

The English version of the curriculum for the „Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography“ is not legally binding and is for informational purposes only. The legal basis is regulated in the curriculum published in the University of Innsbruck Bulletin on 17 March 2009, issue 42, No. 179.

Decision of the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty of Geo- and Atmospheric Sciences on 10.02.2009, approved by Senate Decree on 05.03.2009:

On the basis of § 25 para. 1 no. 10 University Organisation Act 2002, BGBl. I (Federal Law Gazette) No. 120, most recently amended by Federal Law BGBl. I (Federal Law Gazette) No. 134/2008 and § 32 Section "Regulations of Study Law", republished in the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 3 February 2006, Issue 16, No. 90, most recently amended by the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 7 May 2008, Issue 42, No. 272, the following is decreed:

Curriculum for the **Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography** at the Faculty of Geo- and Atmospheric Sciences of the University of Innsbruck

§ 1 Qualification profile and programme objectives

- (1) The Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography belongs to the group of studies in the natural sciences.
- (2) The Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography at the University of Innsbruck serves to educate and train junior scientists in the field of geography. Special consideration is given to questions about the relationship between humans and the environment, as well as to the structure and changes of natural and societal systems in their spatial inter-relationships and in different regional contexts.
- (3) Graduates have a sound theoretical and systematic understanding of their research discipline and command the methods employed by research in this field. Through their submission of an original piece of scientific work, graduates of this programme have made their own contribution to research which widens boundaries of knowledge and conforms to the evaluation standards of international experts. The quality and international orientation of the programme promotes the graduates' mobility and broadens their horizon beyond the boundaries of their special field. The key qualifications acquired during the doctoral programme empower graduates to employ their expertise in scientific and non-scientific dialog and to adapt themselves to fast-changing requirements.
- (4) Graduates of the Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography are able to work on topics in the natural and/or social sciences and humanities on a high subject-specific and methodical level. They work in an independent and scientific way and can present and defend their position in scientific discourse. In addition to excellent subject and method competences, students train those general scientific and communicative skills that are necessary for successful scientific careers in an academic, public, and private-business environment. In particular, this includes the following fields of knowledge and skills:

1. Knowledge and understanding:

- comprehensive knowledge of those fields of geography and related disciplines that are relevant for successful work on the dissertation topic
- profound understanding of the significance of global change in natural and societal systems as to its consequences for shaping the future on different spatial scale levels
- profound understanding of societal and spatial developments which are oriented along the principles of sustainability, equally taking into account ecological, economic, social, and socio-cultural concerns
- profound understanding of the special position of geography as modern human/environmental science at the interface of the natural and social sciences, of theories and methodical approaches

2. Practical skills:

- competence in using methods employed in empirical research for spatial data collection, data analysis and interpretation
- skills to research and critically interpret scientific literature and other information, including the use of data bases relevant in the field

3. Communicative skills:

- independent presentation of scientific results according to the rules of good scientific practice
- skill to explain and critically discuss scientific theories, concepts, and research results in scientific discourse with colleagues, a scientifically competent audience, as well as interested laypeople

4. Competences for a career as a scientist:

- scientifically well-grounded, interdisciplinary and solution-oriented thinking
- comprehensive knowledge of the rules governing good scientific practice
- comprehensive competences to write scientific publications
- competence to compile an application for research funding and knowledge of the pertinent national and international research funding organizations
- understanding ethically relevant issues (e.g. methods of data collection, handling personal data, plagiarism) in scientific practice and knowledge of the pertinent standards and solutions

§ 2 Length and scope

The Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography takes three years (six semesters). This equals 180 ECTS credits.

