

# Curriculum of the PhD Studies at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

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## Preamble

The curriculum of the PhD studies at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (Vetmeduni Vienna PhD) follows Austrian university legislation (2002 Universities Act, Universitätsgesetz 2002/UG 2002) and the statutes of the Vetmeduni Vienna (Satzung der Veterinärmedizinischen Universität Wien).

# 1. General Rules, Objectives and Organization of the PhD Studies at the Vetmeduni Vienna

The PhD studies at the Vetmeduni Vienna is a comprehensive scientific education programme (PhD Programme) in accordance with UG 2002 §54 that enables graduates to generate new knowledge and to become competitive junior scientists with the degree “Doctor of Philosophy” (PhD).

The minimum duration of the PhD studies is 3 years and requires training equivalent to 180 ECTS.

The main subject of the PhD studies at the Vetmeduni Vienna is a research project supervised by experts in the respective field complemented by an academic course work. International peer review processes are in place to ensure good scientific practice and high scientific quality.

Research conducted by the PhD candidate is expected to promote the University’s scientific profile.

The official language of the PhD studies at the Vetmeduni Vienna is English.

## 1.1. Curricular Commission for Postgraduate Studies

The Curricular Commission for Postgraduate Studies is appointed by the Senate of the Vetmeduni Vienna and is responsible for developing the curricula for doctoral and PhD studies according to the 2002 Universities Act §25(8).

## 1.2. Rectorate

The Rectorate decides on all aspects of approval of PhD projects, admission of PhD candidates, monitoring of progress and the selection of reviewers.

For these operational decisions, the Rectorate may consult the Curricular Commission for Postgraduate Studies.

## 1.3. Office for Postgraduate Studies

The Office for Postgraduate Studies (PST) is responsible for the administration of the PhD programme and handles all issues regarding the course of studies for individual PhD candidates.

## 1.4. PhD Advisory Board

The PhD Advisory Board supervises the PhD candidate and the research project.

Structure of the PhD Advisory Board

- The PhD Advisory Board comprises of a minimum of two experts who act as supervisors.
- The primary supervisor recruits the second supervisor. The second supervisor cannot be part of the same organizational unit as the first supervisor.
- At least one expert holds the habilitation or an equivalent scientific qualification approved by the Rectorate.
- At least one expert is a member of the Vetmeduni Vienna.

#### Function of the PhD Advisory Board

- Selection of the PhD candidate.
- Design of the PhD supervision agreement.
- Guidance and support of the PhD candidate in all aspects of research and training; the primary supervisor has continuous interaction with the PhD candidate and monitors the ongoing progress.
- Organization of public presentation and interim evaluation. Evaluation of the PhD candidate's progress in research and course work and granting of ECTS.

### 1.5. PhD Examination Board

- PhD Examination Board is appointed by the Rectorate and consists of at least two independent reviewers, one has to be extramural. Intramural examiners should not be part of the same organizational unit as the first supervisor. The PhD Examination Board evaluates and grades the PhD thesis and the PhD defence.

## 2. Admission to the PhD Studies at the Vetmeduni Vienna

### 2.1. General Remarks

Admission to the PhD studies is a two-step process. The first step comprises the project approval. Following successful project approval, the second step includes the admission of the candidate and contract details. Enrollment of PhD candidates is done in accordance with Austrian legislation and international standards and regulations.

The PhD studies at the Vetmeduni Vienna are open to graduates who have successfully completed university studies comprising 300 ECTS credits or equivalent academic qualification.

Admission of PhD candidates with a university degree comprising less than 300 ECTS credits is possible if they have shown outstanding performance. Exemptions are decided by regulations of the Rectorate according to UG 2002 §64.

### 2.2. Project Application and Approval

The PhD Programme at the Vetmeduni Vienna can only be accessed in conjunction with a research project that covers project- and employment costs for at least three years.

Table of required documents

Required documents	Peer reviewed projects	Non-peer reviewed projects
PhD project application form	X	X
Curricula vitae of PhD Advisory Board members	X	X
Detailed project description: Title, abstract and description of the planned PhD project (5 pages)		X
Confirmation of funding and employment for 3 years		X
Suggestions for independent reviewers (3)		X

Non-peer reviewed projects:

- The project description is evaluated by two experts in the field, at least one is extramural.
- The Rectorate appoints the experts.
- The evaluation process and the project are approved by the Rectorate and the Curricular Commission for Postgraduate Studies.

