



International Joint Cross Border PhD Programme in International Economic Relations and Management



International Cooperative Cross-Border Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Educational & Communication Sciences

STUDY AND EXAMINATION REGULATIONS
JOINT DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

I. Preamble

The core component of both joint doctoral programmes is the innovative research to advance the frontier of evidence-based science while acquiring the qualifications for an attractive employment market.

Both joint doctoral study programmes meet the quality benchmarks at **level 8** of the European Qualification Frameworks as well as the quality benchmarks of Ten Salzburg Principles (2005), European Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training (2011) and the Best Practices for PhD Training (2017).

Students graduating from these two joint doctoral programmes are excellently placed to conduct cutting-edge research and/or to enter a professional career in the public or private sector.

The core element of the 180 ECTS, three-year-study programmes are the hypothesis-driven, scientifically original research with doctoral dissertation. The academic degree Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), a title with worldwide recognition is awarded jointly by all the partner institutions: Joint doctoral diploma, together with Diploma Supplement.

All doctoral students receive guidance and support by one supervisor from one partner university or from a supervisory & mentoring team, consisting of one lead supervisor or/and (if necessary) two deputy supervisors, possibly from different partner institutions.

Lead supervisors must be qualified by a Habilitation or possess a similar evidence of scientific achievements. Deputy supervisors (co-supervisors) must only hold a three-year doctoral degree (e.g. PhD).

2. Legal base and scope

Both joint doctoral programmes have been initially notified (and are regularly re-notified) by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria), with its seat in Vienna, Austria. The notifications and re-notifications run over a period of six years (§ 24 Abs. 7 HS-QSG) and are valid for the duration of the re-notification procedure.

3. Programme details

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name | International Joint Cross-Border PhD-Programme in International Economic Relations and Management |
| ISCD-F 2013 | 041 Business and Administration, 0311 Economics |
| Co-operation Partner in Austria | DOCTORATE Paneuropean Studies, A-7000 Eisenstadt, Campus 2, Austria |
| Seat | (a) Eisenstadt, Austria – das erste Jahr (b) Betreuende Partneruniversität (en) – die zwei darauffolgenden Jahre |
| Vergleichbarkeit Qualifikationsniveau | Doctorate Third Cycle (NQR-Level 8/EQR Level 8) |
| Gesamtarbeitsaufwand (ECTS-Anrechnungspunkte) | 180 ECTS |
| Dauer (in Semestern) | Min. 6 semesters (3years) up to max. 6 years (12 semesters) |
| Verwendete Sprache | English |
| Wortlaut des zu verleihenden akademischen Grades | Philosophiae Doctor / Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bezeichnung | International Co-operative Cross-Border Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Educational&Communication Sciences |
| ISCD-F 2013 | Education 01/0111 Education Science |
| Co-operation Partner in Austria | DOCTORATE Paneuropean Studies, A-7000 Eisenstadt, Campus 2, Austria |
| Durchführungsort | (a) Eisenstadt, Österreich – das erste Jahr (b) Betreuende Partneruniversität(en) – die zwei darauffolgenden Jahre |
| Vergleichbarkeit Qualifikationsniveau | Doctorate Third Cycle (NQR-Level 8/EQR-Level 8) |
| Gesamtarbeitsaufwand (ECTS-Anrechnungspunkte) | 180 ECTS |
| Duration | min. 6 Semesters (3 years) – max. 6 Years (12 Semesters) |
| Language | English |
| Wortlaut des zu verleihenden akademischen Grades | Philosophiae Doctor / Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) |

3.1 Level

Both joint doctoral programmes meet the European educational standards (EQF) at **level 8** as the highest academic qualification within the European educational system.

Each national qualifications' framework (NQF) of all participating, degree-awarding partner universities, is officially referenced to the European Qualifications Framework, and thus, compatible with the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area.

As far as comparability is concerned, these are the joint scientific doctoral PhD-programmes in the meaning of **EQF-Level 8**.

Both Joint PhDs are therefore on the same level as Austrian doctorates.

3.2 Educational Aims of the Doctoral Study

People innovate, discover and explore. Doctoral education is therefore the foundation on which the next generation of researchers and scientists stands. Given the extensive shift in scientific research towards global networks, large data sets, advanced technologies, usage of digital tools and personalised proficiency, these joint doctoral programmes aim for modern research readiness and high employability.

3.3. Jointly designed and delivered Curriculum

The total academic requirement of both joint doctoral programmes is, depending on the partner university, 180 to 240 ECTS, determined as follows:

| Subjects | Credits in semester | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | |
| I. Education credits | | | | | | | |
| - Basic subjects | 5+5 | 5+5 | - | - | - | - | |
| - Compulsory subjects | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | - | - | |
| - Optional subjects | - | - | - | - | 6 | - | |
| Total educational credits | 15 | 15 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 56 |
| II. Research credits/Thesis work | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 17 | 74 |
| III. Publication credits | Credit points according to publication activity at the end of the doctoral programme (in total) | | | | | | 50 |
| IV. Supplementary credits | [If required for a 4 th year of study] | | | | | | [60] |
| Total (obtainable credits) | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 180 [240] |

3.2 Structure of the joint doctoral programmes

3.2.1 Stage 1: Educational phase (YEAR 1, semesters 1 and 2) at the Doctoral Centre in Eisenstadt, including all the academic requirements

The Consortium and the **professors from partner universities** overtake the first academic year of the PhD studies (semesters 1 and 2) at the **Doctoral Centre, Campus 2, Eisenstadt, Austria**.

PhD candidates are assigned to their supervisors **by the second (summer) semester at the latest**, considering their research and scientific field. After that, the students begin working with their supervisor(s) to complete their final RESEARCH PROPOSAL (RP) of their dissertation (at the latest, by the end of the third semester).

Students are encouraged to present their RP during the second semester at the Conference for Doctoral Students and Early-Stage Researchers, which is held in May of each academic year.

Within the first academic year, all the mandatory academic educational requirements (60 ECTS) of the joint curriculum shall be met. Prior to entering the third semester, all mandatory teaching modules of the joint curriculum must have been successfully (i.e. with the grade „pass“) completed.

