

Bachelor with Honors @ TU Wien

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Mission Statement

The Honors Program of the Faculty of Informatics at TU Wien targets excellent students from all Bachelor Programs in Informatics and Business Informatics, who are seeking individual challenges in addition to their regular studies. It aims to nurture outstanding students in line with their talents, and to engage them in scientific research at an early point in their studies.

Webpage: <https://informatics.tuwien.ac.at/bachelor-with-honors>

JEHC article: <https://jehc.eu/index.php/jehc/article/view/113>

Bachelor with Honors - Why?

Designed as a 1-year extension of their regular Bachelor's degree, students with outstanding academic achievements can acquire a 4-years Bachelor's degree with Honors comparable to the Anglo-American model.

- Further contributes to supporting excellence @ TU Wien
- Attracting the best students
- Effective and early challenge & support of outstanding students
- Early development of research interests
- Better education
- Better career perspectives



Cornerstones

- Targets outstanding students (< top-5%) in all Informatics Bachelor programs
 - **Solely performance-based** admission criteria
 - Individual **Bachelor with Honors program (45-60 ECTS)**, composed of (any) Bachelor and Master courses
 - **Individual mentoring** by a professor of the faculty
- **Solely performance-based** completion criteria
 - completion of regular Bachelor program with distinction
 - overall weighted grade point average ≤ 1.5 (Austrian grades range: 1-5, so GPA ≥ 3.5)
 - overall duration of regular Bachelor + Bachelor with Honors ≤ 9 semester
- Completion earns
 - Bachelor with Honors graduation certificate
 - Individual letter of recommendation from TU President, certifying the < top-5% status

Certificate



Some History ...

Setup Experience

- Designing the Bachelor with Honors program within our Faculty of Informatics was smooth and easy.
- Getting the official approval by the Senate of TU Wien was, **unexpectedly, very difficult**, and required massive advertising and lobbying.

Some reasons:

- Threat to Master programs as the mandatory requirement for PhD admission.
 - General reservation, even at professor level, against elite programs („two-class society“).
 - Legal concerns regarding potential incompatibilities with Bologna study architecture.
- **Nevertheless:** Since October 2017, our Bachelor with Honors Program is part of all official Informatics Bachelor curricula.

