



SOUTH-WEST UNIVERSITY “NEOFIT RILSKI”

Faculty of Law and History

Department of Civil Law Sciences

2700 Blagoevgrad, 66 Ivan Mihaylov Street; 073 / 88 55 01; info@swu.bg; www.swu.bg

INFORMATION PACKAGE

OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

FIELD OF SCIENCE: **3. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND LEGAL SCIENCES**

PROFESSIONAL FIELD: **3.6. LAW**

DOCTORAL PROGRAM: **NOTARIAL LAW**

EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE: **DOCTOR (PhD)**

LEVEL ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL **LEVEL 8**

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF):

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION: **RESEARCHER**

DURATION OF STUDY: **3 /three/ or 4 /four/ years**

FORM OF STUDY: **FULL-TIME / INDEPENDENT/
PART-TIME**

SUMMARY

The aim of the doctoral program in the scientific field of "Notarial Law" is to prepare highly qualified specialists using contemporary research methods and tools, who, based on their developed research skills, will contribute with their knowledge and abilities to the further advancement of science and practice in the field of notarial law. This means that graduates of the Doctoral Educational and Scientific Degree program ("Doctor") will possess competencies for independent scientific research. The training methods ensure the expansion of graduates' fundamental theoretical and professional preparation. A doctoral dissertation is developed on a current issue in law and jurisprudence, in accordance with high contemporary standards and the necessity of directly linking doctrinal knowledge with the specific needs of jurisprudence and practice.

Doctoral training is implemented through the mandatory and elective courses specified in the curriculum of the doctoral program in "Notarial Law" and in the individually approved study plans. Each doctoral candidate, in consultation with their scientific supervisor, prepares an individual study plan, which is reviewed by the Department of Civil Law Sciences. The individual study plan is based on the curriculum of the Notarial Law doctoral program accredited by the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation (NAAA) and is subsequently submitted for approval by the Faculty Council. Doctoral study plans are aligned with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations, the Higher Education Act, the Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at South-West University "Neofit Rilski" – Blagoevgrad, the Rules of Organization and Activities of South-West University "Neofit Rilski" – Blagoevgrad, and the Regulations on Educational Activities at South-West University "Neofit Rilski" – Blagoevgrad.

The duration of study for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" depends on the form of doctoral training—full-time, part-time, or independent study. Full-time study requires a minimum duration of two years; part-time study requires a minimum duration of three years; independent study requires a minimum duration of two years. The duration of the doctoral program may be extended for objective reasons by up to one year by order of the Rector, following consultation with the scientific supervisor and upon the proposal of the Faculty Council (Internal Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at South-West University "Neofit Rilski" – Blagoevgrad).

Doctoral training includes the following activities:

1. Research activities, including participation in scientific projects;
2. Attendance and participation in academic sessions (lectures, seminars, etc.);
3. Teaching and expert activities, as well as participation in scientific forums (national and/or international);
4. Participation in the administrative activities and academic life of the hosting unit;
5. Examinations as specified in the individual study plan;
6. Development and defense of a doctoral dissertation.

During the course of training, doctoral candidates in "Notarial Law," in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria, are expected to:

- Master research methodology and its application through the lens of specific scientific and practical problems;

- Develop competence for a detailed understanding of techniques applied in scientific research and complex academic studies;
- Acquire skills in handling scientific apparatus and resources;
- Develop abilities to identify, extract, and analyze scientific and practical problems;
- Cultivate the capacity to form informed judgments on complex issues in the field of notarial law and to present ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to both specialists and non-specialists;
- Gain skills in applying a scientific approach and utilizing scientific tools in research work;
- Acquire knowledge of teaching methodology for legal disciplines;
- Develop specialized knowledge and skills for working with various information sources, and attain advanced computer and language proficiency aimed at ensuring personal informational awareness and facilitating professional contacts with scholars from other countries;
- Acquire specialized and systematic knowledge for conducting critical analysis and synthesizing new ideas;
- Enhance the ability to expand and modify existing knowledge in the field of notarial law, as well as in its interactions with other branches of legal science.

SECTION I.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

(THEORETICAL TRAINING OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATES IN NOTARIAL LAW)

I. Contemporary Courses

Doctoral candidates are required to undertake in-depth study of one contemporary course depending on the chosen dissertation topic within the scientific field: “Bulgarian Notarial Law,” “Law of Obligations,” “Family and Inheritance Law,” “Commercial Law – Part I,” or “Commercial Law – Part II.” Other mandatory courses include “Methodology and Methods of Legal Research,” “Project Preparation and Management,” and “English Language.” Doctoral training comprises independent study, attendance at lectures and seminars, and other related activities.

