

PhD program at the Vetmeduni Vienna

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1. Objectives of the PhD program

- 1.1. The international PhD program of the Vetmeduni Vienna is dedicated to the highest standards of training with the aim of providing PhD students with the opportunity to develop into successful young scientists. The operational language of the PhD program is English.
- 1.2. The minimum duration of the PhD program is 3 years which is equivalent to 180 ECTS credits.
- 1.3. After successful completion of the PhD studies and following satisfactory performance in the PhD examination, the academic degree of "Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD) is awarded by the Vetmeduni Vienna.

2. Admission to the PhD program

- 2.1. All recruitment will be in line with the European Charter for Researchers, which will provide the overarching framework of guidelines and requirements for the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of both the PhD students, their employer and advisors. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers will be the guiding set of principles followed and will ensure selection procedures are fair and transparent.
- 2.2. The PhD program at the Vetmeduni Vienna is open to students who have successfully completed University studies (comprising 300 ECTS credits) in the field of Veterinary Medicine, Life Sciences or related disciplines.
- 2.3. The admission of outstanding students with a university degree comprising less than 300 ECTS credits is possible.
- 2.4. The application documents should be submitted to the prospective future PhD advisor and include the following documents:
 - informal application for a PhD position at the University indicating the personal qualifications and motivation for the PhD program as well as the fields of scientific interest and expectations regarding the future professional career;
 - curriculum vitae
 - certificates
 - statement about the knowledge of English
- 2.5. After consultation with other members of the vetmeduni vienna, the primary PhD advisor selects the most suitable candidate among the applicants. The details of the selection procedure are left to the primary PhD advisor.

2.6. For final approval by the PhD curricular committee the selected applicant will submit the following documents:

- a letter of the PhD advisor, specifying the topic of the research project, commitment to provide scientific supervision, laboratory and office space and funding for three years.
- a description of the planned research project of no more than 4 pages presenting the current state of research in the given research area and the project scheme including a German and English title (in agreement with the PhD advisor); thus specifying the challenging nature of the research project and the expected scientific impact;

2.7. New PhD students can be admitted only at the beginning of every term.

3. Bodies of the PhD program at the Vetmeduni Vienna

3.1. PhD curricular committee

The PhD curricular committee, appointed by the senate of the vetmeduni vienna, is the responsible curricular committee according to § 25 (8) 3 UG 2002.

The PhD curricular committee consists of two representatives of each of: 1) full professors, 2) associate, assistant professors and group leaders, 3) PhD students. The Vice-Rector for Research, the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs are co-opted. A speaker and vice-speaker are elected by the PhD curricular committee.

The PhD curricular committee approves the PhD committee for each PhD student.

In the case of conflict between PhD advisor and student, the PhD curricular committee will moderate the conflict.

3.2. PhD Committee

This board consists of at least two scientists with a habilitation or an equivalent scientific qualification. At least one PhD advisor needs to be a faculty member of the Vetmeduni Vienna.

The PhD committee has the following duties:

- 1) Teaching: advises the PhD student on the most appropriate course work
- 2) PhD project: Supervision, individual guidance and monitoring of the PhD student's progress. Participation in the PhD committee meetings and evaluation of the annual progress reports.

- 3) PhD thesis: Guidance and support during the writing of the PhD thesis. Evaluation of the PhD thesis.

3.3. PhD students

PhD students have the following rights:

- highest standards in supervision and tuition
- payment of a salary for three years
- adequate laboratory and desk space
- adequate courses, including a weekly journal club and a seminar series
- access to all material necessary for the defined project
- referral to the PhD committee in cases of dispute with their primary advisor
- PhD students should be given the opportunity to present their results in front of an international audience

PhD students have the following duties:

- In order to complete their thesis in due time, PhD students are expected to dedicate themselves fulltime to the PhD program. Otherwise the duration of the PhD will be extended by the corresponding time, however, without entitlement for continued salary.
- The attendance of courses, writing of PhD thesis, administrative work and teaching activities of the student are not part of the working hours as specified in the employment contract.
- The PhD student commits herself/himself to the rules of good scientific practice (i.e.: adherence to good scientific practice of the vetmeduni vienna).
- The PhD student agrees not to share any data, material or other results with parties other than members of the laboratory of the PhD advisor, unless explicit consent is given.
- Active participation of the PhD student in adequate courses, including a journal club and a seminar series is mandatory.
- PhD student need to keep a lab protocol book, which will remain with the university.

4. Training program

The PhD program of the Vetmeduni Vienna relies heavily on training by research, and offers courses and seminars to an equivalent of 23 ECTS distributed over three years. The training of PhD students encompasses both scientific training and complementary skills courses. The training provided by the Vetmeduni Vienna aims interdisciplinary in nature with focus on scientific rigor, and the ability to work in a team of scientists with backgrounds in different research areas.