§ 3 Admission

- (1) Valid proof of the necessary academic level for admission to the doctoral programme must be provided. This includes proof of completion of relevant diploma or master programmes, of completion of relevant diploma or Magister programmes at a university of applied science or completion of other equivalent studies at an accredited Austrian or non-Austrian post-secondary educational institution. If equivalency is given in principle, and only a few elements are missing for full equivalency, the rector's office is entitled to combine the determination of equivalency with the obligation to pass certain examinations in the course of the doctoral programme.
- (2) Relevant studies are in any case
 1. the Diploma Programme Geography completed at the University of Innsbruck,
 2. the Academic Teacher Training Programme in the School Subjects Geography and Economic Studies completed at the University of Innsbruck
 3. the Master Programme Geography: Global Change – Regional Sustainability completed at the University of Innsbruck

§ 4 Types of courses and maximum number of students per course

- (1) **Lectures with practical parts** (VU) are courses with continuous performance assessment which combine lecture and practical parts. Maximum number of participants: 6
- (2) **Seminars** (SE) are courses with continuous performance assessment. Content is conveyed through guided self-study programmes. Maximum number of participants: 10
- (3) **Conversation classes** (KO) are courses with continuous performance assessment where supervisors and doctoral students develop the concept of the respective dissertation; they analyze and discuss the results of the research progress on an ongoing basis. Maximum number of participants: 3
- (4) **Special courses** (KU) are courses with continuous performance assessment that focus on scientifically well-grounded training of skills and practical competences or the practical application of scientific knowledge and methods. Maximum number of participants: 10

§ 5 Procedure for the allotment of places in courses with a limited number of participants

Students whose study time will be prolonged if they are not admitted are to be given priority.

§ 6 Mandatory and elective modules

- (1) The following modules – equal to 45 ECTS credits – are mandatory:

1	Mandatory Module: Scientific Literature on Current Research Topics	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
a	SE Seminar on Current Research Topics 1	1	2.5
b	SE Seminar on Current Research Topics 2	1	2.5
	Total	2	5
	Learning objectives of the module: Joint reading of significant scientific texts is the basis for presenting, discussing, and critically analyzing selected current topics at the "forefront of research" in geography. Upon successful completion of the module, students have in-depth insights into central research questions of geography. They receive theoretical, methodical, and subject-related input which they can employ for further developing their own research project.		

	Students also enhance their critical judgment of scientific literature.
	Admission requirements: none

2	Mandatory Module: Concept of Doctoral Thesis	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	KO Conversation Class on the Dissertation Concept; Analysis and Discussion of Research Results 1	1	2.5
	KO Conversation Class on the Dissertation Concept; Analysis and Discussion of Research Results 2	1	2.5
	KO Conversation Class on the Dissertation Concept; Analysis and Discussion of Research Results 3	1	2.5
	KO Conversation Class on the Dissertation Concept; Analysis and Discussion of Research Results 4	1	2.5
	Total	4	10
	Learning objectives of the module: The module serves to present and critically discuss the students' dissertation projects. After the successful completion of the project, students have - in different phases of the research process and in critical discussions with the supervisor of the dissertation project - received important input on the following: theoretical principles, subject-specific position, methodical concept, and empirical realization of the research project; this also includes the analysis and interpretation of research results and the way these results are to be processed.		
	Admission requirements: none		

3	Mandatory Module: Integrative Geography 1	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	VU Integrative Geography 1	2	5
	Total	2	5
	Learning objectives of the module: For the subject-specific "Innsbruck" concept of integrative geography the manifold ecological and socio-economic manifestations and effects of global change and their consequences for sustainable development in a regional context play a central role. The module serves to critically discuss and develop these questions; this takes place in the regular meetings of the research center "Global Change – Regional Sustainability". After the successful completion of the module, students have comprehensive and detailed insights into the basic questions of an integrative understanding of geography. This puts them in a position to critically reflect on and position their own research project in scientific discourse.		
	Admission requirements: none		

4	Mandatory Module: University Course 1	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	KU Course on Special Topics in Geography 1	2	5
	Total	2	5
	Learning objectives of the module: The module requires the students' active participation in a special course on a topic relevant for their research project. Through the – potentially inter-disciplinary – discussion of significant questions with renowned Austrian and international scientists and through continuing education in		

	the area of advanced working techniques, students receive significant subject-related input for positioning their own research project in the field. This course can be completed by participating in a university summer school.
	Admission requirements: none