The RP describes **what** doctoral students want to investigate, **why** it is important to do so, and **how** they will do your planned research. It is a thematically and methodologically concise description of their planned doctoral dissertation. Moreover, it is a crucial planning instrument that supports doctoral students in organising and gradually realising their ultimate doctoral dissertation.

The purpose of the RP defence is to give the supervisor(s) and the members of the Scientific and Academic Committee the opportunity to jointly judge whether the student is on a promising track or whether a significant change is required.

3.2.2 Stage 2: Research phase (semesters 3 and 4)

Being able to enter the second year of the doctoral study programme, doctoral students **are expected to complete** all the required ECTS from the first academic year. Within the second year (winter and summer term), all research and publication credits (ECTS) must be gained as follows:

| Module | Course Type | ECTS |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Seminar/Individual work with supervisor 1 | Compulsory | 5 |
| Seminar/Individual work with supervisor 2 | Compulsory | 5 |
| Thesis work/research credits | (2x10) | 20 |
| Publication credits | (2x15) | 30 |

3.2.3 Stage 3: Scientific phase (semester 5 and 6)

Within the third year, doctoral students must complete the following ECTS for research and publication:

| Module | Course Type | ECTS |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Individual work with supervisor(s) 3 | Optional | 6 |
| Active participation in scientific conferences, research workshops, doctoral/scientific seminar(s) | Compulsory | 10 |
| Thesis work/Research work with supervisor(s) 4 | Compulsory | 17 |
| Thesis work/Research work with supervisor(s) 5 | Compulsory | 17 |
| Publication credits | | 10 |

3.3 Didactical Concept

The didactical concept is centred on the hypothesis-driven, independent research project conducted by the doctoral student under supervision by highly qualified scientific staff from partner universities. Based on the research plan, students test one or more hypothesis with suitable methods in a reproducible and statistically sound manner to obtain publishable results. Both, compulsory and optional teaching activities support the doctoral student along the way to develop all needed research and transferrable skills.

3.4 Workload and ECTS-Points

All activities to be provided by doctoral students as part of their studies are allotted to ECTS credits (ECTS credit = European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System). One ECTS credit corresponds to 25 working hours of 60 minutes and describes the amount of work required on average by a student to achieve the expected learning outcomes. In general, one year of full time study corresponds to 1500 working hours and thus an allotment of 60 ECTS credits,

The planned student workload 180 ECTS/4500 hours (within the three years) corresponds to the usual standards of all participating universities and the regulations in their countries of origin and is comparable to the student workload of a comparable Austrian doctoral degree programme:

| The first study year (60 ECTS) | The second year of study (60 ECTS) | The third study year (60 ECTS) | Requirements for the acquisition of the academic degree PhD |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 40 ECTS by passing 8 mandatory teaching modules (8x5) | 10 ECTS seminar/individual work with supervisor(s) | 6 ECTS Individual work with supervisor(s) | 56 ECTS educational credits |
| 10 ECTS thesis/research credits | 20 ECTS thesis work/research credits | 10 ECTS active participation in scientific conferences | 74 ECTS research credits/thesis work |
| 10 ECTS publication credits | 30 ECTS publication credits | 34 ECTS thesis/research work | 50 ECTS publication credits |
| | | 10 ECTS publication credits | |

The 180 ECTS curriculum aims to enhance research readiness and employability at the highest international level within the benchmarks of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the 10 Basic Salzburg Principles (2005).

In case that the curriculum of the partner university at which the thesis is supervised requires 240 ECTS, 60 supplementary credits shall be acquired at this university.

3.4 Scientific Conferences & Scientific Publications

In accordance with sect curriculum ion § 6.2 (Research Work) of the Agreement between the respective partner universities, a doctoral candidate may only defend his/her dissertation **after** he/she has published research articles with **50 ECTS** credit points in total, divided as follows:

| Group I: Scientific research work | ECTS |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Monography | up to 20 |
| Part of Monography – co-authorship | up to 8 |
| Scientific article, published in journals, indexed by SCI or SSCI (up to 3 co-authors – category A1) | up to 8 |
| Group II: Scientific Conferences and others | |
| Published plenary lecture at international scientific conference | up to 5 |
| Presentation of the plenary lecture at home or international scientific conference | up to 5 |
| Other published articles (up to 2 co-authors – category A2) | up to 5 |
| Conference proceedings | up to 10 |
| Other documented expert work based on the judgement of the Consortium/Academic Scientific Committee | up to 20 |

That means, doctoral students are expected to gather 50 ECTS **PRIOR to the final defence of** their dissertation.

Publication activity of doctoral candidates: The doctoral candidates are obliged to discuss their publication activity with their supervisors. The supervisor(s) is/are responsible for evaluating the published articles of his/her candidate. After the Consortium has received the evaluation (including a suggestion on the number of ECTS points) of the published article from the supervisor, the final decision about ECTS points is accepted by the Consortium.

3.7 Competencies and Programme Outcomes

For the jointness of both doctoral PhD-programmes, the required reference to level 8 of the EQF is provided for all the participating universities within one document, as from the first moment onward, the design, development and delivery of the joint doctoral programme was a joint cooperative and collaboratively harmonized activity.

EQF 8 Descriptors

I Knowledge:

After completing one of these joint PhD programmes, doctoral students should have acquired in-depth, the most advanced level of knowledge ((LO 1 and LO8) in the following areas/activities:

- Deep understanding of, with mastering the theories, principles, and practices related to education and communication and the intersections between the two fields.
- Creating a state-of-the-art of educational and communication research methodologies and techniques, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches.
- Evaluating educational policy, governance, and organization, including the role of government and other stakeholders in shaping educational and communication systems.
- Analyzing the impact of advanced technology on education and communication, including the use and further development of digital tools, resources and online platforms for teaching and learning and communication.
- Evaluating learning achievement, including the development of valid and reliable measures of student learning outcomes as well as the use of advanced technologies in the implementation of these processes.
- Judging the value of effective information and communication strategies for diverse audiences, including strategies for ethical considerations in education and communication, issues related to

equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as academic integrity and responsible conduct of research.

