

Guidelines for the

Doctoral Programme

at the Faculty of Architecture and Planning
TU Wien

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In accordance with the Austrian Universities Act (UG) and the currently valid study law provisions, the following guidelines describe the future structure and procedures of the doctoral programme at the Faculty of Architecture and Planning. The guidelines are consistent with the Universitätsgesetz 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I No. 120/2002), the section of the Statutes entitled "Study Law Provisions," and the curriculum for the doctoral programme at TU Wien, while introducing additional measures for quality assurance and student support.

1. The doctoral programme is designed for a standard period of study of three years and comprises the completion of courses within the curricular component (amounting to 18 ECTS credits), the preparation of a doctoral dissertation, and the defence of the dissertation (Rigorosum).

2. Zulassung (Inskription)

Pursuant to Section 64(4) of the Austrian Universities Act (UG), admission to a doctoral programme at TU Wien generally requires proof of completion of a diploma degree or a master's degree relevant to the respective doctoral programme, or another degree of at least the same higher-education level, obtained at a recognised domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution. Admission to a doctoral programme may also be granted, pursuant to Section 5(3) of the Universities of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG), on the basis of completion of a subject-relevant diploma or master's degree programme at a university of applied sciences.

- a. Applicants who have completed a master's degree in Architecture, Spatial Planning, or Building Science at TU Wien may enrol in the doctoral programme without further requirements. It is recommended that an informal confirmation of supervision be obtained from a prospective supervisor prior to enrolment.
- b. All other applicants are required to apply with a dissertation proposal (exposé) by directly contacting a supervisor of their choice.
- c. Upon confirmation of supervision by the respective supervisor for a specific topic, approval is granted by the Dean of Studies, after which enrolment may take place. In certain cases (e.g. where the master's degree was obtained at a university of applied sciences), the Dean of Studies may prescribe additional courses to be completed after enrolment.

3. Dissertation Agreement

As part of the dissertation agreement (Dissertationsvereinbarung), the doctoral candidate is required to submit the dissertation topic and the name of the supervisor to the Dean of Studies in written form. Within the curricular component, courses amounting to 18 ECTS credits must be completed. The selection of courses shall be made in agreement with the dissertation supervisor and is subject to approval by the Dean of Studies.

4. A dissertation is an independently conducted scholarly work. Regular meetings between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate are expected in order to foster the candidate's continuous and in-depth engagement with the respective research topic.

5. Doctoral candidates are required to present the current status of their research at least twice during the course of their studies. These doctoral colloquia serve to promote transparency and networking among doctoral candidates and are generally held in December and May.

5.1 At the first colloquium (proposal), doctoral candidates present the current status of their work at the beginning of the first year of study in a public colloquium. Candidates are required to submit a proposal describing the research project. The proposal should include the following elements: positioning within the existing academic discourse, identification of the research gap, formulation of a clear research question, explanation of appropriate methodologies, as well as feasibility and a timeline. The proposal is intended to serve as a guideline for the dissertation; however, it may and should evolve and be further developed over the course of the research.

5.2 The second colloquium takes place at the beginning of the second year of study. The doctoral candidate presents the work and the current research plan to an individual review panel. This panel consists of the dissertation supervisor, an additional academically qualified member of the faculty, and an external expert. The external expert may also be a potential reviewer who will be responsible for evaluating the dissertation upon submission. The composition of the review panel is proposed by the supervisor and confirmed by the Dean of Studies. The review panel provides direct feedback.

6. In **annual reports or progress reports** (1–3 pages), doctoral candidates report on the progress of their research as well as on any challenges or obstacles encountered. The report is to be submitted to the body responsible for study law matters.

7. The timing of the submission is at the discretion of the student. Upon submission of the dissertation to the Dean's Office, the evaluation of the dissertation by external reviewers commences.

a. The body responsible for study law matters shall submit the dissertation to at least two reviewers who are not supervisors. These reviewers are required to assess the dissertation within a maximum period of four months, each providing a written review and a grade.

b. Reviewers are proposed jointly by the supervisor and the doctoral candidate. The appointment is made by the Dean of Studies. Where possible, at least one reviewer should be affiliated with TU Wien, and at least one reviewer should be affiliated with another faculty or university or with an external research institution. In the case of interdisciplinary dissertations, all involved disciplines should be represented among the reviewers.

c. The supervisor is required to submit a statement without a grade.

d. The dissertation and the reviews shall be made available at the Dean's Office for inspection by members of the faculty for a period of two weeks.

8. The prerequisites for admission to the Rigorosum are:

a. Successful completion of all examinations for the courses prescribed at the time of admission to the doctoral programme

b. Completion of the curricular component

c. positive assessment of the dissertation.

9. **The Rigorosum** (dissertation defence) is a public, commission-based comprehensive examination.

a. The dissertation defence comprises a scholarly presentation by the doctoral candidate on the contents and results of the dissertation, followed by a discussion and examination on the contents and results of the dissertation and the related academic context.

b. The examination board for the Rigorosum shall consist of three to five members. As a rule, the dissertation supervisor shall be appointed as a member of the examination board. Where possible, the reviewers should also be members of the examination board. Where possible, at least one member of the examination board should be affiliated with a faculty or university other than that of the supervisor, preferably from abroad.

c. The grade for the Rigorosum (dissertation defence) shall be determined by the examination board.

10. The overall assessment is based on the grade awarded for the dissertation and the grade awarded for the Rigorosum.

Glossary:

Colloquium: Twice a year, both early-stage and advanced research projects are presented in the colloquium. The aim is to increase the visibility of the work and to promote networking among doctoral candidates.

Review Jury: The review jury serves as an individual “feedback committee” during the presentation of the research plan by the doctoral candidate. It consists of the dissertation supervisor, an additional academically qualified member of the faculty, and an external expert. Neither of the additional experts is required to be a reviewer of the dissertation; ideally, they should hold a habilitation, but they must have at least a doctoral degree.

Research Plan: The research plan is a concise overview presenting the current status of the dissertation and the planned next steps until completion. It serves as the basis for the review panel to provide informed, targeted feedback on the scientific direction, methodology, and feasibility of the project.

Examination Board (Prüfungssenat): The examination board determines the grade for the Rigorosum. It consists of three to five members. In addition to the supervisor, at least one of the reviewers should be present. Where possible, at least one member of the examination board should be affiliated with a faculty or university other than that of the supervisor.

