

Curriculum und modules – Academic doctoral programme¹

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§ 1 Preamble

- (1) The Anton Bruckner University (ABU) cooperates with selected domestic and foreign recognised post-secondary educational institutions in the arts and academia for its doctoral programmes. Doctoral candidates receive supervision from a principal supervisor at the ABU and co-supervision from a supervisor at a domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution.
- (2) In the framework of the academic doctoral programme, the principal supervisor at the ABU must be authorised to teach in an academic capacity (Venia Docendi/postdoctoral lecturing qualification), so too, the co-supervisor at a domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution.
- (3) The academic doctoral programme provides and promotes theoretical understanding and methodological competence at a post-graduate level. The objective of the doctoral programme is the provision of education which goes beyond academic professional training to imparting the ability for independent research. Graduates of the programme know the current state of research in their subject area, can critically analyse different positions in the intersection between research and the arts or arts practice, and are able to develop and work with new research questions with sound methodological approaches.

¹ The original German version is the only legally binding version. (Last update: January 2026)

§ 2 Doctoral committee

- (1) The doctoral committee is responsible for the selection procedure pursuant to § 3. The doctoral committee also advises the relevant university bodies in cases of disputes relating to doctoral programme regulations and their interpretation. Doctoral committee meetings are not public.
- (2) The doctoral committee is comprised of the following members:
 - Those ABU professors with a doctorate or habilitation within the meaning of § 12 para. 1 lit. a. and b. of the Service Regulations who are named in the programme accreditation application to AQ Austria as first supervisors of dissertations at the ABU and who are willing to assume the function of a first supervisor at the ABU (publication of the first supervisors on the ABU website),
 - The Vice-President for Research, as a member of the praesidium,
 - One representative each from the four cooperating educational institutions (University of Art and Design Linz, Paris Lodron University Salzburg, mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Bern University of the Arts).
 - With an advisory vote: Third supervisors of the ABU from the time of appointment by the Vice-President for Research according to § 3 para 3 of the curriculum until the completion of the studies of the student concerned.

The chair shall be assumed by an elected member of the Doctoral Committee from the group of members pursuant to lit. a, and the deputy chair shall be assumed by an elected member of the Doctoral Committee from the group of members pursuant to lit. c.

- (3) The doctoral committee has a quorum when at least half of its members are present. The simple majority of members present is sufficient for resolution. Voting is performed through a secret ballot upon request. In the case of a hung vote, the chair's vote determines the outcome. Abstention is permitted.
- (4) The members of the doctoral committee are bound by non-disclosure.

§ 3 Admission

- (1) Prerequisites for the doctoral programme:

- a. Completion of a subject-appropriate Masters, Diplom², Staatsexamen, or an equivalent course of study at a recognised post-secondary educational institution.
- b. Successful completion of the admissions process, according to § 3, sections 2 to 3.

(2) Admission to the doctoral programme is subject to a qualitative selection process.

Applicants must submit the following materials in either German or English:

- a. a copy of their Master's thesis, Diploma thesis, or Staatsexamen thesis
- b. a motivation letter
- c. a description and documentation of previous academic studies, artistic experience and competencies
- d. a written agreement of a principal supervisor at the ABU and a co-supervisor at a domestic or foreign a post-secondary educational institution.
- e. a concept (research exposé) for the proposed dissertation topic (topic, research questions, methods, literature)

Verification of the qualitative admission requirements is conducted in an admission colloquium before the doctoral committee. In this setting, applicants are to demonstrate their academic potential for the accomplishment of the doctoral programme.

In the admission colloquium, applicants will present their research concept and engage in a subsequent discussion about the research questions, the current state of research and literature, and methods.

(3) Following the admission colloquium, the doctoral committee decides by simple majority on the fulfilment of the qualitative admission requirements by the applicant. In the event of a hung vote, the candidate will not be admitted. The doctoral committee is entitled to set additional examinations that are related to the proposed dissertation topic, and which must be successfully completed within the first two semesters of study. The head of the university admits those applicants proposed by the doctoral committee to the doctoral programme according to available student places.

Following admission to the programme, the Vice-President for Research will appoint the principal- and co-supervisors.³

² A "Diplom" is an academic degree comparable to a Master's in the German-speaking countries Germany, Austria, and Switzerland and a similarly named degree in some other European countries.

³ The general conditions for agreements pertaining to studies to be completed can be found on ABU's homepage: <https://www.bruckneruni.ac.at/de/bewerben/bewerbung/aufnahmebedingungen>

§ 4 Structure and scope of the programme

(1) The academic doctoral programme is comprised of 180 ECTS, which corresponds to a duration of six semesters of full-time study.