2 Skills:

Upon completion of one of these joint PhD programmes, doctoral students should have developed the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice (LO2, LO 3 and LO 4) including the following:

- Doctoral students should be able to design and conduct advanced research in education and communication studies, including the ability to identify significant research questions, select appropriate and rigorous research methods, collect data and make advanced analyses, adequately interpret and discuss research findings, provide the limitations and suggestions for the further research, and disseminate research findings through highly reputable and indexed journals (WoS, Scopus, Q1 and Q2, and like), conferences, and communicate research to non-academic stakeholders.
- Doctoral students should be able to examine, evaluate and judge teaching and training strategies for various educational and professional contexts and propose new teaching and learning approaches aligned with contemporary developments in technology, the economy and society as a whole.
- Develop and apply leadership and management skills in educational and communicational settings, including identifying, addressing, and resolving critical problems facing educational and communication systems and proposing innovative solutions.
- Doctoral students should be able to analyze and evaluate educational and communication programmes and policies, identify areas for improvement, and propose evidence-based solutions.
- Doctoral students should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of various digital tools, resources and online platforms used in teaching, learning, and communication, propose combinations and improvements, and develop new digital tools, resources, and strategies for their effective use.

3 Competencies:

Upon completion of one of these joint PhD programmes, doctoral students should be able to demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including (LO5 and LO6):

- Demonstrate substantial autonomy in conducting independent research, including identifying a significant research problem,

formulating research questions, designing studies, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting findings to solve the problems, contributing to advancement in professional literature, contributing to innovations and development of new ideas and strategies in the field of education and communication.

- Demonstrate the capacity to innovate and solve complex educational and communication problems and identify and capitalize on opportunities for improvement and change.
- Demonstrate the substantial ability to communicate complex concepts and research findings effectively, both orally and in writing, to diverse audiences, including policymakers, the educational community, stakeholders, and the public.
- Demonstrate sustained commitment to responsibility and professional integrity in educational and communicational contexts, considering technological, ethical and cultural considerations.
- Demonstrate the promotion of social justice, equity, inclusion and diversity in educational and communicational contexts, through research, teaching, and professional practice.

4. Application & Admission Procedure

4.1 Admission Criteria

With regard to the level of qualification, the admission requirements and selection procedure correspond to the provisions provided for all the participating universities in their countries of domicile and are jointly harmonized, complying with international, national and institutional regulation of all participating universities, i.e. both Joint doctoral programmes are open to anyone who has been awarded

- A Diploma or Master's degree or equivalent degree at an officially recognized University or University of Applied Sciences.
- Any other uniform Master's degree Programme comprising an equivalent of at least 300 ECTS;
- English proficiency at least at B2-level.

In case of ambiguity, the Consortium contacts one of the ENIC/NARIC centres of the participating countries to check all the admission requirements to be fulfilled prior to entering the doctoral programme.

4.2 Application Deadlines & Procedures & Documents

Students may enter both doctoral programmes at the latest on September 30, every academic year.

The application form with all the necessary information is to be found on the Website: www.doctorate-ps.eu and should be submitted according to the application requirements to the “DOCTORATE.

Additionally to the application form with all the contact dates, students are expected to deliver the following documents (Should the documents be neither in English nor in German, they must be translated in either of those languages by a sworn translator):

- CV (with photo) in pdf-format : relevant professional career and academic qualifications
- All relevant certificates: general entitlement to study at universities (Matura, Abitur), Bachelor, Highschool Diploma and/or Master certificates and Proof of **all previous academic qualifications** (transcripts of your university, copy of university degrees, etc.) in pdf-format
- Copy of passport in pdf-format
- Passport photograph in jpg-format (picture size min. 1.8 inch (45 mm) high x min. 1.4 inch (35 mm) wide, max. head size 1.4 inch (36 mm), min. eye distance 0.3 inch (8mm)
- **Letter of motivation** in pdf-format
- Proof of **all previous academic qualifications** (transcripts of your university, copy of university degrees, etc.) in pdf-format
- **Research proposal** (with working title): the research proposal is a short description of the planned scientific work
- Copy of your E-Card (Austrian Social Security Card), if applicable in pdf-format
- Birth certificate in pdf-format
- Residential registration (Meldezettel) in pdf-format

Preliminary Review of the Documents: the Doctoral Administration Office checks the submitted documents for completeness and consults with the applicants if required.

After having submitted all application documents, students are screened for eligibility and nominated as doctoral candidates by the Scientific Committee (in ambiguous cases the ENIC/Naric is consulted) prior being invited to the admission personal interview in front of the Board of Examiners.

If eligibility is proven, the doctoral candidates are **invited to** a personal admission interview where each applicant shall present his/her CV, academic work, publication activities and research exposé, proving proficiency in the chosen topic.

In detail, this interview is structured as shown below:

4.2.1 Personal Admission Interview

The personal interview lasts about 20-30 minutes and consists of two parts:

Part A of the personal interview consists of a short Power-Point presentation about the candidate`s personal presentation : previous education, professional experience, additional qualifications, reasons for applying for this study (motivation) and any other issues the candidate considers to be important.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Personalia | |
| education&work | |
| your motivation | |

Part B consists of a presentation of the candidate's **research proposal for the doctoral thesis**

4.2.2 Example of structure of RP (research proposal)

The research proposal is a thematically and methodologically concise description of candidate's doctoral thesis and an important planning instrument that helps students to structure perennial dissertation work and to realize doctoral thesis step by step.

- **Working title (topic and research field) of dissertation**
- **Clear formulated research question(s)**
- **Background information: brief summary of the proposed topic** (Current state of literature-based, already existing research in your research field)
- **Objective(s), hypotheses...** (
- **Chosen research methods** (qualitative/quantitative/mixed)
- **Expected scientific contribution**
- **Proposed time schedule/work-plan**
- **List of used/existing reference literature**

If the candidate does not attend the interview without an argumentative reason, he/she will be excluded from the admission procedure.

4.3 Evaluation & Decision Criteria

The Scientific Committee considers the applicants' former activities (Diploma or Master's degree, current academic work and publications), language proficiency, proficiency in the chosen topic of research and professional intelligence.