Peer reviewed projects:

- All required documents have to be submitted to the Office for Postgraduate Studies. The Rectorate decides on the approval of the PhD project.

Personal fellowships:

- PhD projects of applicants with a personal fellowship from national or international sources require an approval by the Rectorate and Curricular Commission for Postgraduate Studies.

## **2.3. Enrollment of the PhD Candidate**

The most suitable PhD candidate is selected by the PhD Advisory Board. Reasons and criteria for selection have to be laid down in the admission documents. Admission documents have to be submitted to the Office for Postgraduate Studies by the PhD candidate. The Rectorate decides on the admission of the PhD candidate.

### **2.3.1. Admission Documents**

- Admission for PhD Programme
- Supervision agreement (includes contract details with personal data)
- Diploma degree or authenticated equivalent
- Curriculum vitae of the PhD candidate

## 3. PhD Programme

### 3.1. PhD Candidate

In addition to UG 2002 §59 the following rights and obligations apply to PhD candidates

- The PhD candidate commits herself/himself to the rules of good scientific practice and good data management.
- PhD candidates are expected to spend 40h/week on their PhD studies.
- PhD candidates reveal their intended project in a public presentation of 15 min within the first 12 months after enrollment.
- PhD candidates report their progress to their PhD Advisory Board at least once a year.

### 3.2. PhD Research Project

The PhD Advisory Board evaluates the scientific progress of the PhD candidate at least once a year.

The PhD research project accounts to an equivalent of 165 ECTS consisting of:

Titel	ECTS
Project presentation	50 ECTS
Interim evaluation	50 ECTS
PhD thesis	15 ECTS
PhD defence	50 ECTS

The 165 ECTS of the research project are complemented by 15 ECTS of course work.

#### 3.2.1. Project Presentation

PhD candidates reveal their project to the advisory board in a presentation of 15 min within the first 12 months after enrollment.

Based on the outcome of the project presentation, the PhD Advisory Board recommends the continuation of the PhD study and suggests if required modifications of aims and work plan. The report of the public project presentation has to be submitted to the Office for Postgraduate Studies. In case the PhD Advisory Board does not recommend the continuation of the PhD project, the Rectorate is consulted.



### 3.2.2. Interim Evaluation

The interim evaluation is organized by the PhD Advisory Board at the end of the second year and includes:

- A report covering the PhD candidate's scientific progress within the PhD project (max. 3 pages)
- An oral presentation on the PhD's candidate scientific progress (30 min)
- Discussion and evaluation of the scientific progress
- Evidence of attended course work
- The interim evaluation is documented; the interim evaluation report must be submitted - together with the progress report of the candidate - to the Office for Postgraduate Studies

Based on the outcome of the interim evaluation, the PhD Advisory Board recommends the continuation of the PhD study and suggests modifications of aims and work plan if necessary. The Rectorate supervises the interim evaluation report.

### 3.2.3. Course Work

For the professional development of the PhD candidate course work equivalent to at least 15 ECTS is required for the admittance to the PhD defence.

- Courses consist i.e. of journal clubs, seminar series, practical training, lab rotations, guest lectures, active participation at congresses and didactic training.
- Courses can be selected from the postgraduate training programme offered by the Vetmeduni Vienna as well as all national and international universities and equivalent research institutions.
- Attendance of course work has to be documented.
- The Office for Postgraduate Studies approves the successful completion of the course work with 15 ECTS granted.

## 3.3. Compatibility of PhD Programme with other Doctoral Studies

### Admission to the PhD programme

Internal:

Candidates who are enrolled in the "Doktoratsstudium Veterinärmedizin" can change to the PhD programme. A maximum of two semesters can be accredited and eligible course work needs approval. The application procedure follows 2.2.

Candidates who are enrolled in the PhD Programme and intend to change to the Doktoratsstudium Veterinärmedizin have to submit an application to the Rectorate.

The Rectorate will determine compatibilities.

External:

Candidates who intend to change from a PhD Programme from another national or international university have to fulfil the same criteria as detailed in 2.2.

