000 and 40,000 characters and include the following components:
    - a. a more detailed description of research project,
    - b. the methodological framework,
    - c. the expected new scientific results and contribution,

- d. results of preliminary literature review, and
  - e. a time plan for the thesis completion.
- (3) The topic of the thesis should deal with questions from subjects specified in § 6 para. 2 of the curriculum. Students are entitled to propose the topic of their thesis themselves or to choose from a number of proposals made by available supervisors (§ 28 para. 3, Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz).
  - (4) Supervisors and co-supervisors can be members of University (§ 94 *UG*) who possess a teaching qualification (*venia docendi*) in accordance with § 98 para. 12 and § 103 *UG*. Co-supervisors can also be a person with a teaching qualification (*venia docendi*) in accordance with § 98 para. 12 and § 103 *UG* from another recognised Austrian or foreign university or from another recognised Austrian or foreign institution of equivalent academic status.
  - (5) A change of supervisor or co-supervisor according to § 28 para. 6 Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz is possible until the submission deadline.
  - (6) The dissertation project as stipulated in § 2 para. 1 of the curriculum shall be defended before the examination board in accordance with § 4 para. 6 to para. 8 (§ 28 para. 6 Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz).
  - (7) The presentation and defence of the research project comprises an approximately 20-minute presentation of the research project followed by a discussion with the examination board. Students are required to explicate both the research project and which new scientific results the project is hoped to yield.
  - (8) The examination board shall decide whether the planned research project complies with the defined targets of the doctoral programme. Should the research project be positively assessed, it shall be graded as “successfully completed”. Should the research project be negatively assessed, it shall be graded as “unsuccessfully completed” (§ 36 para. 1 Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz). In the former case, both the supervisor and the student shall sign a supervision agreement according to Appendix I. In the latter case, provisions governing the repetition of examinations in accordance with § 38 Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz shall apply.

## **§ 5 Courses**

- (1) In the course of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics”, students are required to achieve a total of 30 ECTS credit points as listed in para. 2 and 3.

- (2) During their first academic year, students are required to successfully complete the following introductory courses amounting to 5 ECTS credit points (two contact hours) respectively:
  - a. Theories and Methods in Law (SE)
  - b. Theories and Methods in Political Science (SE)
  - c. Multidisciplinary Specialisation in Methods of Law and Political Science (SE)
- (3) Students are also required to successfully complete three doctoral colloquia amounting to 5 ECTS credit points (two contact hours) respectively before the thesis is submitted
- (4) In general, the courses are held in English

## **§ 6 Doctoral thesis**

- (1) Students of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” are required to prepare and write a doctoral thesis. A doctoral thesis serves to demonstrate students’ ability to master scientific topics independently (§ 51 para. 2, subpara. 13 *UG*) and represents an independent scientific research paper.

- (2) The topic of the thesis shall be selected from research areas on Law or Political Science and encompass questions from the following subjects:

Law: particularly Constitutional and Administrative Law, General Theory of State, Administrative Law and Public Administration and New Public Management, Legal Theory, Legal Sociology, Legal Philosophy, Public International Law, European Law, Business Law, Legal History;

Political Science: particularly Political Theory, Political Systems, Comparative Government, International Relations, Public Management;

Economics: particularly National Economy, Regional Economy, Political Economy, International Management;

Sociology: particularly Macrosociology, Microsociology, Sociological Theory, Empirical Social Research;

History: particularly Contemporary History;

Philosophy, Human Rights Studies, Gender Studies, European Studies, Cultural & Religious Studies and Anthropology.

In view of the focus and multidisciplinary orientation of the degree programme, the selected topic should in any event be sufficiently related to either Law or Political Science.

- (3) Students are required to present new scientific results and explicate them in the context of the current state of research. Conducted investigations shall be documented and results thereof shall be presented in a comprehensible manner.
- (4) The thesis shall be elaborated under the guidance of the supervisor and co-supervisor. Their tasks include assisting and educating students in order to enable them to undertake independent research and to yield new scientific results.
- (5) Students may change the topic of their thesis until the submission deadline. In order to do that, a written notification must be submitted to the Head of the doctoral programme stating reasons for the change. A change of thesis topic is only possible with the approval of the examination board.
- (6) Should the thesis topic be changed, it is again required to defend the research project before the examination board as specified in § 4 para. 6 to 8 of the curriculum.
- (7) Parts of the thesis may be published in scientific journals prior to submission. Nevertheless, the thesis in question is still required to be fully completed.
- (8) Regulations as specified in § 28 Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz shall apply to the submission and assessment of the thesis. § 86 *UG* shall apply to duty of publication.

### **§ 7 Teaching**

Students are required to hold a course related to the topic of their doctoral thesis amounting to two contact hours, either at the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences or at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (10 ECTS credit points) in consultation with the Head of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics”. Should it not be possible to hold an individual course, students are required to contribute to a course in consultation with the Head of the programme. The relevant confirmation must be submitted upon application for the Defence at the latest.

### **§ 8 Defence**

- (1) After positively completing all courses as specified in § 5 para. 1 of the curriculum, holding or contributing to a course as specified in § 7 of the curriculum and following the positive assessment of the doctoral thesis as specified in § 6 para. 8 of the curriculum, the student is required to hold a Defence in the form of an oral examination before the examination board (§ 1 para. 2, line 5, Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz).

- (2) The date of the Defence is established by the Head of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” in consultation with the student.
- (3) The Defence consists of two parts. Firstly, the student shall present content and results of their doctoral thesis. Secondly, the student shall defend their research work and demonstrate their academic ability and methodological skills in a discussion with the examination board.
- (4) For the assessment of the Defence, § 31 para. 6 and 7 of the Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz shall apply. Should the Defence be negatively assessed, regulations regarding repetition of examinations (§ 38 Statutes “Study Act Regulations” of the University of Graz) shall apply.

### **§ 9 Graduation, final degree**

The doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” is completed as soon as the student has successfully completed all courses, successfully defended the research project, written the doctoral thesis and successfully held the Defence.

### **§ 10 Academic degree**

Upon successful completion of the programme as specified in § 9 of the curriculum, the body responsible for study matters shall issue to graduates of the doctoral programme “PhD Law and Politics” at the Faculty of Law official notification of the award of the academic degree of “Doctor of Philosophy”, abbreviated as “PhD” (§ 54 para. 4 *UG*), without delay, but no later than one month following the Defence.

### **§ 11 Entering into force**

This Curriculum shall enter into force as of 1 October 2016.