In particular, the Scientific Committee evaluates:

- **Study results:**The previous academic education (e.g. Bachelor, Master, Diploma) must provide evidence that the acquired skills and competences are likely to sustain the planned research and scientific work.
- **Admission personal interview results.**

- Letter of motivation.
- Quality and relevance of the research proposal (RP) together with the applicants' scientific research potential (i.e. understanding of scientific research, matching areas of his/her research to research undertaken at the partner universities).
- Previous research and publication activities (if available).
- English language skills.

The research plan/proposal (RP) is assessed according to the following criteria:

- a. Quality and testability of the hypothesis (hypotheses)
- b. Suitability of the methods to challenge the hypothesis (hypotheses)
- c. Adequate power, sample sizes, tools and data quality to test the hypothesis (hypotheses)
- d. Definition of milestones and alternative approaches if milestones may not be met
- e. A time schedule that enables the applicant to acquire the curricular ECTS of the research work
- f. Subject specific criteria may apply, especially in case of externally funded PhD research projects

Candidates are evaluated, ranked and informed in writing about their application and their admission results.

Candidates who are not offered a firm place are put on a waiting list and move up the list if other candidates decide to drop out.

Late registrations are only considered if there are places available on the doctoral study programme.

Within the whole admission procedure, the Scientific Committee respects the admission requirements and enrolment constraints of all partner universities.

5. Recognition of external courses, modules, seminars, doctoral colloquia and workshops

In agreement with the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region (Lisbon Agreement, 1997), the following regulations apply:

„Recognition refers to the crediting of already completed study or learning qualifications so that individual modules do not have to be attended or exams/assignments do not have to be completed.“

But only in case of transferring from another **level 8 doctoral programme** onto the Joint doctoral programme, the accomplished activities can be recognised. All recognised ECTS and all ECTS to be completed shall be registered (Board of Ruling).

Within the Cooperation Agreement (dated September 15, 2024), under Pt.3. – Implementation - it is stated and signed:

„All partner universities agree on the mutual recognition of skills, competencies and qualifications awarded in one of them.“

Recognition of skills and qualifications is THE key to support mobility, learning and career opportunities for all across the EU, therefore within these both joint doctoral programme,s Consortium pays special attention to the following **principles**:

- All partner universities agree on the mutual recognition of skills, competencies, qualifications and professional qualifications awarded in one of them, but always on the corresponding level. In the case of these doctoral programmes, **only the level 8** can be recognised mutually.
- Concerning the achievements according to the joint curriculum: All academic achievements/ teaching modules/workshops/tutorials/exams/complex exams etc. and other academic requirements are automatically recognized and the ECTS credits allocated. There is no need for case-by-case assessments when applicants have been trained in universities conferring essentially comparable skills and knowledge, therefore no formal decision on that is necessary.
- Concerning achievements additionally to the joint curriculum, completed at one of the partner universities: For additional examinations, **educational credits** are granted unless there is no substantial difference in comparison with the examinations according to the joint curriculum. For scientific work, **research credits** are granted provided that this work can contribute to the aim of the thesis. For publications, **publication credits** are granted, if they are in line with the scientific field of the thesis. A formal decision on the extent of the crediting has to be taken by the partner university at which the work on the thesis is done, or which provides the corresponding parts of the joint curriculum.
- Concerning achievements additionally to the joint curriculum, completed at other universities or research institutions: Additional examinations, scientific work and publications shall be granted educational, research or, respectively, publication credits to full or part extent, if they build a reasonable completion of the joint doctorate. A formal decision on the extent of the crediting must be taken by the partner university at which the work on the thesis is done, or which provides the corresponding parts of the joint curriculum, informing the Consortium about this decision as the central body of the joint doctoral programme.
- Crediting applies also to non-formal and informal competencies, if they have undergone a validation procedure by the decision-making and degree- awarding university.

If a doctoral student is planning to do achievements additionally to the joint curriculum, she/he can apply to the partner university at which the work on the thesis is done, or which provides the corresponding parts of the joint curriculum, to decide in advance on the possibility of crediting after completion.

Informal qualifications correspond to the usual standards and are harmonized with all participating partner universities, corresponding to regulations in countries of origin.

6. After successfully passing the admission interview and entering the doctoral programme, the students get a detailed Information about the study programme, the academic requirements,

their rights and their obligations during the study within the document: „Navigating and Managing your doctoral studies“.

7. Attendance, leave of study and exemptions

7.1.Attendance

All students must familiarise themselves with the attendance requirements of each teaching module. Poor attendance, especially unexcused absence, may compromise the successful completion of a teaching module. The extent of home study is communicated by the professor who delivers the teaching module.

7.2 Notification of illness und Healthy Message

Absence comprises non-attendance due to illness or other unforeseen events that prevent the doctoral student from taking part in (f2f or online) teaching sessions.

In case of illness or justified absence, students must inform in writing the respective administrative office „Doctorate“ in Eisenstadt in advance or as soon as possible after the occurrence of the prevention.

7.3 Leave of Study

7.3. 1

Doctoral students can apply for leave of study, based on plausible circumstances (e.g. chronic illness, vocational or professional training courses, childcare, domestic care, pregnancy, civil service). Leave of absence is granted for one semester only and students may re-apply if the circumstance exceed one semester. Hence, students may take leave of absence twice (or due to special circumstances more than twice) within the duration of the whole study programme.

Applications for a leave of study for the following reasons (maternity/paternity leave, military service, pregnancy, childcare, care-taking duties, voluntary year, illness, injury or disablement which considerably impair your PhD study) have to be submitted before **November 1st** (winter term) or **March 1st** (summer term) to the administrative office/Consortium.

7.3.2

The matriculation remains active during leave of study. Students must not attend teaching modules nor take an exam nor submit any written work for marking during leave of study. Exceptions from this regulation may be granted by the professor on a case-by-case basis.

7.3.3

Students are exonerated from paying the tuition fee during leave of study.

