

PEF Fact Sheet 7: Thesis, Pre-Defence, Public Defence and Grading of Thesis

September 2019

Legal basis: Award Regulations of the University of St Gallen, November 7, 2016 (PromO 17), Course Regulations for the Doctoral Studies in Economics and Finance of November 14, 2016, and Implementation Provisions of May 2, 2017.

Thesis

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 overall thesis;
- an introductory part of the thesis summarises the single papers and put 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.
- in the case of co-authored papers, individual authors have to provide the programme committee with a written statement showing the extent of their own independent contribution; the statement has to be signed by all authors.

The regulations of the thesis (form, language, declarations) are stipulated in the Award Regulations PromO 17 (see § V b, Art. 31, 32 1, 33, 34, 35, 36 1).

Thesis Submission and Extension of Submission Deadline

Submission deadline:

- The thesis has to be submitted at the latest **ten semesters** after starting the PhD programme (from the day of matriculation).
- The Programme Committee strongly encourages the submission of the thesis within three-four years of the start of the doctoral study.
- The thesis may be submitted at any time during the period allowed for its completion. All PEF Literature and PhD seminars must be completed and passed before the thesis may be submitted.

The regulations of the thesis submission deadline are stipulated in the Award Regulations PromO 17 (see § V, Art. 23 1 and Art. 30 3).

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. The submission of the thesis has to be done according to the HSG rules. Any thesis that is not submitted by the deadline will be rejected. Any student in such a situation will not be accepted for any further Ph.D. programme at the University of St.Gallen.

The regulations of the thesis submission and passes and repeats are stipulated in the Implementation Provisions of May 2, 2017(see § V, Art. 29 and § VII Art. 49 and 53).

Deadline extension

The Dean of Studies may grant an extension in individual cases if there are significant reasons.

The regulations of the extension of the thesis submission deadline are stipulated in the Award Regulations PromO 17 (see § V, Art. 23 2).

Passes and Repeats

If a thesis requires some minor amendments, the final acceptance of the thesis may be made contingent upon the student's making the required revisions. The chair must specify a date for delivering the final thesis.

A thesis that is not accepted the first time may either be sent back for reworking or may be rejected.

If a pre-defence of a thesis is required, then after the final submission of that thesis, it can only be accepted or rejected.

A thesis that is not submitted on time shall be deemed to have been rejected. Any student in this situation will not be accepted for any further Ph.D. programme at the University of St.Gallen.

When submitted for a second time, a thesis may not be returned again for rework. On second submission, the thesis may only be accepted or rejected.

A period of 12 months is granted for the reworking of the thesis.

A thesis with the same structure (i.e. number and topics of papers, co-authors) as the accepted research proposal may always be submitted.

The regulations of the thesis passes and repeats are stipulated in the Award Regulations PromO 17 (see § V, Art. 48 and 49).

Grade

The thesis is examined and graded by the Thesis Committee.

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:

- A pre-defence of the thesis has to be held;
- The PhD Office distributes the printed 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 PhD Office, with three months being scheduled for the assessment of the thesis (written reports);
- 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 and informs the candidate accordingly. 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 thesis is requested and must specify the requested changes. If a thesis requires some minor amendments, the final acceptance of the thesis may be made contingent upon the student's making the required revisions. The chair must specify a date for delivering the final thesis. If the thesis is sent to reworking, then a period of 12 months is granted for it;
- Students who fail the pre-defence may repeat it once;
- The final reports and grading forms must be signed by the Thesis Committee members and sent to the Executive Director.

The regulations of pre-defense deadline are stipulated in the Implementation Provisions of May 2, 2017(see § IV, Art. 22 and § VII, Art. 50) and the Course Regulations for the Doctoral Studies in Economics and Finance of November 14 ,2016 (Art. 22),.

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) and the PhD Candidate have to be present;
- The public defence is open to the public, it takes 60 minutes, it has to take place on the premises of the University of St. Gallen, and it is graded;
- 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. 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. The decision is disclosed to students through a decree issued by the Dean of Studies.

The regulations of the public defense are stipulated in the Award Regulations PromO 17 (see § V b, Art. 38 and § VII Art. 50).

Final Grade

The thesis accounts for 80% and the thesis defence for 20%.

The following levels of distinction are awarded:

- with a grade average of 5.75 to 6.00: summa cum laude (with the highest distinction);
- with a grade average of 5.50 to 5.74: magna cum laude (very good);
- with a grade average of 5.00 to 5.49: cum laude (good).

No level of distinction are awarded for average grades below 5.00.

The Ph.D. examination shall be deemed to be failed definitively if:

- two or more courses or seminars are failed or
- the research proposal is rejected or
- the thesis is rejected or
- the thesis defence is not passed at the second attempt.

Students who fail to pass definitively the Ph.D. examinations will not be accepted for any further Ph.D. programme at the University of St.Gallen.

The regulations of overall examination grading and levels of distinction are stipulated in the Award Regulations PromO 17 (see § V b, Art. 38 and § VII Art. 51 2 and Art. 52).

Thesis Formal Requirements

The regulations of formal requirements of the thesis are stipulated in the Implementation Provisions of May 2, 2017(see § V, Art. 26, 27 and 28).

Publication of Thesis

The regulations of submission and publication of the thesis are stipulated in the Implementation Provisions of May 2, 2017(see § V, Art. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, and 39).

Graduation

Graduation may only occur after publication of the thesis in accordance to the *Implementation Provisions of May 2, 2017 (Art. 30)*.

The HSG rules apply.