5	Mandatory module: Active Participation at a Scientific Conference 1	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
a	Active participation in international scientific discourse at a conference or workshop 1	-	5
b	Active participation in international scientific discourse at a conference or a workshop 2	-	5
	Total	-	10
	Learning objectives of the module: The module focuses on the presentation of the student's research results, as a rule in international forums. Corresponding to scientific culture, students learn to expose their research to criticism in subject-specific and interdisciplinary dialog and, as a consequence, are able to position, analyze, and evaluate their research results in a self-critical manner.		
	Admission requirements: none		

6	Mandatory Module: Generic Skills	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	Courses, as defined in the dissertation agreement, equal to 5 ECTS credits must be completed. Additionally, courses are offered which develop didactic skills and competences for subsequent knowledge transfer of the field. Completion of one course from the field of "Equality and Gender" is recommended. Suitable options are marked in the course catalog.	-	5
	Total	-	5
	Learning objectives of the module: After the successful completion of this module, students command advanced theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and competences in selected disciplines, as well as methods and general skills which empower them to pursue independent scientific work and help them succeed in their future careers.		
	Admission requirements: none		

7	Mandatory Module: Doctoral Thesis Defense	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	Final oral dissertation defense before an examination board	-	5
	Total	-	5
	Learning objectives of the module: Presentation, reflection on, and analysis of the dissertation results in the overall context of the doctoral programme; the focus is on summarizing and explaining results of the research project, on presenting the increase in knowledge for the discipline, on demonstrating evaluation and method competences, as well as on presenting the results.		

	Admission requirements: positive completion of all other modules and positive evaluation of the dissertation
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(2) Elective modules equal to 15 ECTS credits have to be completed:

1	Elective Module: Advanced Scientific Literature on Current Research Topics	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
a	SE Seminar on Current Research Topics 3	1	2.5
b	SE Seminar on Current Research Topics 4	1	2.5
	Total	2	5
Learning objectives of the module: The module serves to present, discuss, and critically analyze selected current topics at the "forefront of research" in geography on the basis of joint work on significant scientific texts. After the successful completion of the module, students have in-depth insights into central research questions of geography. They receive theoretical, methodical, and subject-related input which they can employ for the further development of their own research project; they also enhance their critical judgment of scientific literature.			
Admission requirements: none			

2	Elective Module: In-Depth Scientific Literature on Current Research Topics	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
a	SE Seminar on Current Research Topics 5	1	2.5
b	SE Seminar on Current Research Topics 6	1	2.5
	Total	2	5
Learning objectives of the module: The module serves to present, discuss, and critically analyze selected current topics at the "forefront of research" in geography on the basis of joint work on significant scientific texts. After the successful completion of the module, students have in-depth insights into central research questions of geography. They receive theoretical, methodical, and subject-related input which they can employ for the further development of their own research project; they also enhance their critical judgment of scientific literature.			
Admission requirements: none			

3	Elective Module: Supervision Dialogue of Doctoral Thesis	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
a	KO Conversation class on the progress of the dissertation with analysis and discussion of research results 1	1	2.5
b	KO Conversation class on the progress of the dissertation with analysis and discussion of research results 2	1	2.5
	Total	2	5

	<p>Learning objectives of the module: The module serves to present and critically discuss the students' dissertation progress. After the successful completion of the module, students have - in different phases of the research process and in critical discussion with the dissertation supervisor - received important input on the following: theoretical principles, subject-specific position, methodical concept, and empirical realization of the research project; this also includes the analysis and interpretation of research results and the way these results are to be processed.</p>
	<p>Admission requirements: none</p>

4	Elective Module: Integrative Geography 2	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	VU Integrative Geography 2	2	5
	Total	2	5
	<p>Learning objectives of the module: For the subject-specific "Innsbruck" concept of integrative geography the manifold ecological and socio-economic manifestations and effects of global change and their consequences for sustainable development in a regional context play a central role. The module serves to critically discuss and develop these questions; this takes place in the regular meetings of the research center "Global Change – Regional Sustainability". After the successful completion of the module, students have comprehensive and detailed insights into the basic questions of an integrative understanding of geography. This puts them in a position to critically reflect on and position their own research project in scientific discourse.</p>		
	<p>Admission requirements: none</p>		