Acknowledgments

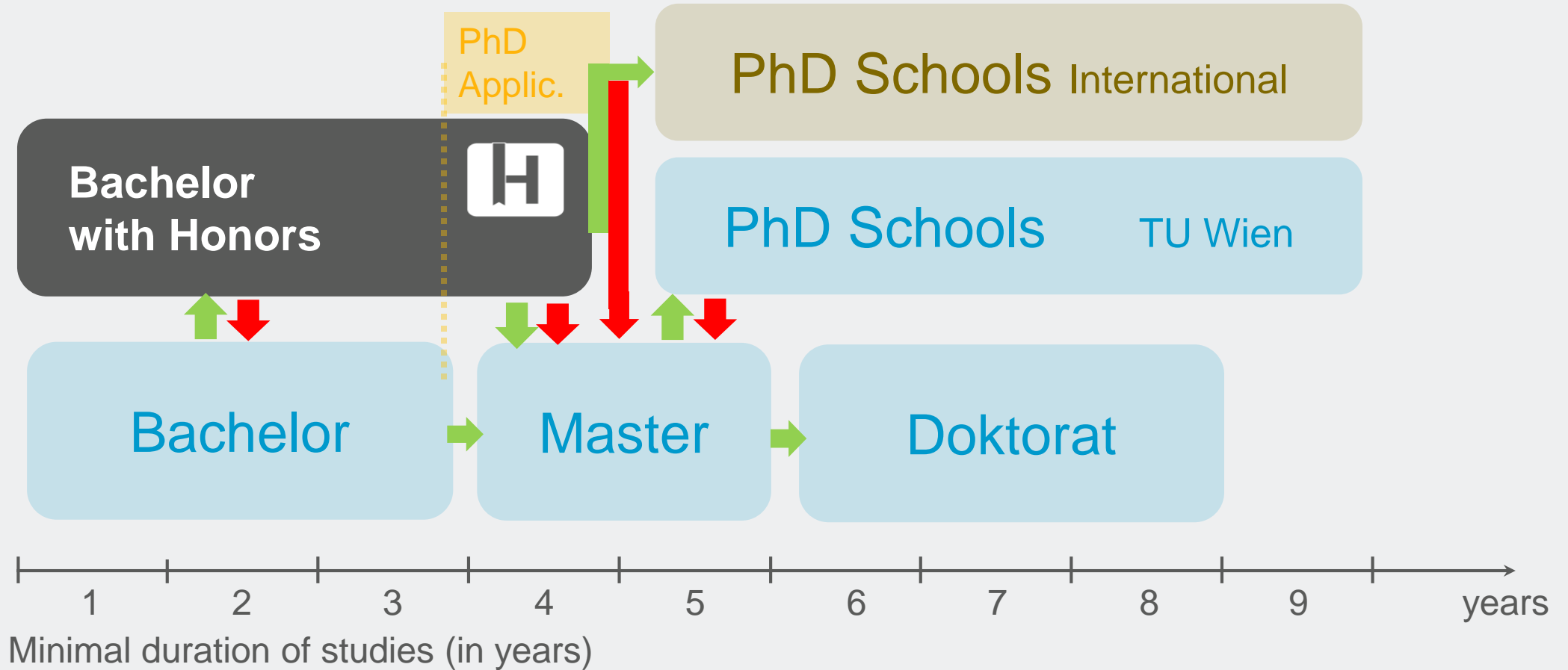
I am indebted to many colleagues at TU Wien, who contributed to the shaping and implementation of our Bachelor with Honors program: The members of the expert group (**G. Gottlob, T. Eiter, S. Dustdar, R. Freund, R. Grosu, L. Kovacs, and G. Salzer**), the members of the working group of our Studienkommission (**M. Fassi, R. Grosu, M. Cammerlander, L. Kovacs, A. Leitsch, S. Miksch, H. Tompits, and H. Werthner**), our Deans of Academic Affairs **Hilda Tellioglu** and **Christian Huemer** and our former Dean **Hannes Werthner** for their dedication to the program and their continuous support, my colleague **Rudolf Freund**, the head of the curricula commission of the senate of TU Wien, for his vital efforts to make the Bachelor with Honors program compatible with the law and to convince the senate, all members of our senate, like **Simone Knaus**, who were in favor of our program, and last but not least our Rektorin **Sabine Seidler** and Vizerektor **Kurt Matyas** for their understanding and support. Establishing and running the program would have been impossible without the active support by the Communications Center of the Faculty of Informatics, namely, by **Martin Wagner, Stefanie Madsen, Peter Pahs** and **Eva Straka**, and by **Ricarda Aminger** and **Tamara Lenes** from the Dean's office.

Current Status

- First enrolments to Bachelor with Honors program in January 2018
 - By March 2021: 43 admissions
 - By June 2021: 21 graduations
- Many success stories (awards, successful applications, accepted papers etc.): <https://informatics.tuwien.ac.at/bachelor-with-honors/success/>
- Internship program [Badly hit by Cornona ...]
 - Academia: *Purdue, ENS Cachan, MPI Saarbrücken, IST Austria, Urbana Champaign*
 - Industry: *Infineon, Intel, Bosch*
- Scholarship program
 - Research funding organizations: *WWTF, FWF*
 - Industry: *Infineon, Intel*
 - Faculty of Informatics @ TU Wien

Future Perspectives ...

