Study Regulations
Doctor of Philosophy in Business and Socioeconomic Sciences

Decided on **15 October 2026**, by the University Senate

Due to the accreditation as a private university (decision of the Austrian Accreditation Council on 12 July 2007, according to the university accreditation law, BGBl. I No. 168/1999 as amended), the University Senate of Modul University Vienna decreed the following study regulations, according to Art. III §12 (12) of the University Constitution.

§ 1 Ambit

These study regulations oversee the admission criteria, the structure of the study program, and the examination requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy study program 540 at Modul University Vienna.

§ 2 Goal of the Degree

The PhD degree is awarded upon the completion of university studies at its highest level. Through course exams, Prelim Assessments, defense of the proposal, and the dissertation, students demonstrate that they have acquired the necessary skills for designing and conducting creative and high-quality research relevant to academic, private, or public organizations. Graduate must have demonstrated the ability to communicate their research findings through teaching and writing.

§ 3 Degree of Completion

After the successful completion of the study program, the following academic degree will be conferred:

Doctor of Philosophy in Business and Socioeconomic Sciences

The short form of this degree is: **PhD**

§ 4 Admission to the Study Program

(1) Admission to the PhD study program is granted to those who have completed at least the equivalent of a bachelor's degree and master's and/or diploma degree with a minimum

combined duration of at least four years. Applicants must demonstrate aptitude for conducting high quality research and for making significant scholarly contributions to knowledge in the field of business or one of the social or economic sciences. Selection will be based upon transcripts of courses taken and grades received at previous universities and other educational organizations, as well as letters of recommendation. The fit between the applicant's area of research interest and the interests of the university's faculty members will also be a factor in the admission's decision.

(2) Applicants who do not completely fulfill the requirements in §4 (1) can qualify upon receiving credits from Modul University's MSc courses.

(3) It is possible to apply without proof of a graduate university degree if the applicant has completed all the course work of a school which prepares one for doctoral-level studies. In this case, a written declaration or equivalent documents have to be presented upon registration. The proof of the definitive completion of the qualification as outlined in § 4 (1) is to be presented no later than the end of the first study year at Modul University Vienna.

(4) To assure a high quality of the PhD study program at Modul University Vienna the applicant has to get the approval of thesis supervision in one of the specialization areas offered at Modul University Vienna [see § 6(2)] prior to the final admission.

(5) Academic documents that are not in the German or English language must be accompanied by a certified translation.

(6) All applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of their proficiency in the English language through one of the following tests, of which the test results may not be older than 2 years.

The minimum scores are:

- TOEFL: average of 5.0
- IELTS: overall band score between 7 and 7.5 with no sub-score below 6.0; or
- Cambridge C1 Advanced, min. Grade C (180)

Exceptions will be considered for students who have completed their **graduate studies entirely in English at universities that are recognized in Austria**. However, the admissions committee maintains the authority to request any additional evidence of English proficiency if deemed necessary.

The Admissions Committee may decide upon the recognition of other evidence of language skills if they are at the same level.

(7) Additional Documents required for Admission:

- Résumé and a statement of research and career interests.
- Two letters of recommendation from academic references such as a current or former lecturer or research supervisor.

(8) When deemed necessary, the Admissions Committee may conduct an interview with the applicant, either in person, in a video meeting, or over the telephone. The interview serves to clarify unanswered questions raised during the application process, ensures that the applicant's expectations are in line with the program's offerings, and aids in making a final admissions decision.

(9) Study and examination credits can be obtained as outlined in the Examination Regulations of Modul University Vienna (ER §2).

(10) The Admissions Committee decides about a student's admission to the study program.

§ 5 Structure of the Studies, Format, and Duration of Studies

(1) The regular duration of the study program is eight semesters.

(2) All lectures, course work, and examinations are held in the English language.

(3) The study degree program is offered in hybrid study format: Students have to notify the lecturer at the latest in the previous class whether they will participate online or on campus. However, on-campus presence of all students is required for the attendance week that will take place in the last week of each semester. Remote students will have the same learning and studying conditions as on-campus students, except that they will attend classes via an online collaboration tool instead of being physically present in class. Remote students' participation in class is recorded and counts in the same way as for on-campus students.

(4) During the course of the studies, a thesis must be completed.

(5) The degree is conferred when a PhD candidate (1) has successfully completed at least 60 ECTS from among the required courses and exams (as scheduled in § 8) and (2) has received a passing grade on the defensio dissertationis [§ 6 (13)].

(6) Upon application of the student, the Dean can grant a leave of absence. During this period, the student's tuition fees are suspended, and they are not able to take exams or attend courses. All other effects of the suspended study activity are the student's responsibility. The application for the leave, which must also include the planned duration of the leave, has to be submitted at least one month prior to start of the leave's first semester. The maximum duration of the leave of absence is two semesters. Multiple leaves of absence are possible; however, the maximum duration of leave allowed in total is 4 semesters.

