PhD Committee

10 Responses to the most frequently asked questions
Are you interested in undertaking a PhD within the Department of Spatial Planning? We welcome you!

You can graduate from the Department of Spatial Planning with a PhD in engineering or economics & social sciences.

Within the PhD Regulations (PhD Reg.) you will find formal guidelines concerning the prerequisites and PhD procedure. The following frequently asked question responses are intended to assist you during the initial steps:

1. **Can I undertake the PhD if my previous studies were not in spatial planning?**
   Section 4 of the PhD Reg. states the prerequisites which must be fulfilled in order to enrol. These do not necessarily concern only city and/or developmental planning, but also comprise related areas such as geography and architecture. However, your studies should exhibit a clear and concise reference to spatial planning.

2. **In what language can I write my PhD dissertation?**
   You may undertake your PhD at the Department of Spatial Planning in either German or English.

3. **What should I submit to communicate my PhD research idea?**
   For your selected field, you should have already prepared an initial concept (approx. 10 pages), which clearly defines your focal area, key research questions and the underlying methodical approach. Furthermore, you should have also developed an initial concept for a time schedule and work plan.

4. **How do I find a supervisor?**
   To commence your PhD you have to approach a potential supervisor from our faculty for your dissertation personally. Consider your initial concept document described in Q3 as the first point of discussion between yourself and a potential supervisor. The supervisor/assessor must be a member of the Department of Spatial Planning.

5. **Can I apply for scholarships before official enrolment?**
   To apply for a PhD scholarship, written confirmation from the supervisor is generally sufficient; the admission procedure must not necessarily already be completed.
6. Do I need more than one advisor?
   In addition to the first advisor, your PhD committee must also comprise a second
   assessor/examiner. The second advisor can be selected at a later stage after enrolment.
   Should the focus of your intended dissertation be located abroad, please be aware that at
   least one member of the PhD committee must be familiar with the regional/cultural
   learnings of the relevant country/countries. The supervisor will advise the PhD candidate
   about the composition of the PhD committee to the effect that it is representative of the
   interdisciplinary nature of the Department of Spatial Planning and the range of research
   groups within the context of the chosen PhD topic, and that at least one active university
   lecturer is nominated as a member of the PhD committee.

7. What documents do I need to apply, and when should I send them?
   Please refer to section 5 of the PhD Regulations for a list of the documents required for
   the formal application process. Please note that the PhD committee only meets twice per
   semester. Meetings are generally held at the beginning and at the end of each semester
   (October, February, April, July; the exact dates are published on the website). Your
   documents should be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to each meeting.

8. How will I know if I am accepted?
   Once the PhD committee has processed your application, you will receive written
   confirmation of your admission/provisional admission/refusal.

9. What if the PhD committee has recommended an assessment test?
   Should the PhD committee recommend one or more assessment tests (max. 4 possible)
   within the scope of provisional application acceptance, these are to be perceived as in-
   depth discussions/interviews on the topic at hand. The objective of these discussions,
   pursuant to section 4 of the PhD Regulations, is to ascertain your level of knowledge,
   theoretical and methodical abilities with regard to spatial planning. Each discussion lasts
   30 minutes and will be recorded in brief form as minutes. The discussion/s will be based
   around the topics of your intended PhD endeavours and your ability to convey your
   competence in the selected topics in relation to spatial planning. Hence, the discussion/s
   will address the professional environment of your selected topic and the related spatial
   planning sub-discipline. The assessment test/s will result in a pass or fail and will not be
   graded. A positive discussion outcome (pass) often includes recommendations to attend
   certain lectures offered by the Department of Spatial Planning that will satisfy credit
   requirements and help you develop your study. An assessment test may be repeated; as
   long as the test is passed by the time the PhD is commenced.
10. What if the PhD committee has recommended an assessment task?

Should the PhD committee issue an assessment task (in the form of an essay), the objective will be to prove your ability to prepare scientific documentation on the research topics related to the intended PhD project. A conceivable essay topic would be, for example, the current state of research in the selected area. The essay should be approx. 30 pages in length. Recognition of the completed task will be issued by the assigned supervisor and at least one other university lecturer or authorised research scientist (in accordance with section 10 (3) of the PhD Reg.), both of whom belong to the Department of Spatial Planning. As an alternative, a master’s thesis (German/English) may also be submitted.

Should you have any questions, please refer to

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signed
Dietwald Gruehn
University Professor / Doctor of Engineering
(Chair of the PhD Committee)