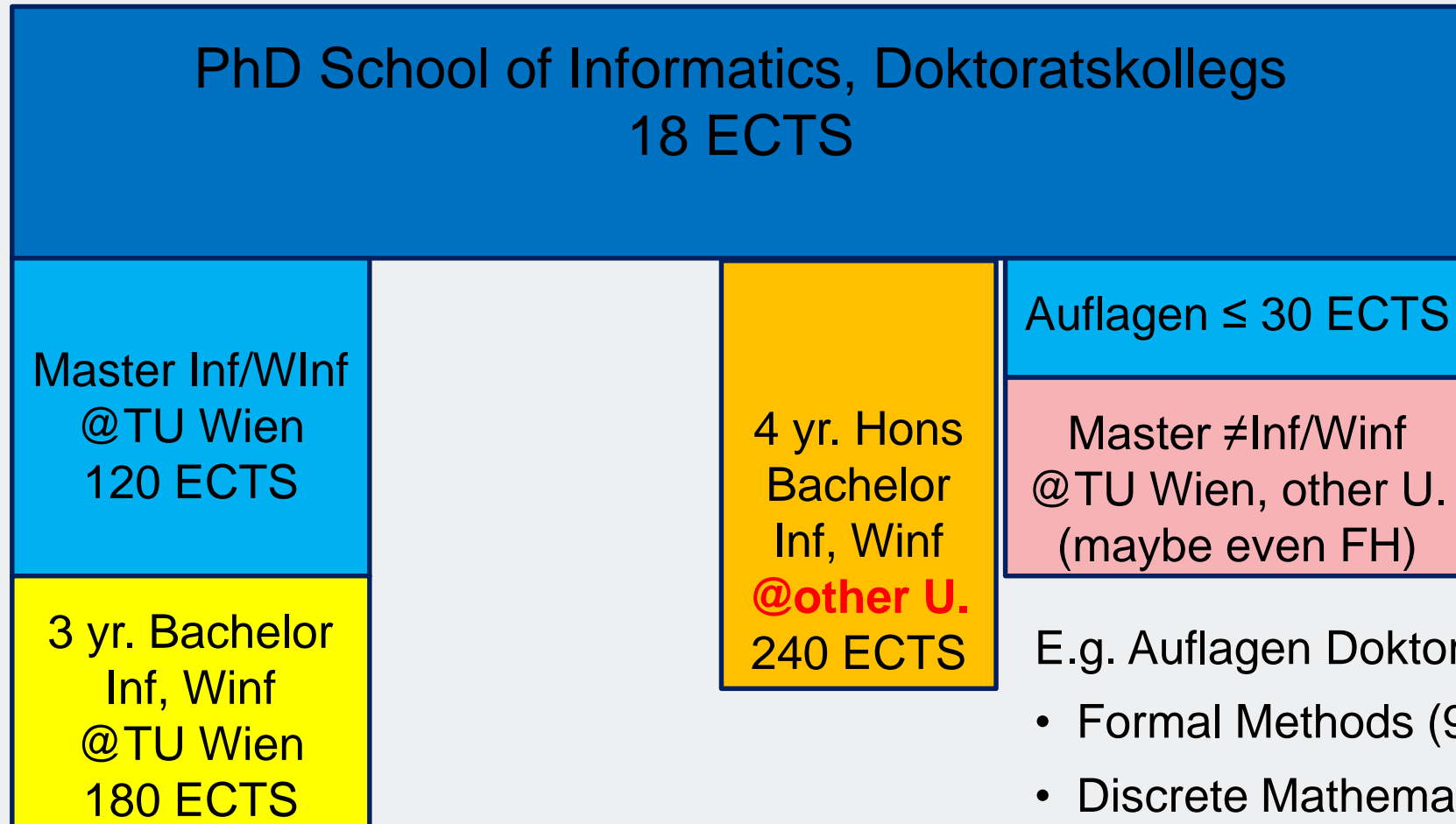
Embedding in Study Programs



Our Vision: Future Master with Honors Program

- Natural next step for attracting and supporting excellent students @TU Wien Faculty of Informatics.
- Provide a way for (international) students who directly enter a PhD program with only a 4-year Bachelor degree to also get a Master degree „on their way“.
- Provide an accelerated entry for our own BHons graduates into a PhD program.