### 3.4. Submission of the PhD Thesis

#### Requirements:

- At least two peer reviewed publications as first author resulting from the PhD research project. At least one publication must be an original research paper.
- At least one manuscript has to be published or accepted for publication in the top tertile (Z1), the other in the Z1 or Z2 tertiles of the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) listed journals (Web of Science) in respective subject category.
- A maximum of one shared first authorship is accepted. The PhD candidate's qualitative and quantitative contribution to the scientific outcome has to be laid out in detail. All shared first authors with exception of this PhD candidate have to confirm that the publication is not used to meet the requirements for another PhD thesis.
- The formal requirements for the PhD thesis have to comply with Annex 1.

### 3.5. Assessment of the PhD Thesis

- After the consent of the PhD Advisory Board, the PhD thesis is submitted to the Office for Postgraduate Studies.
- Evaluation of the PhD Thesis is subject to the PhD Examination Board.
- The members of the PhD Examination Board provide a justified assessment together with a plausible final grade (1-5) within four weeks
- The Rectorate evaluates the quality of the reviews. Based on the evaluations, the Rectorate decides on the admission of the PhD candidate to the PhD defence.
- The reviews are provided to the PhD Advisory Board and the PhD candidate.

## 4. PhD Defence

The PhD defence is the final step of the PhD Programme and is intended to communicate the PhD candidate's research activities to the public and demonstrate her/his competences to present, discuss and defend scientific results.

### 4.1. Prerequisites for Admission

- Proof of completion of the course work
- Positive evaluation of the PhD thesis

### 4.2. Regulation of the Examination

- The date and location of the PhD thesis defence is announced publicly by the Office of Postgraduate Studies no later than two weeks in advance.
- The PhD defence consists of a public presentation of the research project followed by a scientific discussion. The entire PhD defence should last 60 and no more than 75 minutes.
- The PhD presentation is in English and lasts 30 minutes.
- The PhD Examination Board initiates the discussion followed by the general audience.
- The PhD defence protocol is prepared by the chairperson and signed by the members of the PhD Examination Board.
- The PhD Examination Board agrees on a final grade of the oral PhD defence.
- The PhD defence has to be passed successfully (grades 1-4).
- In case of failure, three attempts to repeat the PhD defence are permitted.
- The PhD defence protocol is approved by the Rectorate.

### 4.3. Grading

#### 4.3.1. Components of the Grading System:

- PhD thesis (70 %)
- PhD defence (30 %)
- Both parts have to be evaluated positively.

The final grade of the PhD will be calculated as follows:

PhD thesis: The individual grades of the three (3) evaluations are summarized and divided by 3. Results ending in a final digit above 5 are rounded up, otherwise (5 or below) they are rounded down. (This is grade **R**)

PhD defence: The individual grades of the three (3) examiners are summarized and divided by 3. Results ending in a final digit above 5 are rounded up, otherwise (5 or below) they are rounded down. (This is grade **E**)

The final/overall grade **G** is calculated as follows:  **$G = R*0.70 + E*0.30$**

The final grade **G** is rounded up if its final digit is above 5, otherwise (5 or below) it is rounded down.

## 5. Graduation

The academic title “PhD” becomes effective with awarding the PhD certificate.

## 6. Effective date

The PhD curriculum is based on UG 2002 §54 (2).

Students who started their PhD studies at Vetmeduni Vienna before the entry into force of the current curriculum are entitled to continue and complete their studies according to the version of the curriculum published in the *Mitteilungsblatt* (University Gazette/Notification Bulletin) of the Vetmeduni Vienna on June 30, 2014.

Independent of this regulation, students who started their PhD studies before the entry into force of the current curriculum are entitled to opt for a change to the new curriculum voluntarily at any time.

# Annex 1

## Cover sheet

- Title of PhD thesis, name of PhD candidate, organizational unit

## Acknowledgements

## Contribution

- List of publications that are part of the cumulative PhD thesis
- The qualitative and quantitative contribution of the PhD candidate to the scientific outcome has to be laid down in detail. Categories are: experimental design, experiments, data analysis, writing of the paper

## Declaration

- The PhD candidate confirms that the rules of good scientific practice have been followed in all aspects.

## Summary

## Introduction

- Overview of the current state of research in the field including the initial hypotheses and aims.

## Manuscripts

- Published manuscript(s) should be provided in the journal layout using the original pdf. Manuscripts in press should be provided as accepted by the journal.

## Discussion & Conclusion

- The PhD thesis should conclude with an overall discussion explaining the outcome of the PhD studies in relation to the initial hypotheses, the suitability of the applied methods and the impact on the field.

## References

Citations should follow the Vancouver guidelines