(2) The academic doctoral programme is divided into four modules:

Module 1 = Exposé and presentation (12 ECTS)

Module 2 = Doctoral studies seminar, courses (VO, SE), and special academic activities and projects (30 ECTS)

Module 3 = Dissertation (130 ECTS)

Module 4 = Defence (8 ECTS)

§ 5 Programme modules

(1) *Module 1* Exposé and presentation:

The exposé serves to confirm the indispensable research competencies needed to complete the dissertation, and should, ordinarily, be submitted by the end of the second semester. The exposé includes the objectives of the research project, hypotheses, research questions and themes. Through the candidate's choice of research methods, context, and literature review in the chosen research field, it may be ascertained that the doctoral candidate is capable of pursuing his or her research objective.

The submission of the exposé to the Dean of artistic-academic studies must also be accompanied by written statements from the two supervisors.

An oral presentation followed by a discussion of the dissertation project completes the first module. This presentation must be before an examinations commission. The committee consists of first and second supervisors as well as the head of the doctoral programmes and the Dean of artistic-academic studies. The Dean of artistic-academic studies chairs the committee (without voting rights). The role of any third supervisors is exclusively advisory.

The successful completion of module 1 requires a majority decision of the examinations commission, and results in the acceptance of the dissertation topic. If unanimity is not reached, the exposé must be revised and resubmitted.

Should a candidate wish to make a substantial change to their dissertation topic after the successful completion of module 1, the module would need to be repeated.

(2) *Module 2* Doctoral studies seminar, courses, and special academic activities and projects

As part of the doctoral programme, students must complete doctoral studies seminars, courses, special activities, and projects amounting to 30 ECTS in consultation with their supervisor and co-supervisor. The chosen courses should relate to the dissertation topic or complement the methodological approach and are to be determined in the doctoral thesis agreement. The agreement has to be approved by both supervisors and the Dean of artistic-academic studies, at the latest, by the beginning of the third semester. Dependent on resources and possibilities, students are also encouraged to take/undertake courses/projects at the partnering educational institutions.

Upon the request of a supervisor, the Dean of artistic-academic studies may withdraw the topic if the student is in serious violation of responsibilities, as laid out in the doctoral thesis agreement.

(3) *Module 3* Dissertation

The dissertation is to be written in German, however, with the agreement of both supervisors, may be written in English. It must be a newly written work comprising at least 270,000 characters (including spaces; at minimum 150 pages, excluding images, examples scores and musical examples, bibliography, abstracts and appendices). The provisions of the current version of the Copyright Act (Urheberrechtsgesetzes idgF) must be strictly observed in the writing of the dissertation.

With the approval of the doctoral committee and the agreement of the Vice-President for Research, it is permissible to change the principal supervisor, but only before the submission of the dissertation. It is likewise permissible to change the co-supervisor with the approval of body responsible for policies (Dean, Director of Studies, Deputy Head of the University, etc.) at the domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution, but also only before the submission of the dissertation.

The form 'Anmeldung zur Einreichung und Beurteilung der Dissertation' ['Registration for submission and assessment of the dissertation'] must be submitted digitally, including the relevant documents. The reviewers will be contacted by the member of the ABU Rectorate responsible for research. Once the reviewers have agreed to assess the thesis, the doctoral candidate will receive the upload link with all further information on submitting the dissertation. The ABU rectorate member responsible for research will then commission the primary supervisor, secondary supervisor and an external expert with subject specific 'Venia Docendi' [postdoctoral lecture qualification] to prepare their assessments.

Should there be significant reasons to extend this period, the member of the Rectorate

responsible for research may, in consultation and agreement with the relevant body from the domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution, extend the assessment period.

Should the plagiarism check and/or the expert assessment of the supervisors or the external expert reveal that the student has used other intellectual property without identifying it as such, or has otherwise breached the rules of good scholarly practice the dissertation will be negatively assessed. In this case, both principal- and co-supervisors may refuse further supervision.

The assessment reports must be made available to the student in an appropriate form no later than three weeks prior to the defence.

(4) *Module 4* Disputation (Defence)

Registration for the defence is subject to the positive assessment of all courses and projects in modules 1 and 2, as well as the positive assessment of the dissertation (module 3).

