

Note:

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The legally binding versions are found in the University of Innsbruck Bulletins (in German).

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Curriculum for the

PhD Social and Political Sciences

at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Innsbruck

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§ 1 Allocation of the study programme

Pursuant to 54 (1) Universities Act, the PhD Programme in Social and Political Studies is allocated to the group of social and economic study programmes.

§ 2 Admission

- (1) Proof of general university entrance qualification for admission to the PhD programme in Social and Political Sciences is, in any case, provided by evidence of completion of a relevant diploma or master's degree programme, a relevant diploma or master's programme at a university of applied sciences, or another equivalent programme at a recognised domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution. To compensate for significant subject-specific differences, supplementary examinations worth a maximum of 30 ECTS-Credits may be required, which must be taken by the end of the second semester of the doctoral programme.
- (2) In any case, the following degree programmes offered by the University of Innsbruck are considered to be relevant:
 1. the Diploma Programme in Political Sciences
 2. the Master's Programme in Media, Society and Communication,
 3. the Master's Programme in Political Sciences: European and International Politics
 4. the Master's Programme in Political Sciences.
- (3) In addition, a thesis proposal is required as a qualitative admission requirement; this must be deemed academically sound and suitable for supervision by a committee to be appointed by the Dean of Studies in accordance with the provisions of §21 of the Study Law Regulations.

§ 3 Qualification profile

- (1) The PhD Programme in Social and Political Sciences is designed to further develop students' ability to conduct independent academic research and to nurture and support the next generation of academics, building on the foundations laid in diploma and master's programmes.
- (2) Graduates of the PhD Programme in Social and Political Sciences are able to make an original, independent contribution to the further development of the discipline. This includes, in particular, the ability
 - to make informed judgements within the field of their dissertation based on the current state of research,
 - to reflect on the methodological foundations of research in the field of their dissertation,
 - to produce academic papers that meet the international quality standards for double-blind peer-reviewed publications in the relevant field of research,
 - to apply the principles of good academic practice,
 - to organise, document and carry out research processes independently, as well as to work effectively within research teams,
 - to identify points of intersection with related research areas within the scope of their dissertation and to establish links with them,
 - to reflect on the implications of their own research in terms of its ethical, social, gender-related and societal implications and consequences,
 - to present their own research findings within academic discourse and in communication with experts in the fields of politics, communication and society, as well as to an interested public in a manner tailored to the target audience.

- (3) Graduates of the PhD programme in Social and Political Sciences find employment opportunities in particular
- at universities,
 - in research institutions and other post-secondary research institutions,
 - in research departments of public and private national and international institutions.

Furthermore, graduates of the PhD Programme in Social and Political Sciences are qualified to take on leadership roles in organisations that require the analytical application of social science knowledge.

§ 4 Scope and duration

The PhD Programme in Social and Political Sciences covers 180 ECTS-Credits. This corresponds to a duration of the study programme of six semesters. One ECTS-Credit corresponds to a workload of 25 hours.

§ 5 Language

The PhD Programme in Social and Political Sciences is offered in English.

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

Courses with continuous performance evaluation:

Seminars (SE) as a forum for academic discussion of the content, methods and techniques of one or more subject areas, including the presentation and discussion of student contributions. Maximum number of students: 20.

§ 7 Procedure for the allocation of places in courses with a maximum number of participants

In courses with a limited number of participants, the places are allocated as follows:

1. Students for whom the study duration would be extended due to the postponement are to be given priority.
2. If the criterion in no. 1 does not suffice to regulate the admission to a course, then first, students for whom the course is part of compulsory module and second, students who pass the course as part of a elective module are to be admitted.
3. If the criteria in no. 1 and 2 do not suffice to regulate the admission, the available places are randomly allocated.

§8 Compulsory and elective modules

(1) The following compulsory modules covering altogether 10 ECTS-Credits are to be passed:

1.	Compulsory Module: Research Design (Exposé)	h	ECTS-Credits
	SE Research Design (Exposé)	2	5
	Total	2	5
Learning Outcomes: The students are able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflect on their proposed research project in light of the requirements for Doctoral Theses; - theoretically and methodologically justify, scrutinise and, where necessary, revise research questions relating to the empirical testing of their hypotheses and the research indicators used in their studies. 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

2.	Compulsory Module: Scientific Communication	h	ECTS-Credits
	Scientific Communication (Going Public)	-	2.5
	Total	-	2.5
Learning Outcomes: The students are able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present research findings at international conferences; - critically evaluate their own research work and that of others; - present research findings clearly to experts and explain complex concepts in an accessible way. 			
Prerequisite/s: positive evaluation of compulsory module 1			

3.	Compulsory Module: Dissertation Defense (Defensio)	h	ECTS-Credits
	Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation	-	2.5
	Total	-	2.5
Learning Outcomes: The students are able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulate, in a reflective manner, the theoretical and methodological basis of their dissertation within the academic discourse; - defend the findings of their dissertation's research question in a well-reasoned manner. 			
Prerequisite/s: positive evaluation of the Dissertation as well as all other modules.			