5	Mandatory Module: University Course 2	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	KU Course on Special Topics in Geography 2	2	5
	Total	2	5
	<p>Learning objectives of the module: The module requires the students' active participation in a special course on a topic relevant for their research project. Through the – potentially inter-disciplinary – discussion of significant questions with renowned Austrian and international scientists and through continuing education in the area of advanced working techniques, students receive significant subject-related input for positioning their own research project in the field. This course can be completed by participating in a university summer school.</p>		
	<p>Admission requirements: none</p>		

6	Elective Module: Participation at a Scientific Conference 2	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	Active participation in international scientific discourse at a conference or workshop 3	-	5
	Total	-	5
<p>Learning objectives of the module: The module focuses on the presentation of the students' research results, as a rule in international forums. Corresponding to scientific culture, students learn to expose their research to criticism in subject-specific and interdisciplinary dialog and, as a consequence, are able to position, analyze, and evaluate their research results in a self-critical manner. In the process, they achieve an enhanced awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.</p>			
Admission requirements: none			

7	Elective Module: Participation at a Scientific Conference 3	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	Active participation in international scientific discourse at a conference or workshop 4	-	5
	Total	-	5
<p>Learning objectives of the module: The module focuses on the presentation of the students' research results, as a rule in international forums. Corresponding to scientific culture, students learn to expose their research to criticism in subject-specific and interdisciplinary dialog and, as a consequence, are able to position, analyze, and evaluate their research results in a self-critical manner. In the process, they achieve an enhanced awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, students make significant contacts for their research project, gain experience in applying for research funding, and acquire basic skills in research management.</p>			
Admission requirements: none			

8	Elective Module: Scientific Basics/Core Skills of the Thesis Topic	Sem. hours	ECTS credits
	Courses, as defined in the dissertation agreement, equal to 15 ECTS credits must be completed to develop the scientific basis/core competences for the dissertation topic.		15
	Total		15
<p>Learning objectives of the module: After the successful completion of this module, students possess the high level of interdisciplinary knowledge necessary for working on the dissertation.</p>			
Admission requirements: none			

§ 7 Dissertation

- (1) In the course of the Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography, a dissertation has to be written, which equals 120 ECTS credits. The dissertation is a piece of scientific work in a special

field of geography which – in contrast to a diploma or master thesis – serves to prove the student's ability to cope with scientific questions in an independent way.

- (2) The dissertation can also consist of articles which are related in terms of subject matter or methods. The following quality criteria apply:
 - 1 The dissertation has to consist of a minimum of three articles that have been accepted for publication by an acknowledged scientific journal.
 - 2 If the articles were written by several authors, the student's own contribution must be clearly shown and added to the dissertation.
 3. In addition to the articles, the dissertation must include a comprehensive discussion of the research question, a discussion of the state of the art, an explanation of the methods employed, an extensive critical assessment of the results, a survey of the collected data, and a summary.
- (3) The student has to propose a team of supervisors, consisting of at least two people (dissertation committee), and to nominate one of them as the supervisor mainly responsible. It is permissible to propose supervisors (with the exception of the main supervisor) from subject-related fields. In justifiable exceptional cases it is possible for students to propose only one supervisor.
- (4) Prior to beginning the work, the student has to communicate the dissertation topic and names of the supervisors in writing to the Director of Studies. Topic and supervisors are considered as accepted, if the Director of Studies does not veto them by means of a decree within one month after the receipt of the proposal.

§ 8 Examination regulations

- (1) The evaluation of Mandatory Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 as well as Elective Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 is based on the student's regular written and oral contributions. The lecturer is required to communicate evaluation methods and criteria before the course starts.
- (2) Mandatory Module 5 and Elective Modules 6 and 7 are evaluated by the main supervisor on the basis of a performance report written by the student.
- (3) The evaluation of the Mandatory Module 7 "Doctoral Thesis Defense" is based on an oral board exam taken before an examination board consisting of three examiners.

§ 9 Academic degree

Graduates of the Doctor of Philosophy Programme Geography are awarded the academic degree of "Doctor of Philosophy" or "PhD", in brief.

§ 10 Implementation

This curriculum comes into force on 1 October 2009.

For the Curriculum Committee:
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Christoph Spötl

For the Senate:
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ivo Hajnal