

**PhD programme at the Transdisciplinary Institute of Social Work (ITTS)
at the Faculty of Economics and Business**

General orientation for PhD students

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1. Mission of the Transdisciplinary Institute of Social Work

The institute allows holders of a Master's degree in social work of a university of applied sciences (UAS) or a university Master's degree in social sciences, law or economics to acquire a doctorate in social work awarded by the University of Neuchâtel. This doctoral title will bear the mention "in partnership with the HES-SO".

The institute adopts a transdisciplinary perspective as all doctoral theses of the institute are codirected by a social work professor of an UAS and by a professor of the university of Neuchâtel.

The institute allows to promote a new generation of professors, trained at postgraduate level in social work.

The institute aims to train social work experts who are able to examine theoretical and practical foundations of social work and who contribute through their scientific work to the development of new knowledge in social work.

The institute develops, in collaboration with researcher and professors of schools of social work (UAS) and with university social work research institute in Switzerland and elsewhere, as an (inter-) national centre of competence in social work education and research.

2. Learning outcomes of the PhD Programme

Fields and methods of social work

"Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels." (Global definition of Social Work, International Federation of Social Worker, General Meeting, International Association of Schools of Social Work, General Assembly 2014).

Social work research implies qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, collaborative, and community-based methods. As a transdisciplinary action science, social work research creates knowledge relevant for its diverse beneficiaries and professional fields.

In accordance with the Dublin Descriptors and the description in the National Qualification framework for the Swiss Higher Education Sector (nqf.ch September 2011), a doctorate in social work (3rd cycle) is awarded to students who are able to:

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Apply and use common research methods associated with the discipline of social work
- Carry out (i.e., conceptualise, design, implement and adapt) research in the domain of study with scholarly integrity
- Write/prepare scientific texts for seminars, conferences, and scientific publication in social work and in the broader topical field of the PhD

Making judgments

- Summarise and interpret essential theoretical, topical and methodological texts for social work

- Write texts for scientific publication in social work and in the broader topical field of the PhD
- Choose adequate methodological tools for data collection and data analysis for the PhD
- Practice an adequate position regarding open science, open data, and research ethics
- Analyse, evaluate and synthesise new and complex ideas

Communicative skills

- Present scientific texts at seminars and conferences in social work and in the broader topical field of the PhD
- Communicate about the field of social work with different types of publics (scientific, professional, interested) in a scientifically adequate manner and using different means and levels (including simplifying and vulgarizing for social media)
- Write a PhD project relevant for social work including topical overviews, formulating research questions and a methodologically coherent research design
- Defend the PhD thesis comprehensibly before a jury of experts and an interested public

Learning skills

- Develop technological, social, or cultural advances in a knowledge society within academic and professional contexts
- Conceptualise original research by extending the limits of knowledge through the development of substantial research that merits publication, at least in part, to the usual standard, nationally or internationally

3. Registration as a PhD student at the ITTS at University of Neuchâtel

Conditions for admission

PhD students of the ITTS have either an MA degree from a UAS or an MA degree from a Swiss (or recognised foreign) University. To enrol for a PhD at ITTS, a grade point average of 4.75 for the MA and a grade 5 for the Master's thesis are required.

Students interested by a PhD at the ITTS organize a meeting with the director of the ITTS before registration to discuss first ideas about topic, involved disciplines and potential PhD directors.

Codirection of PhD

A PhD in social work at ITTS requires a co-direction by a professor from an UAS (school of social work) and a professor of UniNE. Confirmations from both accompanying professors are required for registration as a PhD student. Further information for requirements can be found on the institute's website: (https://www.unine.ch/seco/en/home/instituts_recherche/institut-transdisciplinaire-de-t.html). *A copy of the confirmations by the codirectors must be sent to the ITTS.*

After registration, but before seminars and classes start, the PhD student and the codirectors establish a document deciding on roles and tasks for coaching. It can be inspired by the following model of Badoc HES-SO: <https://www.hes-so.ch/recherche-innovation/formation-doctorale-et-relevés/diriger-une-these>. *A copy of a signed document is to be sent to the ITTS.*

Doctoral programme: 30 ECTS in the first 18 months

In the first 18 months after registration, PhD students at ITTS complete 30 ECTS. Together with their PhD directors and the directors of the ITTS, PhD students compose their own programme according to their education and their PhD topic, which must, however, meet certain requirements. *The individual*

programme is listed in an individual pedagogical agreement and must be handed in to the ITTS before classes start.

Beside the two days of the introductory seminar in fall semester and a one-day seminar at the beginning of the spring semester (Starting a PhD thesis, entering a PhD process, scientific writing skills), a certain number of ITTS seminars in social work theories and social work methods are compulsory for all PhD students of ITTS. Other seminars/courses can also be selected within the offers of the CUSO or MA university offers in different faculties and universities.

In principle, the ECTS regulations of the University of Neuchâtel apply. 2 teaching periods (p.) per week during a semester correspond to 3 ECTS (= 2p.X14=28p.). Approx. 30 hours of work are calculated per ECTS. To obtain the ECTS in the PhD programme, oral presentations and written papers appropriate to the different seminars / classes are required. The presentations and papers are evaluated by the lecturers.

Submission deadline for PhD project and PhD thesis

At the latest after 18 months from registration, the PhD students submit, in accordance with their codirectors, their PhD project to the Conseil des Professeurs of the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Neuchâtel, accompanied by a report by each of the two directors.

When the PhD project is accepted, the PhD students participate in self-organized communities of practice, participate actively in conferences by presenting and publishing on the PhD topic. The PhD thesis must be submitted after 7-10 semesters (counting from initial registration) and it can consist of peer reviewed articles or a monography.

Multilingual orientation of the ITTS

The regular PhD programme is conducted in English. English is increasingly the language of science in social work and is therefore necessary for a PhD programme. An exception are workshops on scientific writing, they are proposed in French (and German). The CUSO offers several seminars for scientific writing in English.

4. PhD programme for the first 18 months after registration

Seminars and classes by the ITTS Professors

The seminars and classes of the PhD programme taught by the two professors (each one 50%) of the institute are organised in seminars (several days) and classes (every two weeks) to leave space for the students for reading and writing. It amounts to 12 ECTS per semester.

The doctoral seminars and the international conferences

The additionally offered doctoral seminars (equivalent to the CUSO seminars), at least four two-day seminar per year, can be conducted in French or English (or in German). One two-day seminar is worth 1.5 ECTS.

Each year, the ITTS organizes an international conference, giving the PhD students the opportunity to discuss their topics with their directors and other experts. These conferences may be multilingual as well.

PhD programme for the first 18 months (individually adaptable framework programme)

Each PhD-student must complete 30 ECTS during the first 18 months. Each PhD student decides upon its own programme, together with the two co-directors and the direction of the institute.

All PhD students must complete

- At least 6 ECTS of seminars/classes in Theories of social work
- At least 6 ECTS of Methodologies in social work
- At least 6 ECTS in their PhD topic-oriented discipline

All PhD students must prove to have completed at least 6 ECTS of quantitative methodologies on MA level.

Equivalences are possible but must be justified and proofs have to be submitted with the individual pedagogical programme. These will be checked by the ITTS and the scientific committee.

Within this minimal framework, the PhD students can choose the classes and seminars in tune with their PhD topic.

The programme is to be handed in as a pedagogical contract to the director of the institute with the other registration documents.

The PhD project cannot be submitted without the completion of the 30 ECTS.

Charte du doctorat de l'UNINE :

https://www.unine.ch/files/live/sites/systemsite/files/General/UNINE_charte_doctorat.pdf