- (2) Elective modules covering 20 ECTS-Credits are to be passed, whereby at least one elective module from no. 3 to no. 5 is to be selected:

1.	Elective Module: Scientific Writing and Presentation	h	ECTS-Credits
	SE Scientific Writing and Presentation	2	5
	Total	2	5
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students are able</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present the interim and final results of their research in a structure and format suitable for publication or presentation; - present findings in a linguistically and stylistically correct manner that is also visually appealing, i.e. in a way that is objectively understandable within the field's academic discourse; - apply the tools required to produce publishable manuscripts (book reviews, literature reviews, discussion papers) and presentations (conference presentations or poster sessions). 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

2.	Elective Module: Science Communication and Open Science	h	ECTS-Credits
	SE Science Communication and Open Science	2	5
	Total	2	5
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structure research findings and scientific methodologies in a clear, coherent and comprehensible manner, and communicate this knowledge both in writing and orally to a variety of audiences (e.g., the general public, the media) in a manner appropriate to the context, function and subject area; - organise and document scientific processes and results in line with the principles of open science, thereby ensuring they are reproducible. 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

3.	Elective Module: Qualitative Research Methods	h	ECTS-Credits
	SE Qualitative Research Methods	2	5
	Total	2	5
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - design a qualitative research project independently; - independently assess the suitability of various qualitative research methods for academic research questions within the context of dissertation projects; - independently apply qualitative research methods; - independently assess the quality of qualitative studies. 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

4.	Elective Module: Quantitative Research Methods	H	ECTS-Credits
	SE Quantitative Research Methods	2	5
	Total	2	5
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - independently design a quantitative research project; - assess the suitability of various quantitative research methods for academic research questions within the context of dissertation projects; - independently apply quantitative research methods; - assess the quality of quantitative studies. - 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

5.	Elective Module: Advanced Research Methods	h	ECTS-Credits
	SE Advanced Research Methods	2	5
	Total	2	5
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apply selected specialist social science research methods (qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods approaches) to their dissertation project; - assess the suitability of these specialist social science research methods for academic research questions; - assess the quality of academic studies based on these specific social science research methods. 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

6.	Elective Module: PhD Research Seminar	h	ECTS-Credits
	SE PhD Research Seminar	2	5
	Total	2	5
<p>Learning Outcomes: The students are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analyse selected substantive and/or methodological discourses and/or issues in the social sciences (with a focus on communication studies or political science); reflect on the relevance of these discourses and/or research questions to their dissertation project. 			
Prerequisite/s: none			

7.	Elective Module: Generic Skills	h	ECTS-Credits
	Students must select courses from the Generic Skills for PhD and Doctoral Students programme covering 5 ECTS-Credits. It is recommended that students choose courses from the fields of gender studies and women's and gender research.	-	5
	Total	-	5
	Learning Outcomes: The students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possess additional and more advanced skills, abilities and further qualifications. - can make connections with their own specialist knowledge and are able to tailor and deepen their professional profile by acquiring additional qualifications. 		
	Prerequisite/s: none		

§ 9 Dissertation

- (1) In the PhD Programme in Social and Political Sciences, a Dissertation worth 150 ECTS-Credits must be written. The Dissertation is an academic thesis designed to demonstrate the ability to independently address academic research questions.
- (2) The topic of the Dissertation must be closely related to the degree programme that led to admission to the doctoral programme and must be chosen from the fields of "Communication Studies" or "Political Science".
- (3) The completed Dissertation must be submitted to the Director of Studies in electronic form, either as a monograph or as a thematically coherent collection of at least three academic papers accompanied by an introductory text setting out the theoretical framework and conclusions ("Cumulative Dissertation").
- (4) A monograph must meet the international quality standards of the relevant field of research.
- (5) A cumulative Dissertation must meet the following quality criteria:
 1. The Dissertation must consist of at least three papers (chapters), preceded by an original text ('framework text') which situates the chapters within the broader context of the literature in the relevant field of research and reflects on the relevant theoretical and methodological implications and assumptions. This text must be written solely by the author.
 2. The three papers must be suitable for publication and eligible for submission to quality-assured, internationally recognised journals.
 3. At least one of the papers must be written solely by the author.
 4. At least one of the papers referred to in no. 2 or no. 3 must have been accepted for publication.
- (6) The student must propose a team of supervisors consisting of at least two supervisors (Dissertation Committee) and designate one member of that team who holds teaching authority (*venia docendi*) as the principal supervisor. It is permissible to propose supervisors from related disciplines or fields, with the exception of the principal supervisor. In justified individual cases, students may also propose just one supervisor.
- (7) The student must notify the Director of Studies in writing of the Dissertation topic and the Dissertation supervisors before commencing work on the Dissertation. The topic and supervisors are deemed to have been approved unless the Director of Studies formally objects within one month of receiving the notification
- (8) The completed Dissertation must be submitted to the Director of Studies in electronic form. It must be accompanied by a statutory declaration confirming that the rules of good academic practice have been followed.

§ 10 Examination regulations

- (1) The evaluation of modules that consist of a course with continuous performance assessment is carried out through the course examination for that course. The course instructor has to fix and announce the examination method (written, oral and/or practical contributions) and the evaluation criteria before the start of the semester.
- (2) The evaluation of Compulsory Module 2 Science Communication is carried out by the Director of Studies. Positive evaluation reads “successful participation”, negative evaluation “unsuccessful participation”.
- (3) The evaluation of the Compulsory Module “Dissertation Defense (Defensio)” takes the form of a public oral examination before an examination board consisting of three members.

§ 11 Academic degree

The graduates of the PhD Social and Political Sciences are awarded the academic degree “Doctor of Philosophy”, abbreviates as “PhD”.

§ 12 Coming into force

The curriculum for the PhD Social and Political Sciences comes into effect on 1 October 2025.

§ 13 Transitional provisions

- (1) This curriculum applies to all students who start the PhD Social and Political Sciences as of the 2025/26 semester onwards.
- (2) Regular students who have started the Doctoral Programme in Political Sciences as published the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 24 February 2009, Issue 29, No. 151, last amended on 5 April 2019, Issue 26, No. 370, before 1 October 2025, are entitled to finish their study programme within a maximum of eight semesters from this point in time.
- (3) If the Doctoral Programme in Political Sciences is not completed in time, the students are subject to this curriculum. In any case, students are entitled to subject to this curriculum on a voluntary basis any time.