

Information on Doctoral Studies for External Reviewers / Examiners

The University of Vienna would like to thank you for taking the time to undertake the task of reviewing a doctoral thesis. In doing so, you are making an important contribution to maintaining and improving the standards of quality of postgraduate education at the University of Vienna.

Doctoral Studies at the University of Vienna

The subject of the thesis and the thesis supervisor must be approved by the appropriate academic governing body. (Studienpräses, President for Studies Legislation)

Prior to completion of a thesis, candidates submit an official request for the assignment of reviewers.

Where appropriate and possible, the examiners selected will also include external examiners. Examiners will be members of the appropriate scientific community, have excellent scientific and academic credentials and be either qualified professors or hold an academic qualification equivalent to that of an Austrian professorship (*“Habilitation”*). To guarantee objectivity, there should be no close relationship between an examiner and the candidate – unless the former is also the candidate’s thesis supervisor – and they should not have written any joint publications or be members of the same study group.

Evaluation Procedure

You have agreed to undertake the task of assessing a doctoral thesis for the University of Vienna. Both examiners have received the thesis at the same time and, in accordance with the statute of the University of Vienna, are required to complete their assessments within a period of four months. However, in the interests of the candidate, we kindly request that you keep the assessment period as brief as possible.

As soon as all required documents (see accompanying letter) have reached the responsible *StudienServiceCenter* at the University of Vienna, the candidate can apply for the *viva voce* (*“Defensio/Rigorousum”*) exam. If you would like to receive the thesis in electronic format (PDF), please contact the *StudienServiceCenter* listed in the accompanying letter.

The thesis you have been asked to assess is a scientific work written to attain an academic qualification. It must stand in its own right and can no longer be changed or corrected. The copy of the thesis you have been sent is one of three officially submitted copies, which, upon return and positive assessment, will be published in the university library.

You may find it useful to consider the following points when evaluating the thesis:

- Are the aims of the thesis clearly stated and formulated?
- How broad and consistent is the analysis of the material and sources?
- How broadly is the status of research in the field in question presented?
- Do the experiments correspond to the aims of the thesis?
- Are the research topic, research approach, methodology and methods consistent? Were the correct methods used?
- Are the methods used and approaches taken appropriate?
- Were the results derived logically, controlled correctly and described, analysed and interpreted in accordance with the scientific standards required by international peer-reviewed journals?
- Do the results justify the conclusion(s) drawn?
- Were the results and conclusions discussed in the scientific community?
- Are the literature references correctly cited?
- How good is the candidate’s quality of linguistic expression?
- Has the candidate adequately described any experiments performed?
- Does the thesis augment existing knowledge in its field?
- Does the thesis demonstrate that the candidate can conduct independent scientific research?
- Is it to be expected that any future research work carried out by the candidate independently will meet the standards of his/her scientific community?

The thesis should be assessed on a scale of 1 to 5 in accordance with the Austrian grading system (where 1=very good, 2=good, 3=satisfactory, 4=sufficient, 5=insufficient). In line with the recommendations of the Bologna Follow-up Group, these grades are defined as follows:

Austrian Scale	Grading	Definition
1		VERY GOOD: above-average level of achievement with only a few mistakes
2		GOOD: generally good, solid piece of work
3		SATISFACTORY: corresponds in all respects to average requirements
4		SUFFICIENT: still meets minimum requirements despite any flaws
5		INSUFFICIENT: major improvements are required

Should both examiners grade the thesis positively, the candidate can apply to take the final exam, namely the *viva voce*. If one examiner grades the thesis positively and the other grades it negatively, the *Studienpräses* will appoint a third examiner to assess the thesis. The grade awarded by this third examiner determines whether the thesis has passed or failed.

If the third examiner grades the thesis positively, the candidate can proceed to the *viva voce* exam. However, if the third grade is negative, the thesis will be graded as “insufficient”, and the candidate is not entitled to take the final exam.

He/she now has the possibility of reworking the thesis and resubmitting a modified version which takes account of the examiners’ criticisms. In doing so, the examination process starts again from the beginning.

The author of a thesis must confirm to the University of Vienna in writing that he/she will adhere to the rules of good scientific practice. All theses will also be subjected to a plagiarism check. Should you determine in the course of your evaluation that the rules of good scientific practice have not been adhered to and detect, for example, passages that are identical to other texts, non-cited sources or style inconsistencies, please contact the appropriate *StudienServiceCenter*.

Examination Panel

The Director of Study Programme (Studienprogrammleiter*in) responsible for the respective degree programme nominates the members of the *viva voce* examination panel. However, the candidate also has the right to suggest appropriate members for this panel.

Viva voce panels must be made up of at least three people, usually the two examiners and a chairperson. In most cases, the Director of Study Programme serves as chairperson, but this role can be delegated if required. The reviewer and the examiner do not necessarily need to be the same person (this is determined by the actual curriculum in question).

It is the candidate’s responsibility to arrange a suitable date for the *viva voce* with all parties.

If you have any questions regarding the evaluation procedure, the composition of the examination panel or the examination dates, please contact the responsible *StudienServiceCenter*.

Contact: StudienServiceCenter

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E-Mail:

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Travel Expenses

The University of Vienna actively supports and encourages the participation of external examiners/reviewers in *viva voce* exams and allocates a maximum of € 700 per exam for this purpose to cover any travel costs expenses incurred. This figure is intended as a maximum guideline amount and should, as far as possible, not be exceeded. Similarly, it should not be necessary to claim the full amount in all cases.

The University of Vienna is subject to monitoring by the Austrian Court of Auditors, and the guidelines regarding the submission of travel expense claims must be adhered to in all cases.

The following expenses will be reimbursed	
Arrival / Hotel	Bookings are basically made by the arriving persons, as well as the payment of tickets and hotel bills.
Air travel → Economy Class	Upon submission of the following documents: e-ticket + copy of the bank debit order, boarding pass and invoice
Rail travel → First Class	Upon submission of the ticket and corresponding invoice (if issued)
Travel by car	Upon submission of the fuel bill; Vignette (max. 10 days - invoice)
Transfer costs	Transfers by public transport to the airport/railway station (upon submission of the tickets)
Accommodation	In principle, one or two overnight stays will be covered if the date of the defensio or the arrival requires this. Many hotels in the vicinity of the university locations have special conditions for the University of Vienna. You are free to choose the hotel, but for budgetary restrictions we can only refund invoices that are within the range of max. 100,00 € per overnight stay.

We do not reimburse:

- More than one / two overnight stay
- Mileage costs
- Per diems
- Parking fees
- Meals

Please send your travel expense documents – by **email (PDFs)** - to the office of the Studienpräses upon your return. For billing reasons, it is necessary to provide an **e-mail address as well as the private address** is required.

Your travel expenses will be reimbursed promptly upon receipt of your receipts and **bank account details (IBAN and BIC/SWIFT, account number, sort code, bank name)**.

If you have any questions regarding the reimbursement of travel expenses, please contact the office of the Studienpräses.

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