8. Research & Scientific Work

In line with the Ten Basic Salzburg Principles (2005), and in line with the mutual agreement among all the participating universities, the independent research thesis is the core of both joint doctoral programmes. Every PhD student must therefore discuss the progress of the research work with his/her supervisor or supervisory team at least once every term. This evaluation allows for the review of the previous as well as the future work.

8.1 Supervision of research & scientific work

The supervision of the dissertation thesis through an experienced researcher plays a central role and is the key factor in the PhD process. In particular regarding a future academic career it is essential that doctoral candidates become involved and embedded in their scientific community. The supervisor is the main contact person in order to receive regular feedback and guidance on the development of the thesis.

Supervisors must be suitably qualified and have sufficient experience in supervising theses or exercise supervision under the supervision of experienced supervisors.

PhD student is mentored by either one supervisor or even a supervision team consisting of one lead supervisor and two deputy supervisors (co-supervisors).

The lead supervisor must hold Habilitation or must provide a similar scientific qualification. Deputy supervisors must hold at least a three-year doctoral award.

8.2 Roles and responsibilities of doctoral researchers and supervisors

Both, supervisors and doctoral students have their obligations and responsibilities as described below:

8.2.1 Doctoral student/early-stage researcher

A doctoral student is expected to

- Contact the supervisor(s) asap after receiving his/her contacts, before beginning writing on the thesis
- Try hard to develop a good relationship with his/her supervisor(s)
- Communicate regularly with his/her supervisor(s), at least once a month
- Work systematically to complete the doctoral research and other studies within the overall target period of (max.) six years
- Design and conduct research independently and on his/her own initiative, with the support of his/her supervisor(s) and other members of the academic community within Consortium
- Prepare himself/herself carefully for meetings with the supervisor(s) and respect the agreed deadlines and all agreements met
- Write the annual progress report on his/her work-in-progress once a year
- Be responsible for the progress, quality, and reliability of their own research work and report to the supervisor(s) about the progress of the research regularly
- Be responsible for reporting and publishing the results of his/her research work in conferences agreed upon with the supervisor(s)
- Familiarise himself/herself with, good ethics and ethical principles of scientific research, respecting the regulations of European Charter for Researchers

- Become acquainted with practical matters related to academic work and other scientific activities
- Inform and discuss with the supervisor(s) about changes affecting working conditions, progress, or the agreed schedule/timeline.

8.2.2 Doctoral thesis supervisor(s)

Doctoral thesis supervisor(s) is obliged to:

- Be committed to the supervision of the doctoral researcher's research and its planning throughout the whole six-year study period and to comply with the agreed deadlines and schedules
- Treat the doctoral student/researcher (and/or other supervisors) well
- provide regular feedback on the work
- Develop his/her own leadership and supervision skills through e.g. student feedback (evaluation within the annual report once a year) and supervisor training
- Agree with other co-supervisors and the doctoral researcher on the responsibilities of supervisors and, where appropriate, on the rights with respect to the research results (e.g. thesis publication principles, sharing of degree points ...)
- Give doctoral researchers the just merits for this/her own contribution to the work
- Adhere to good scientific practice and ethical principles of research and guide the doctoral researcher to adhere to them
- Acquaint himself/herself with the practicalities related to academic studies and other scientific activities
- Inform and discuss with the doctoral researcher and other supervisors about any significant changes affecting the conditions under which the work is carried out
- Guides the doctoral researcher in career planning by discussing post-graduation career options and helping to target the training to meet the career goals of the doctoral researcher

The supervisor of a PhD candidate is required to **provide academic guidance and practical support from the inception of the dissertation to the submission of the final version of the thesis and its defence.** The supervision of PhD candidates is a specialised and demanding activity.

After the public presentation of the research project, the doctoral candidate and his/her supervisor make a mutual agreement, in which they clarify different aspects of their collaboration such as the art (online, in person...), frequency of feedback meetings, overall collaboration, including of doctoral candidates into publication and/or teaching activity etc) . In addition, it is recommended to use the annual progress reports to discuss the progress of the dissertation as well as plans for the following period in detail.

If necessary for the interdisciplinarity of the topic, **supervisory team** may be nominated.

All supervisors must be recognised researchers within the relevant scientific field, without direct connection to the milieu where the PhD was performed and without any conflict of interest.

No member of the supervisory team is allowed to act as an assessor of the PhD thesis. Both assessors (opponents/reviewers) must be extern to the university in which the work was performed. All assessors must have the required expertise to judge the quality and significance of the submitted scientific work.

The review process is confidential and a non-disclosure agreement may be needed in case of commercially sensitive data.

8.2.3 Annual Progress Reports

Doctoral students are also obliged to submit Annual Progress Reports to the Consortium once a year, signed by their supervisors. The idea behind annual reports is twofold:

First, they take stock of the progress made during each year of their doctoral studies. Although this may seem insignificant, it aids in keeping doctorate students and their supervisors on track with their dissertation and helps them avoid mistakes that were easily preventable in hindsight (e.g. unrealistic timetable, procrastination, etc.).

Second, annual progress reports become necessary when the dissertation registration is signed. For instance, it could happen that access to special archives or databases is restricted, making the originally planned data collection impossible. Alternatively, it might be that new opportunities arise, such as new conferences or workshops on the topic of doctoral dissertation. These changes to the dissertation agreement need to be documented in the annual reports. However, it is important to emphasize that ultimately it is up to the Head of the Consortium of the PhD study programme to accept these changes.

9. Assessment and/or certificates of achievement

All the assessment methods are aligned with the competences that each module or teaching activity intends to convey. The competences are assigned to the programme outcomes.

9.1 Grades

Within both joint doctoral programmes, there are only two grades for assessing the students activity, written work and assignments (with exception of the doctoral thesis):

- **pass** (above 66,7% of the knowledge /skills/competencies achieved)
- **fail** (beneath 66,7%)

The grade (pass, above 66,7% of) is required for the successful completion of a formally assessed teaching module .

The grading system and the achieved grades may be communicated by email or orally. Or in person, with a short feedback given and possibility of suggested amendments incorporated in assignment.