§ 6 Doctoral Thesis

(1) A prerequisite for the successful completion of the study program and the acquisition of the degree is the completion and positive assessment of a thesis which should demonstrate that the student is capable to independently solve scientific problems. The thesis can either take the form of a single-authored monograph or of a cumulative dissertation, a compilation of at least three journal article-length papers linked as part of a focused research area. For a cumulative dissertation, at least one article needs to be single-authored. In case of a co-authorship, the contribution of the candidate must be clearly documented and justify the recognition as a fully adequate achievement. However, the performance in total needs to be equivalent to the production of three single-authored papers. The student's work must be of a quality acceptable for publication as judged by the doctoral committee. The thesis has to be written according to the style and standards of a scholarly work. All articles must have been submitted to a journal and subject to a review, but not necessarily accepted for publication.

(2) The topic of thesis, which can be proposed by the supervisor or the student, must be assigned to one of the following subject areas:

- Information Systems
- Marketing
- Sustainable Development, Management, and Policy
- Service Innovation, Recreation, Leisure, and Tourism

(3) Each student must be supervised by a professor who holds a habilitation or equivalent qualification (Full or Associate Professor) for the subject area the thesis has been assigned (§ 10 (2)). The supervisor is normally an internal faculty member. However, an external scholar with a habilitation or its equivalent qualification can be appointed by the Dean. The supervision can be shared with another supervisor.

(4) It is the discretion of the Dean to decide on the announcement of the thesis title, the appointing of the professor(s) who will supervise the student, and the naming of the other members of the doctoral committee.

(5) The doctoral committee consists of the supervisor(s) and at least one external and two internal professors who hold a habilitation or its equivalent qualification (Full or Associate Professor). Members of the doctoral committee can join remotely.

(6) The thesis shall be written in the English language.

(7) The student has to submit a document (research proposal) which includes detailed information on the planned dissertation. In particular, it must include information about the state of the area of research, the research question(s), why the question is a significant one, a review of relevant literature, a detailed description of the theoretical and methodological approach, a preliminary hypothesis, and a discussion of the significance of the anticipated results. The proposal shall ideally reflect the achievements at the end of the planning phase, but before the start of actual empirical or analytical work, typically to be presented in the second year of studies. If it is not presented by the end of the third year of studies the termination of a study contract will be discussed in the semester conference.

(8) The research proposal has to be submitted to the academic office 4 weeks before the defense. Before the evaluation commences, each member of the doctoral committee can request an examination if the manuscript meets the linguistic and formal standards of the university by the Dean.The research proposal has to be made electronically available to the MU community for at least one month. After this period, the research proposal will be evaluated and assessed by the doctoral committee. In the case that the research proposal does not meet the linguistic and formal standards of the university, the student will be offered the opportunity to improve and resubmit the proposal within 3 months otherwise the proposal will be assessed negatively. If parts of a proposal are submitted for review to the supervisor and these parts are not acceptable, the proposal can be negatively assessed by the supervisor even before the defense.

(9) A research proposal must be positively assessed by all members of the doctoral committee but one; otherwise, it will be negatively assessed. Upon acceptance, the assessment will state “research proposal accepted.” In case of rejection, the assessment will state “research proposal not accepted.”

(10) Each member of the doctoral committee provides constructive feedback for the further development of the dissertation. In case of a negative assessment, members of the

doctoral committee will make recommendations on what needs to be improved in order for the research proposal to be considered again. Only one re-submission within 3 months is possible.

(11) In the event of a change in topic or of supervisor, the student must submit a new research proposal.

(12) The final manuscript of the thesis has to be made electronically available to the MU community for at least one month. Then it has to be defended (defensio dissertationis) on campus in front of the doctoral committee before being bound and submitted. For the application of the defensio dissertationis, the student must have positively completed all required examinations and courses. Before the oral defense, the Dean may decide on changing the members of the committee after consulting the supervisor and the student. Before the defensio dissertationis commences, each member of the doctoral committee can request an examination of the thesis by the Dean to verify that it meets the linguistic and formal standards set by the university. In the case that the thesis does not meet the linguistic and formal standards set by the university, the student will be offered the opportunity to improve and to resubmit the thesis. The defensio dissertationis will then have to cover the revised manuscript. The defensio dissertationis is open to the public and has to take place on campus. It is announced on the website of the University.

(13) The supervisor and one other member of the doctoral committee must prepare reviews of the dissertation draft before the date of the defensio dissertationis. At least all members of the committee but one have to attend the presentation and discussion of the research proposal and the final defense of the PhD thesis. The defensio dissertationis is evaluated on a 'pass' or 'fail' basis.