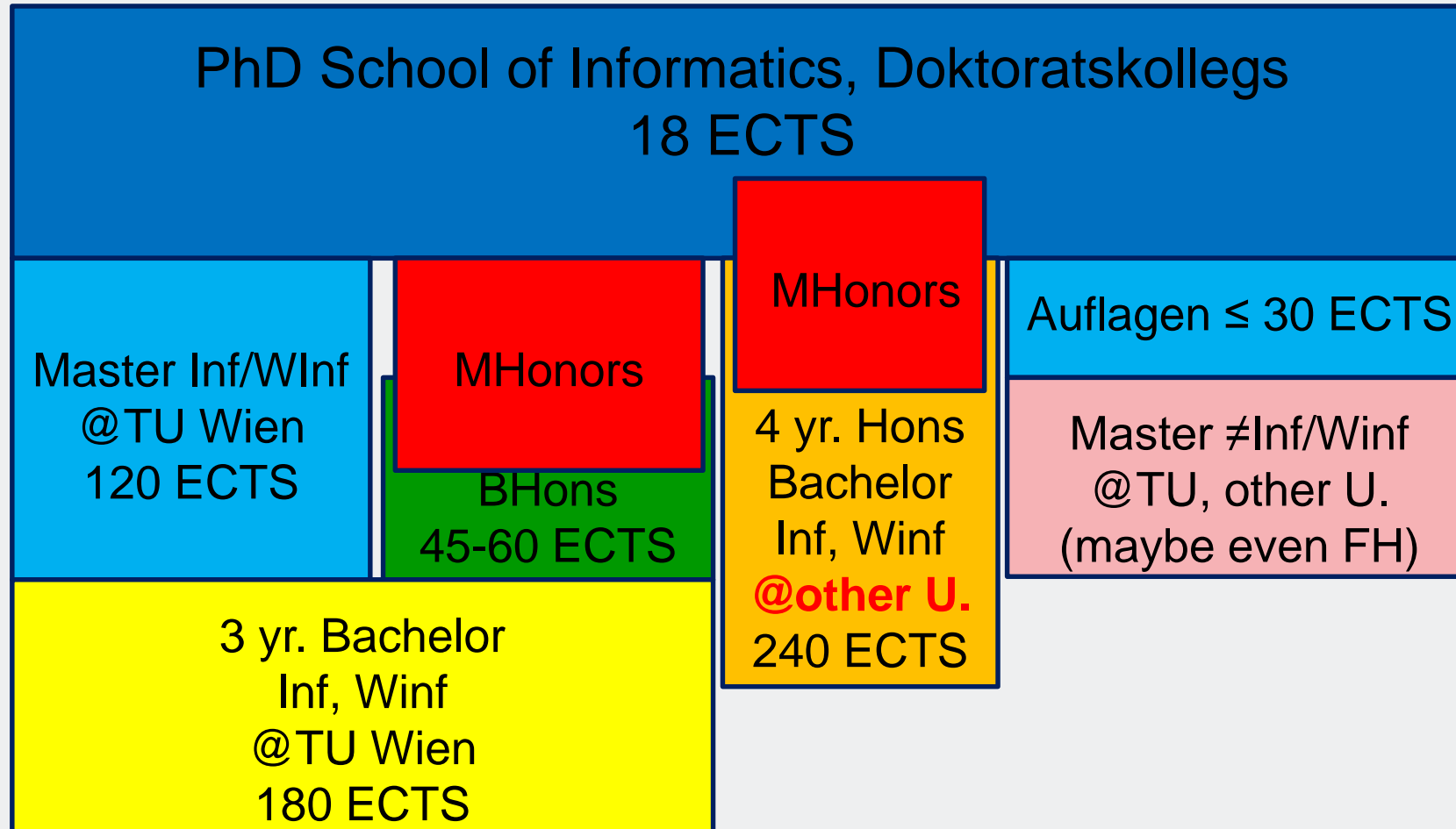
Existing Paths into Informatics PhD



E.g. Auflagen Doktoratskolleg RES:

- Formal Methods (9 ECTS)
- Discrete Mathematics (9 ECTS)
- Gatekeeper (6-9 ECTS), mandatory course in chosen area

Envisioned Additional Paths into Informatics PhD



Envisioned Cornerstones

- Applications open for
 - Graduates of our Bachelor with Honors program
 - Graduates of 4-year Bachelor programs at accredited foreign universities (satisfying our Bachelor with Honors criteria)
- Individual mentor
- Individual Master with Honors (Mhons) curriculum
 - Variation (under constraints) of one of our existing Master programs
 - Accreditation of 4th year Bachelor courses
 - Research orientation, e.g., trade publications against ECTS credits
 - Needs approval by dean of studies, as part of the application
- Graduation requires
 - With MHons certificate: successful completion of MHons program
 - within 6 semesters
 - with distinction, Master thesis graded 1, ECTS-weighted grade points ≤ 1.2 (GPA ≥ 3.8)
 - Without MHons certificate: regular completion of MHons program

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