All students must be informed about the grading criteria (i.e. which level of knowledge corresponds to the grades „pass“ or “fail”) in class at the start of the teaching module. The nature and weight of the assessment depends on the content and learning strategy and is set by the academic who delivers the module or unit. The assessment methods should reflect the skills and knowledge taught on the module. The appropriateness of the assessment is part of the module evaluation by the students.

Attendance is not sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes and for every teaching/learning/written activity the grading is required.

University professors who are responsible for setting a summative assessment must inform all students at the start of the module or teaching unit about:

- the exact date of submission
- the assessment details and the grading criteria
- the learning outcomes, and
- the content of the module or teaching unit
- the possibility of amending and/or repeating the presentation/written essay/grade,....

9.2 Types of Assessment

A distinction is made between mandatory teaching modules with written assignments and the final public defence of the degree programme.

Joint doctoral programme requires not only jointly designed admission process or jointly developed curriculum, but also jointly harmonized examination regulations in order to address and negotiate all the national, international and institutional differences in these fields.

Therefore, **the examination regulations are harmonized, adapted and adopted by all participating universities and correspond to the usual standards of all the national and institutional regulations in their countries of origin.** They were jointly accepted and laid down within the Consortium Strategic Meeting on February 14, 2019 as **general provisions:**

- for mandatory admission interviews, organized jointly by all the partner universities within Consortium (after the candidates were screened for their eligibility), the admission criteria and scoring are unified and harmonized.
- for teaching modules, seminars and tutorials the candidates are graded pass/fail for their work: pass: above 66,7% ; fail below 66,7% .
- After First /Second Monitoring doctoral students receive descriptive feedback and are graded also with Pass/Fail: pass: above 66,7% ; fail below 66,7% .
- examinations passed at one of the Consortium partners are fully and automatically recognized by other partner universities
- the publication activity of the doctoral students is measured, scored and harmonized among partner universities by ECTS points: students have to reach 50 ECTS prior to defending finally the thesis. Evidence: Evaluation of Publication Activity and Scientific research Work.
- The continuous assessment of student's scientific performance and independent work is assessed by the supervisor(s) through the Annual Progress Report, submitted at the end of each academic year. (Evidence: Annual Progress Report)
- For the final grade of the public defence of doctoral thesis, the grades are as follows: Summa cum laude, Cum laude, Rite or not defended.
- For all written assignments and in case of detecting Ghost writing, Plagiarism and any other unethical behaviour of the doctoral students, the Consortium checks regularly

all scientific works with plagscan or turnitin checker, esp. for Monitorings, Public Hearing and the Final Defence.

- the Consortium has transparent procedure in place to handle student complaints about grading or other issues regarding the assessment process.

9.2.1 Written Papers/assignments /homeworks/essays

Within each teaching module, doctoral students are obliged to submit a written paper, which describes independently prepared work and documents, dealing with a specific topic in an academic or (self-)reflective manner. In contrast to written examinations, the preparation extends over a defined period of time and requires submission deadlines, set by the professor of the teaching module. Or by the supervisor in case of the doctoral thesis work.

9.2.2 Oral Examinations & Monitorings of the scientific work

There are no oral examinations in a classical sense, but there are regular monitorings and presentations of the work-in-progress, combined with oral discussions of the scientific findings, results, methods of the scientific work etc.

9.2.2.1 Public Defence of Research Proposal

The public presentation (normally February/March or September/October in Eisenstadt) of the doctoral RP is the **precondition for the final approval** of the dissertation topic. The intention of the public defence of a RP is to provide a forum for feedback and exchange among professors of the examination board and a doctoral candidates. It is chaired by the nominated and attended members of the Consortium. The professors within the Scientific Committee provide feedback on the RP and evaluate whether the proposal meets the scientific standards and if they can be realised successfully in a reasonable timeframe. The public defence has the following agenda:

1. Brief introduction by the chair/supervisor
2. Candidate presents RP, maximum 30 minutes
3. Short break, 10 minutes (if necessary)
4. Questions from Scientific Committee members and candidate answers
5. Questions from audience (if any)

Candidate and audience leave the room. Committee decides.

6. The candidate is informed of the Board decision in writing within one month at the latest, including the overall and detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement and recommendations for further work.

Entire Dissertation Proposal Defence lasts approximately one hour. Signed documents from the Committee are handed to the Doctoral Administration.

In the cases where the **RP is not approved**, the Committee issues a brief report outlining its reasoning for not approving the proposal (within one month at the latest, setting a tentative date for a new submission). The Scientific Committee additionally specifies if an oral defence of the revised proposal is required of the PhD candidate or if an updated written submission alone suffices.

9.2.2.2 Monitorings

The first and second monitoring are intended to serve as midterm-evaluations of the doctoral dissertation and ought to be completed following the defence and approval of the RP. The candidate defends his/her preliminary doctoral dissertation before the Academic and Scientific Committee. The Committee consists of at least of three members, i.e. of the main supervisor, and two other members of the Consortium.

First Monitoring: The doctoral candidate submits a **written request and draft version of the dissertation**, showing his/her work-in-progress. The Academic and Scientific Committee must receive it in writing no later than **four weeks prior** to the agreed date for the pre-doctoral (first and second) monitoring. The evaluation committee must express its opinion on the academic status and progress of the research dissertation and provide feedback to the candidate, while feedback will also be given by the doctoral student's supervisor and the Consortium.

For the First Monitoring the students are obliged to prepare and present:

1. Literature review in full,
2. Research methods and methodology,
3. Results and findings

Second Monitoring: The PhD candidate, who has finished his/her doctoral dissertation and all his/her publications, must present his/her work within the second monitoring. The date and time of the public defence of the doctoral dissertation is decided in advance, after the student has met all the requirements, received permission from the supervisor(s) and has registered for second monitoring.

For the Second Monitoring, the doctoral students are expected to deliver:

1. 100% completed doctoral dissertation,
2. Thesis booklet,
3. Discussion,
4. Conclusion with clearly defined scientific contribution,
5. List of publications (evaluated and signed by supervisor).