The defence will be held before an examination commission, and is a public event. The examination commission consists of the following members:

- a member of the Presidium as chairperson (non-voting);
- first and second supervisors of the student (authorised to vote);
- the external subject representative appointed by the member of the Presidium responsible for research matters (§ 5 para. 3) (authorised to vote).

The defence is the final examination before graduation and involves the defence of the dissertation and examination within a single examination process. This examination includes the topic of the dissertation and associated subjects.

The defence begins with the presentation of the content and results of the dissertation by the student. The supervisors then pose questions to the student with the objective of evaluating the mastery of the subject and the ability to create larger contexts for the subject area. Members of the examinations commission as well as members of the audience may subsequently pose questions to the doctoral candidate, under the moderation of the chair of the examinations commission. The maximum duration of the defence is 90 minutes – approximately 30 minutes for the presentation of the dissertation, and approximately 60 minutes for discussion.

§ 6 Assessment

The completed dissertation must be submitted to the Vice-President for Research in five bound copies, as well as two digital copies (one full version and a copyrighted version for distribution via

the ABU homepage).

The assessment is made in accordance with the study and examinations regulations of the ABU.

Positively assessed dissertations are made publicly accessible in the ABU's university library. Artistic and academic works, or sections thereof, which do not lend themselves to reproduction are exempt from the obligatory publication. Positively assessed dissertations are also to be released to the Austrian National Library for publication. This release may be done electronically, where possible.

At the point of release, the author may request that the exemplars may not be used for a maximum period of five years. The request must be considered by the Vice-President for Research, if the student demonstrates that their legal or economic interests may be jeopardised.

§ 7 Conferring of the academic degree “Doctor of Philosophy” (PhD)

Following positive overall assessment, the Head of the university will confer the degree “Doctor of Philosophy” upon the graduate, if not immediately, within a month.

In support of students' international mobility, the award certificate is accompanied by a Diploma supplement.

Should it be determined, after the positive assessment of the dissertation, that the student has used other intellectual property without identifying it as such, or has otherwise violated the rules of good scholarly practice, the Vice-President for Research will declare the dissertation void, and the President of the university will revoke the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Module overview

Course title	Course Type	SST	ECTS ⁴ per Semester						ECTS total	Contact -hours ⁵ (ECTS)	Independent study ⁶ (ECTS)	TU per semester
			1	2	3	4	5	6				
MODULE 1												
Exposé			8						8		8	
Presentation			4						4		4	
Total Module 1									(12)			
MODULE 2												
Doctoral studies seminar	SE	2	2		2			2	6	3	3	30
Foundations and concepts of research 01 and 02	VO	2	1		1				2	1,5	0,5	30
Methods of research 01	SE	2	2						2	1	1	30
Methods of research 02	SE				2				2	1	1	
Privatissimum	PV	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	5	1	15
Doctoral collegium	SE	2		2		2		2	6	3	3	30
Special achievements (e.g. subject-relevant courses, active & passive participation at conferences, etc)					2	2	2		6		6	
Total Module 2									(30)			
MODULE 3												
Dissertation									130		130	
MODULE 4												
Disputation									8		8	
TOTAL									180			

⁴ One ECTS credit corresponds to 25 working hours of 60 minutes each.

⁵ The contact hours correspond to the teaching units (TU) in the following manner: 1 TU = 45 min, 15 times per semester

⁶ Independent study includes preparation and follow-up of individual tuition, preparation of presentations, literature research, preparation of the exposé and dissertation, as well as examination preparation.

The special achievements/projects are defined in a supervision agreement at the latest at the beginning of the third semester and approved by the two supervisors and the Dean of Studies for Artistic and Scientific Studies.

As a guideline for ECTS credits awarded to special achievements/projects, the following key applies:

Conference participation (passive)	1 ECTS
Conference participation (active)	3 ECTS
Organisation of a symposium	2 ECTS
Artistic presentation in form of a lecture recital ⁷	5 ECTS
Participation in supplementary courses (SE, VO) at ABU, partner institutions, or other post-secondary educational institutions that make a substantial contribution to the research topic of the doctoral thesis.	The ECTS credits of the respective study plans of the ABU, partner institutions, or other post-secondary educational institutions, apply.
Collaboration on the edition of a scholarly publication	4 ECTS
Collaboration on the preparation of research applications	4 ECTS
Own publications in an academic journal or with an academic publisher ⁸	5 ECTS

⁷ As live-version or in form of a video documentation

⁸ Includes publications on online journals of artistic research such as JAR, the peer-reviewed “Journal for Artistic research” (<https://www.jar-online.net/>)