Information on Research Proposal, Colloquium, and Admission to the Research Phase in the PiF Programme

St Gallen, May 2020; Legal basis: Award Regulations of the University of St Gallen, November 2016

Relevant Regulations / Guidelines

Admission to the Research Phase

The conditions for admission to the research phase are:

- The courses in the coursework phase must be completed and passed within four semesters from the start of the Ph.D. programme (Art. 29).
- All courses must be passed with a minimum grade of 4.0 (Art. 42, Art. 43).
- The research proposal has to be accepted (Art. 43, Art. 45).

The research phase starts in the term when the research proposal is successfully defended.

Passes and Repeats

The research proposal must be submitted within four semesters (Art. 29):

- The research proposal is not graded but must be accepted to pass (Art. 45).
- A research proposal that is not accepted the first time may either be sent back for rework or may be rejected (Art. 46).
- When submitted for a second time, the research proposal may not be returned again for rework (Art. 46).
- A research proposal that is not submitted on time must be submitted within the following six months, but it can then not be returned for rework (Art. 46).
- A period of 12 months is allowed for rework (Art. 46).

Colloquium

During the colloquium (proposal defence), Ph.D. students outline their thesis project and justify their approach (Art. 28):

- The proposal defence must take at least 30 minutes and is not public (Art. 28).
- The proposal defence is deemed to be passed if the research proposal is accepted (Art. 45).

The doctoral examination is deemed to be failed definitely if the research proposal is rejected (Art. 53).

Recommended Procedure

PiF students should pursue the following procedure:

Preparation

1. Students should contact their supervisor during their second semester in the coursework phase to agree on the content for the research proposal. In particular, the student and supervisor should agree on the projects (papers) to be presented in the proposal.
2. Before a student submits the research proposal, a supervisor should assign a co-supervisor to be a member of the thesis committee. If the supervisor does not assign the co-supervisor at that stage, the member of the thesis committee who is assigned by the programme committee acts as the co-supervisor.

Submission and Assessment

3. The research proposal has to be submitted by email to the Ph.D. Office and in a pdf file to the executive director by email (pif@unisg.ch).
4. The supervisor has to arrange a date for the proposal defence.
5. The proposal defence has to take place within **8 weeks** of submitting the proposal.
6. After the colloquium, the thesis committee has to decide on whether to accept, send back for rework, or reject the research proposal.
7. The thesis committee has to pass this information together with the final signed written assessment on to the Ph.D. Office.
8. The dean of studies will subsequently notify the student of the admission to the research phase.

Research Proposal: Proposed Content

⇒ *"In the research proposal, the plan of the thesis project and the methodological approach must be described and some initial, already completed, research work demonstrated (Art. 28)".*

- The research proposal should specify (at least) three research projects which are intended to form one paper of the cumulative thesis each
- For each paper the proposal should clarify: (i) the research question which will be tackled, (ii) the potential contribution to the literature, (iii) the planned methodology, and (iv) preliminary results (if available).
- The projects can be at different stages of maturity, ranging from outlines to draft papers.
- The research proposal should be between 30 – 50 pages. The form and layout of the research proposal should follow the usual criteria for academic work.