The presentations at monitorings last at **least 20, but not more than 30 minutes**. Following the presentation, questions are invited from the committee members by the chair of the committee. Questions are an integral part of the process. To help the doctoral candidate continue and complete the doctoral dissertation, the committee members share some observations and recommendations. Following this and prior to defending his/her dissertation, the doctoral candidate has approximately 6 (six) months to adopt and incorporate all suggestions, amendments, and corrections.

All monitorings, hearings and defences, are usually held in Eisenstadt **TWICE** per academic year in February/March and September/October in Eisenstadt, Austria, depending on the availability of all the members of Examination Board and the Consortium.

9.2.2.3 Public Hearing / public pre-defence

The PhD candidate, who has completed 100% of his/her doctoral dissertation and published all the required articles, has to present his/her work within **the public hearing (pre-defence)**, at least six months prior to finally defending it. The doctoral candidate must register

for the public hearing at least **two months** before the hearing (i.e. by the **end of December** for the public hearing in February/March and by the **end of June** for the public hearing taking place in September/October). The following documents must also be submitted:

- registration with the template: Request for the public hearing
- the complete (100%) dissertation, sent electronically
- the thesis booklet (a short version of your dissertation consisting of 20–25 pages that includes all research results and candidate's scientific contribution)
- a brief evaluation report from your supervisor attesting to your right to ask for a public hearing
- the list of your publications on the template available (see Moodle)
- declaration of authorship.

The Consortium nominates the two reviewers (opponents), who have up to three months' time to complete and submit the review.

The public defence, which takes place in Eisenstadt twice a year (in February/March and September/October), is opened by the chairperson, who outlines the order in which it will take place. The chairperson presents the doctoral student, the title of the dissertation, the two reviewers and the members of the Scientific Academic Committee. After that, the doctoral student is given the opportunity to address any printing mistakes or to highlight any other necessary modifications that need to be made to the dissertation. The chairperson of the public defence can also be the doctoral student's supervisor.

The public defence consists of a presentation of the central findings, followed by a general discussion about the research subject with the examination board members. The presentation normally lasts 20 minutes, but not more than 30 minutes. Following the presentation, questions are invited from the committee members by the chair. The committee members make some observations, recommendations and suggestions, for changes that could be made to continue a doctoral dissertation. The doctoral candidate accepts the suggestions of the members of the committee and takes them into account in the further writing process of his/ her doctoral dissertation, on the condition that all suggested changes must be made within 6 (six) months for minor corrections and up to one year (12 months) for major amendments.

9.2.2.4 Doctoral Thesis & final public defence

The doctoral dissertation demonstrates the ability of the doctoral candidate to conduct **independent scientific work at the highest possible academic level**. It demonstrates his/her capacity to comprehend and reflect the latest state of the art in his/her field of research and advance it by making methodologically sound contributions.

A final public defence is a mandatory final component in order to successfully complete a doctoral degree programme and to obtain an academic degree PhD.

Registration for the final public defence of the doctoral thesis is only possible if the PhD dissertation

- has been positively assessed by the supervisor, giving the “green light”
- has been approved and positively assessed by two opponents/reviewers and
- all required publications and scientific work has been properly published and 50 ECTS publication points reached
- passed plagiarism test (all PhD theses are subject to a plagiarism test)
- all other academic and programme requirements have been met.

Each partner university has strict guidelines regarding the format and length of a doctoral dissertation, which the candidate must adhere to.

However, it is **NOT** possible to hand in a cumulative dissertation as a compilation of several articles touching on a similar topic.

It is imperative to adhere to the rules of one's own discipline. The supervisor(s) should be consulted when deciding which style needs to be used e.g. APA. The doctoral dissertation must be written in **English** and must comply with international standards of the discipline.

The public defence consists of a presentation of the central findings followed by a general discussion about the research subject with the examination commission.

The examination committee is assembled by the Head of Consortium/Scientific Committee of the Doctoral Study Programme. A PhD student defends his/her dissertation before a five-member examining committee. Normally the supervisor as well as one of the reviewers are part of the committee. At the end of the presentation each member of the committee awards a grade within the following grading scale:

- summa cum laude (with high distinction)
- cum laude (with distinction)
- rite (pass)

If the candidate does not defend the dissertation, the grade is

- non probatum, non sufficit, non rite, insufficienter (fail, beneath 66,7%).

9.3 Quality Assurance Requirements for Doctoral Thesis

A PhD thesis must satisfy and meet the following basic conditions:

- It must make use of an extensive bibliography and a comprehensive and in-depth reference to international research which is relevant to the subject of the thesis. Thus, the findings and conclusions of the thesis must be correlated to what has been achieved so far in the relevant scientific field.
- It must make an explicit reference to the scientific contribution of the thesis, especially as regards the advancement of the field on the basis of the research conducted. Therefore, an explicit reference to the originality of the thesis is required.
- It must provide an important and original contribution to scientific knowledge. A doctoral thesis must have a theoretical foundation and its conclusions and findings must have an impact on the broader scientific field.
- The scientific contribution and originality of the thesis must be presented briefly but clearly in the thesis abstract and analyzed to a greater extent in the main part of the thesis.

For all details about the structure of the doctoral thesis see the document Guide: **Dissertation Layout Guidelines**. For the case that the partner university has strict guidelines regarding the format and length of a doctoral dissertation, which the candidate must adhere to.

However, it is **NOT** possible to hand in a cumulative dissertation as a compilation of several articles touching on a similar topic.

It is imperative to adhere to the rules of one's own discipline. The supervisor(s) should be consulted when deciding which style needs to be used e.g. APA. The doctoral dissertation must be written in **English** and must comply with international standards of the discipline.

9.4 Examination Boards & Reviewers/opponents

The oral presentations, monitorings, hearings and the final PhD defence is assessed by the PhD Assessment Committee.

At least three-member -committee is appointed by the Head of Consortium in discussion with the lead supervisor and/or deputy supervisors. The members of the committee must be recognised researchers in the relevant field and at associate professor (reader) or senior researcher level or higher. All members must be external to the university of the supervisor(s). Nobody from the supervision team may act as an assessor of the defence.