(14) After the oral presentation by the student, the doctoral committee will hold an internal discussion to determine whether or not the thesis is positively assessed. For the overall assessment of the PhD thesis all individual grades proposed by the members of the doctoral committee will be added, and the sum must be divided by the number of assessors. Assessments with a decimal value greater than 0.5 are rounded up; otherwise, they are rounded down. If the thesis is assessed negatively by more than one member of the doctoral committee, the overall assessment will be negative. In the event of a negative assessment – in which case the defensio dissertationis is considered failed - the candidate receives written feedback by the committee and the chance to re-submit within a period stipulated by the committee but maximum 12 months. Once the student re-submits the thesis a new defensio dissertationis will take place. The committee will follow the grading procedure. In the event of negative assessment no further re-submission is possible.

(15) After successful completion of Module V, two printed and bound copies and an electronic version of the thesis must be submitted. The printed format must contain a written statement from the student that they wrote the paper independently and has not used any aids other than those stated.

(16) The PhD thesis is, in principle, a publicly accessible document and is archived in both the MU library and the Austrian National Library or published on its internet.

§ 7 Dissertation Planning Meetings and Progress Reports

(1) At the beginning of the studies, the supervisor and student make an agreement which includes the following information:

a) A tentative schedule of an individual study plan that includes the actual type and sequence of courses and examinations (as foreseen in § 8).

b) A binding agreement on the courses and examinations which need to be completed in the forthcoming year. This individual work plan agreement has to be approved by the Dean.

c) A definition of the supervisor's and student's accomplishments expected in the forthcoming year.

d) The date of the next dissertation planning meeting.

(2) Four times during their PhD studies, the student must write a progress report in which they reflect on the objectives agreed upon during the last meeting, and present in the course of the attendance week. The report must include a summary of all major achievements and make a suggestion for steps in the forthcoming academic year. The report serves as the principal document for the revision of the original study plan (§ 7 (1a)) and for developing a new individual work plan for the forthcoming year (§ 7 (1b)) between supervisor and student.

(3) The Dean has to be informed promptly about the outcome of a dissertation planning meeting. The supervisor and the Dean jointly decide whether the progress report is accepted.

(4) Latest one month before the beginning of each Fall semester, the Dean, the supervisor and the student must agree on the courses to be taken in the forthcoming semesters.

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§ 8 Courses and Examinations

During the course of their studies, students must positively complete at least 60 ECTS from among the following courses and examinations:

MODULES	Notes	ECTS	Course Type
MODULE I: Theory Building and Methodology			
Philosophy of Science	required	4	SE
Logic of Social Science Research	required	4	SE
Research Design	required	4	SE
Minimum Number of ECTS required in Module I		**12**	
MODULE II: Research Methods			
Qualitative Research Methods	required	4	SE
Quantitative Research Methods I	required	4	SE
Quantitative Research Methods II		4	SE
Analysis of Causal Relationships		4	SE
Online Data Collection		4	SE
Minimum Number of ECTS required in Module II		8	
MODULE III: Research Seminars* Research Seminars deal with selected topics from the below areas (A1-6). One of the Research Seminars may be replaced by a Reading Course**.			
A1: "Advances in Social Economics"		4	SE
A2: "Advances in Business Research"		4	SE
A3: "Advances in New Media and Information Systems"		4	SE
A4: "Advances in Marketing Science"		4	SE
A5: "Advances in Econometrics"		4	SE
A6: "Advances in Ecological Economics"		4	SE
Minimum Number of ECTS required in Module III		12	
MODULE IV: Research Communication and Collaboration			
Scientific Writing I		4	SE
Scientific Writing II		4	SE
Quality Issues for Publications and Conferences		4	SE
Pedagogical and Didactical Training		4	PT

Research Colloquium		4	SE
Research Conference Presentation		4	PT
Teaching Experience		4	PT
Research Project Participation		4	PT
Minimum Amount of ECTS for MODUL IV		8	
Total number of ECTS required in MODULE I-IV		48	
MODULE V: Subject Examinations			
Participation in Progress Report Conference *The presentation must take place on site during the attendance week*	Four times during the PhD studies		
Research Proposal *The defense must take place on site during the attendance week*		4	
Prelim Assessment		4	
Defensio Dissertationis *The defense must take place on site during the attendance week*		4	
Total number of ECTS required in MODUL V		12	
Thesis		180	
TOTAL ECTS		**240**	

* The choice of research seminars offered varies by semester.
** The student is given the choice to complete either a) Reading Course from Module III **or** b) an additional, 4th research seminar from Module III **provided** the focus of the research seminar reflects the student's area of academic specialization.

§ 9 Types of Examinations

(1) The type and the number of seminars that a student has to take is defined by the supervisor as outlined in § 7. All seminars are conducted by professors who hold a habilitation or its equivalent qualification (Full or Associate Professor).

