

Fact Sheet 7:

Thesis, Pre-Defence, Public Defence and Grading of Thesis

September 2019

Legal basis: see Award Regulations of the University of St Gallen, 11 December 2006, and Course Regulations for the Doctoral Studies in Economics and Finance, 17 December 2012.

Thesis

- a) The thesis in the PhD programme in Economics and Finance has to be written as a **cumulative** thesis and has to satisfy the following conditions:
- written in **English**;
 - consisting of at least **three papers**;
 - the overall **quality** and **style** of the three papers as required by renowned international academic journals;
 - at least one paper is a **single authored paper** and it represents a notable contribution to the thesis as a whole;
 - in the case of co-authored papers, individual authors have to provide a written statement showing the extent of their own independent contribution; the statement has to be signed by all authors;
 - an introductory part of the thesis summarises the single papers and puts them into proper perspective;
 - an extended literature overview may be a substantial part of one of the papers;
 - the thesis has to contain a declaration that it has been written by its author without any inadmissible assistance. Furthermore, the author has to declare that the thesis has not already been submitted to another university.
- b) At the first submission, a thesis that has not been accepted may be returned for revision or be rejected. At the second submission, a thesis that has not been accepted may only be rejected. The programme committee will grant a deadline of one semester or one year for the revision of a thesis.
- c) A thesis with the same structure (i.e. number and topics of papers, co-authors) as the accepted research proposal may be submitted.

Time, duration and submission

Time:

- The thesis has to be submitted within **six semesters** of the acceptance of the research proposal.
- The Programme Committee strongly encourages the submission of the thesis within two years of the acceptance of the research proposal.
- The thesis may be submitted at any time during the period allowed for its completion.

Submission Procedure

The thesis has to be submitted first in **electronic** form to the (main) referee (supervisor) who has to provide the student with a written confirmation of the submission. The same version has to be submitted in electronic and printed form to the PhD Office together with the confirmation of the electronic submission: the number of hard copies has to be identical to the number of members of the Thesis Committee. Any thesis that is not submitted in printed and electronic form by the deadline will receive a grade 1. Therefore, the candidate will be considered to have failed this part of the examination. The submission of the thesis has to be done according to the HSG rules.

Grade

In terms of scientific content and quality, a thesis should be similar to the standards required by scientific journals. Therefore, all referees are recommended to apply the following reference points for grading the theses:

6.0: It is very likely that all 3 papers are publishable in good field or general journals, or 2 papers are publishable in very good journals, or one paper in an absolutely top journal.

5.5: It is very likely that 2 papers are publishable in good field or general journals, or 1 paper is publishable in a very good journal.

5.0: It is very likely that 1 paper is publishable in a good field or general journal.

Grades 5.75 and 5.25 may be used for intermediate / borderline cases.

- A higher standard may be applied to co-authored papers.
- To assist in the evaluation of a thesis, referees should name journals where a paper (chapter) is likely to be published.
- The chair of the Thesis Committee (member of the Programme Committee), ensures that the same standards are applied to all submitted theses.

The thesis is considered to be accepted if it is awarded a grade of at least 4.0.

Pre-defence

Procedure:

- The PhD Office distributes the copies to the Thesis Committee members.
- The pre-defence takes place in the presence of the Thesis Committee, it is not public and it is not graded.
- The pre-defence has to take place within four months of the submission of the thesis to the Office of Doctoral Studies, with three months being scheduled for the assessment of the thesis.
- The referee and the co-referee write **reports** on the thesis which are handed in **to the chair** of the Thesis Committee (the appointed member of the Programme Committee) two weeks before the date of the pre-defence.
- The pre-defence consists of a presentation by the candidate and questions by the committee. It usually proceeds paper by paper and may take as long as required.

- The thesis committee decides whether the pre-defence has been successful. The chair of the Thesis Committee writes a memo that summarises the most important issues discussed. The memo must also state whether further work on the dissertation is requested and must specify the requested changes. If the Thesis Committee requests changes and revisions, the chair must specify a date for delivering the final thesis. Depending on the extent of the changes required, a period of 6 months or maximum 1 year may be granted.
- The final reports must be handed in to the chair of the thesis committee and sent to the Office of Doctoral Studies.

Public defence

Procedure

- The chair of the Thesis Committee sets a date for the public defence.
- The public defence takes place in the presence of the Thesis Committee and it is chaired by the chair of the Thesis Committee. At least the **main referee** (supervisor) has to be present.
- The public defence is open to the public.
- The Executive Director will announce the public defence university-wide at least 14 days in advance.
- The chair of the Programme Committee welcomes everyone to the defence. Subsequently, the **main referee** shortly introduces the PhD candidate and his/her research work.
- The public defence consists of a popular 30-minute talk by the PhD candidate, followed by questions from the Thesis Committee and in the end from the general audience in the end.
- The Programme Committee decides immediately whether the public defence has been passed and informs the candidate accordingly. Students who fail the defence of their thesis may repeat it once.
- After a thesis has been publicly defended, the Programme Committee decides on the final grade, based on the recommendation made by the Thesis Committee.

Final grade

The HSG rules apply ([Art 56 Award Regulations](#)).

Graduation

The HSG rules apply.