4.1. coursework (23 ECTS)

Based on the recommendations of the PhD committee, the student is required to attend courses with an equivalent of 23 ECTS. The courses can be taken either at the Vetmeduni Vienna or at other universities. The courses need to include a weekly journal club, scientific seminar series, complementary skills, as well as specialized courses.

4.2. teaching (2 ECTS)

PhD students are required to assist during the teaching of course(s) at the vetmeduni vienna. Preference is given to courses related to the topic of the PhD project. If possible the teaching activities could be in the form of tutors.

4.3. PhD project (155 ECTS)

5. Supervision

- 5.1. An essential element of the PhD program are PhD committees, which supervise the progress of each student throughout his/her graduate work. The committee serves a central role in helping the student to formulate a “Personal Career Development Plan”, which specifies the training needs, complementary skills and the scientific objectives of the thesis.
- 5.2. The primary PhD advisor, who has continuous interaction with the PhD student, will monitor the immediate progress.
- 5.3. Each student has an annual committee meeting, which includes a public seminar by the PhD student summarizing the progress of the PhD work. Two weeks before the committee meeting the student submits a written progress report, which is discussed at the meeting. External thesis committee members will also be able to participate through a SKYPE or telephone conference if their schedule does not allow their attendance at the committee meeting. Students will receive feedback on all their reports from all committee members. The PhD committee briefly reports to the PhD curricular committee about the outcome of the annual committee meeting.
- 5.4. The PhD students are guided by their PhD advisors and hold at least one progress report meeting with their PhD committee in addition to the annual evaluation outlined in 5.3.
- 5.5. One important quality control element is the first year evaluation, which is designed to ensure that the student has the potential to successfully complete the PhD program. In the case of a unanimous vote by the PhD committee in favor of the continuation of the PhD, the contract given for the first year is extended.
- 5.6. After the student has passed the PhD examination supervision of the PhD student ends. The final examination has to be taken no more than five years after starting the

PhD studies. In cases where there have been extenuating circumstances the PhD curricular committee may accept exceptions.

6. PhD Examination

6.1. Admission

After completion of the PhD program, i.e. normally at the end of the third year, the PhD examination is held by the PhD committee. Upon application for the PhD examination, the PhD student has to provide the following documents:

1. Proof of successful attendance of the courses and seminars according to the individual study program
2. A cumulative thesis must be submitted, based on at least two publications with the student as first author or shared first author in internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals. At least one publication has to be published in a high-ranking journal (in the upper 30% of the impact factor ranked journals in the corresponding research discipline). Accepted papers are also considered. The publications have to be thematically related and complemented, in terms of a cumulative thesis, by a detailed description of the research topic, a comprehensive summary and a discussion of achieved results with a joint title in German and English. In the thesis the student has to indicate for each manuscript her/his contribution in planning, accomplishment, analysis and manuscript writing.

In very exceptional cases a PhD thesis could be submitted if the student has less than two publications. The PhD curricular committee will decide about such exceptions based on the independent statements of the student and the two PhD advisors explaining why it was not possible to obtain two publications during the PhD. The primary advisor also needs to sketch a plan on how to publish the results obtained in the thesis.

6.2. Assessment of the PhD thesis

The PhD curricular committee evaluates the PhD thesis based on:

the written reports of 1) the PhD advisors 2) an external examiner, who is identified by the PhD committee. The reports are independent of each other and include a concluding assessment of the thesis and a final grade (1-5).

6.3. PhD defence (disputation)

The PhD defence consists of a public presentation of at least 30 minutes and in English by the PhD student on the research project, followed by a public discussion of the project of at least 15 minutes. The disputation should take at least 45 minutes, yet not exceeding 75 minutes. In cases where the student fails the examination, three further attempts are possible. In case of repeated failure to pass the examination, it will be concluded that the

student has failed the PhD examination. The PhD curricular committee is then notified about the examination result.

Following the defence the PhD curricular committee determines the overall result of the PhD student with regard to the assessment of both the thesis (see 9.) and the disputation and will award a final grade (1-5).

7. Conferment of the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

- 7.1. After successful completion of the PhD examination and filling in the PhD program questionnaire the Vetmeduni Vienna confers the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the student.
- 7.2. An official document in German and English on the conferment of the doctoral degree is issued.
- 7.3. The conferment entitles the graduate to hold the academic degree of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy).

8. Annex 1:

Distribution of ECTS credits:

Course work (planned individually for each student by the PhD committee) 23 ECTS

Teaching assistance 2 ECTS

Research work 155 ECTS

Total sum 180 ECTS