(2) **Subject Examinations**: Subject examinations include the defenses of the research proposal and the thesis (see § 6 (7-11) and (12-14)) and the Prelim Assessment; they are referred to in the curriculum and the academic record with the abbreviation ES.

(3) The Prelim Assessment assesses the understanding of the foundations and principles of theory building and research methods relevant for the social and economic sciences. The

student can apply for this exam after passing in total 28 ECTS, including Research Design, Quantitative Research Methods I, Qualitative Research Methods, and one more course from Module I. The examiners are appointed by the Dean from the pool of lecturers of these modules. Typically, the Prelim Assessment is taken after the student's third semester. The Prelim Assessment is an open-book assessment, composed of the three subjects Research Design, Quantitative Methods I, Qualitative Methods taking four hours each. It involves critical reflection and practical application of the subjects in writing, and an oral discussion of the written work. Each of the parts must be assessed with a passing grade to pass the Prelim Assessment.

(4) The Defense of the research proposal and final thesis take the form of oral exams. The PhD candidates must present their topics within 30 minutes. After the presentation, the doctoral committee will hold a discussion session with the PhD candidate lasting up to three times the length of the presentation. Defenses are not graded. The doctoral committee only assesses passing grades using the designation "Passed" (P*), or "Passed with Distinction" (PD*).

(5) **Practical Training (PT):** The overarching goal of the practical training is to give the student the possibility to gain insight into practical activities of faculty, work on research projects, participate actively in the scientific community, and gain teaching experience. The PT preferably takes place during the on-campus Attendance Week, but can also be organized online if necessary.

§ 10 Compulsory Courses

(1) The course "Logic of Social Science Research" in Module I "Theory Building and Methodology" is compulsory and must be completed with a positive assessment.

(2) The course "Philosophy of Science" in Module I "Theory Building and Methodology" is compulsory and must be completed with a positive assessment.

(3) The course "Research Design I" in Module I "Theory Building and Methodology" is compulsory and must be completed with a positive assessment.

(4) The course "Qualitative Research Methods" in Module II "Research Methods" is compulsory and must be completed with a positive assessment.

(5) The course "Quantitative Methods I" in Module II "Research Methods" is compulsory and must be completed with a positive assessment.

(6) The Prelim Assessment must be completed with a positive assessment before the defense of the research proposal can occur. In exceptional cases such as evidence of advanced research skills of the candidate, the Dean may waive this condition.

(7) The defense of the research proposal must be completed with a positive assessment before the final defense of the dissertation can take place (defensio dissertationis).

§ 11 ECTS Points

(1) ECTS points (European Credit Transfer System – ECTS, 87/327/ECC, Official Journal no. L 166 from 25 June 1987, CELEX no. 387D0327) are allocated for each course depending on the student workload. In the schedule of studies (§ 8), the corresponding ECTS points for each course are allocated.

(2) Each ECTS credit point corresponds to 25 working hours for the student.

§ 12 Overall Result of the Study Program

The overall assessment is given by the grade percentage average of the course examinations of all courses completed at Modul University Vienna and the thesis. Each course is weighted in correspondence to the acquired ECTS points.

Assessment Scheme

- "With distinction" is awarded for an overall grade percentage average of 90% or higher.
- "With merit" is awarded for an overall grade percentage average between 80% and 89%.
- "Passed" is given for an overall grade percentage average between 60% and 79%.

§ 13 Conferment of Degree

(1) The academic degree of PhD in Business and Socioeconomic Sciences is conferred after successful completion of all Core Courses of the curriculum, the Prelim Assessment, and the thesis and its defense (as outlined in § 6).

(2) Overall, graduates must complete 240 ECTS points in order to obtain a PhD degree at Modul University Vienna. Students are able to transfer course credits from another university or other educational institutions; however, a minimum of 220 ECTS points must be completed at Modul University Vienna.

(3) Graduates will receive the following documents issued in the English language indicating the date on which they were awarded:

a) Doctoral Diploma: The diploma is signed by the President and the Dean and certified by the Modul University Vienna seal.

b) Diploma Supplement: A supplement will be provided in addition to the diploma and explain the international allocation of the completed program. It is signed by the Dean.

c) Transcript of Records: The Transcript of Records contains all courses that have been passed, the respective ECTS credits, and the examination grades achieved. It also includes the student's overall grade point average.

(4) This certifies the awarding of the academic degree by Modul University Vienna.

(5) In the event that a student fails to complete the study program, the student will receive an official Transcript of Records for the course work which they has completed.

§ 14 Semester Conference

In this program, the tasks outlined in § 10 of the MU Examination Regulations and Student Code of Conduct are carried out by a Semester Conference, as specified by the University Constitution (Article XIII. §1-2).

The University Board of Modul University Vienna publicly announces these Study Regulations, which will become effective on 15 February 2027