External reviewers (opponents) of the thesis may be members of the examination board as long as they meet the other criteria (i.e. Habilitation or equivalent). The lead supervisor has to join the defence to answer questions regarding the work but remains without voting right regarding the grade for the defence and must not write the protocol of the meeting.

One of the members is appointed as chairperson to reside over the defence meeting. Immediately after having appointed the members of the assessment committee, the administrative office must inform the PhD student and the supervision team thereof. The PhD student is entitled to object to the appointments within one week after being informed. The objection must be in writing to the Head of Consortium stating the reasons for the objection. The date, time and venue of the defence meeting will be communicated in writing not later than 4 weeks prior to the defence to the student, board members and supervision team by the PhD administrative office. The student and all board members must confirm their attendance.

All members of an examination board must be present throughout the defence or examination. The chair person is responsible for the orderly process of the defence or examination and must ensure that a protocol (minutes) are written.

The discussion and vote on the final mark of the defence or examination by the board members must take place immediately after the defence or examination in a private meeting. The chairperson votes last. Members of the supervision team are not allowed during the discussion.

The preparation of reviews for doctoral theses is carried out in accordance with the guidelines for safeguarding good scientific practice. The following principles apply to the preparation of reviews within Consortium:

- Reviewers must be impartial, conflicts of interest must be declared.

- The necessary expertise and specialist knowledge for the preparation of the report must be available.
- Data protection and confidentiality must be observed.
- Reviews must be comprehensible and understandable.
- The thesis must be assessed clearly and in detail, including all essential sub-areas. In the event of ambiguities, clarification must be sought with the head of Consortium.

The preparation of expert reports (peer review) on the submitted thesis or work follows the Best Practices for PhD Training (2017), the Salzburg II emphasis on peer review as basis of doctoral education (EUA 2010, 2.7) and good international practice (Barnett et al., 2017).

10. Academic Degree

After the successful completion of all academic and other requirements, doctoral students are awarded the internationally recognised academic degree 'Doctor of Philosophy' (PhD) with a single joint document of the Consortium in a closing ceremony, which usually takes place in Eisenstadt, Austria on behalf of all partner universities in the Consortium.

11. End of Doctoral Studies

The degree programmes end after all 180 ECTS according to the joint curriculum are successfully completed and all tuition, publication and graduation fees are paid. If this were not to be the case, the study ends without an academic award.

12. Degree Exit Documents

According to Anlage 2 zu § 6 Abs. 1 der Verordnung über die Evidenz der Studierenden (Universitäts-Studienevidenzverordnung 2004 - UniStEV 2004) a Joint Diploma and Diploma Supplement is issued to all graduating students who successfully completed these doctoral degree programmes.

13. Ethics code

Doctoral students agree to uphold a standard of honesty, integrity and mutual respect. This behavior is expected of all students in direct, indirect and virtual interactions and includes the following points in particular:

- Students do not reject anyone on the basis of nationality, color, creed, place of birth, gender, or any other reason that could be considered unfair or discriminatory.
- Students behave respectfully, politely and courteously towards their fellow human beings.
- Students see themselves as part of a team and act as members of a community.
- Students live up to the trust placed in them to the best of their knowledge and belief.
- Students acquire knowledge through their own strength and effort and never use unauthorized aids in performance assessments. Behavior that is deemed unethical, illegal or otherwise reprehensible by other students, lecturers or employees of the DOCTORATE or cooperation partner universities within the meaning of the Code of Ethics, so that it is not compatible with the defined standards of conduct, can lead to the imposition of a reflection period or to an

"exclusion for non-academic behavior". Examples of such conduct include threatening or harassing behavior, bullying, lying, theft, fraudulent examination results and other improper behaviour.

13.1 Complaint handling procedure

Within these doctoral joint programmes, the complaints handling procedure is INTEGRATED and harmonised one within the Consortium.

- Consortium tries to avoid challenging complaints, but tries to manage them (if there are any) harmonized, in a joint and integrative way, i.e.
- All doctoral students (but also professors and supervisors) are animated to bring any matter to our attention.
- Complaint can be made in person, by phone, by email or in writing. Or in a discussion with the Head of Consortium.
- All complaints are registered, all details recorded.
- The students are expected to provide their constructive feedback (either in evaluations of teaching modules or within students talks or within their annual progress reports, evaluating their supervisors and themselves) : but all facts are additionally investigated.
- Within Consortium we try to fix and resolve the problem individually with rector or vice-rector or any person involved as soon as possible (if possible, within one working day).
- Following up properly, we act quickly and: either offer an apology or offer politely solutions.
- Head of Consortium shares actionable feedback with all the representatives of the universities (if and when necessary).
- The last step is the improvement of the situation (lessons-learned).

13.2. Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee will be (in case of necessity) appointed by the Head of Consortium. The committee consist of five members two of which are the rector of one of the partner universities and the Dean of one of the partner faculties. The remaining members are selected from the appropriate university staff. The impeached student is informed about date, time and venue of the committee meeting as well as about the information that will be presented by the Faculty Dean at the meeting. At the meeting, the Faculty Dean makes the case and the accused student has the right to question the complainant and to present useful information.

The Disciplinary Committee may reach the following decisions:

- A: The case is discontinued and the complained will not further pursued.
- B: A period of reflection is imposed on the accused student and a set of behavioural rules must be adhered to with the aim to solve the matter in question. The result of this process will be reviewed by the university management.
- C: The impeached student is deregistered from the university due to non-academic behaviour.

The decision by the committee must be reported in a written protocol that is communicated by Consortium to the university management and the student. In case of the deregistration (outcome C), the affected student has the right to object to this decision in writing or in person to Consortium within a fortnight (14 days).

14. Validity

The current version of the Study and Examination Regulations comes into effect at September 15, 2024 and applies to the entire duration of studies and to all doctoral students (unless otherwise provided for individual years) and is published on the Doctorate Website and on the website of all partner universities.

15. References

- Barnett J.V., Harris R.A. and Mulvany M.J. (2017) A comparison of best practices for doctoral training in Europe and North America. FEBS Open Bio. 7(10): 1444-1452
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- European Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training (2011) Available at: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/policy_library/principles_for_innovative_doctoral_training.pdf
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