Completion of the training is assessed through an examination before a committee that includes the scientific supervisor, in accordance with the individual study plan. The examination grade is reported to the Department of Civil Law Sciences and included in the documentation for monitoring the doctoral candidate’s progress under the individual study plan.

II. Elective Courses

During their studies, doctoral candidates may choose one of the following elective courses: “Bulgarian Civil Procedural Law,” “Property Law,” “Comparative Civil and Commercial Law,” “European Union Law,” or “Ethics of Scientific Research.”

Doctoral training includes independent study, attendance at lectures and seminars, and other related activities. Completion of the training is assessed through an examination before a committee that includes the scientific supervisor, in accordance with the individual study plan. The examination grade is reported to the Department of Civil Law Sciences and included in the documentation for monitoring the doctoral candidate's progress under the individual study plan.

Teaching Methods, Assessment, and Language of Instruction

The training is fully compliant with the applicable legislation and the Internal Rules for the Development of Academic Staff at South-West University "Neofit Rilski." Training is conducted through lectures and independent study by the doctoral candidates. The instructor provides explanations regarding the subject matter of the course, relevant legislation, required literature for preparation, and questions arising during the independent work of the candidates.

The language of instruction is Bulgarian.

SECTION II.

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

(CORE ACTIVITIES OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE DISSERTATION AND IN THE PURSUIT OF THEIR ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT)

During their academic training and the development of their dissertation, PhD students in Notarial Law:

1. participate in seminar sessions and discussions on didactic issues;
2. prepare reports (on topics related to their dissertation research and other issues within the scope of the doctoral program) for scientific events, discussions, conferences, and round tables;
3. take part in the development and implementation of research projects;
4. attend the meetings of the **Department of Civil Law Sciences** when discussing theoretical and practical issues;
5. carry out research work in preparation for the dissertation;
6. familiarize themselves with new trends and amendments in the law of the **European Union** and the dynamics of changes in domestic legislation, as well as with the case law of the **Constitutional Court of the Republic of Bulgaria** and the **Supreme Court of Cassation of the Republic of Bulgaria**;
7. analyze the necessity and possibilities for amendments to domestic legislation.

1. The main research activities forming part of the preparation of the dissertation include:

- formulation of the research problem and the development and presentation of a scientific thesis;
- conducting a bibliographic review and systematization of sources;
- description and systematization of prior research in the field of the dissertation topic;
- defining the aims and objectives of the research; choosing the research approach and methodology to be applied;

- developing a rationale for the selected methods and methodologies;
- preparing a conceptual project for the dissertation;
- discussion of the dissertation project – in two stages;
- presentation of the research concept and instruments;
- research activity – preparation and publication of a study, article, or scientific report;
- participation in research projects.

2. PhD students in Notarial Law may also engage in teaching and methodological activities.

3. The final stage of the academic training of PhD students involves familiarization with the procedures for the defense of the dissertation before a scientific jury and preparation for the defense.

Bulgarian Notarial Law

ECTS credits: 10

Academic hours: 45 lectures / 255 self- study

Form of assessment: Exam

Course status: Compulsory

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Valentina Popova

Annotation:

The discipline “*Bulgarian Notarial Law*” is included as a compulsory course within the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*. Through an in-depth study of the subject, the PhD student acquires theoretical knowledge of the concepts and legal institutions of substantive notarial law. Special attention is given to clarifying the notions and types of notarial certifications and the procedures through which they are performed, as these issues have significant practical importance.

The study of the legal status of persons with general and special notarial competence, the prerequisites and procedures for acquiring and losing notarial capacity, the rights and obligations of notarial authorities, as well as the organization of notarial activity, form the foundation of the discipline.

It is of primary importance for PhD students to gain knowledge in procedural notarial law—specifically, the various notarial proceedings concerning the issuance of different types of notarial acts and certifications. Advanced knowledge of the notarial procedures regulated by the **Civil Procedure Code**, as well as those established under other laws—such as the **Commerce Act**, the **Inheritance Act**, the **Merchant Shipping Code**, and others—enables comparative legal analysis and contributes to a deeper and broader understanding of the field.

Law of Obligations

ECTS credits: 10

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Ivanov

Academic Hours: 45 lectures / 255 self- study

Course status: Compulsory

Annotation:

The discipline “*Law of Obligations*” is included as a compulsory course in the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*, depending on the topic chosen by the PhD student.

The content of the course encompasses two main areas of study: **the general theory of obligations** and **special obligations**.

The first part focuses on the general principles and issues of the Law of Obligations—objective and subjective obligation law, the nature of obligation relations, their sources (particularly the general theory of contracts), performance, non-performance and liability, and means of securing obligations.

The second (special) part examines two principal areas: (1) specific contractual obligations and (2) special non-contractual obligations arising from tort, unjust enrichment, and negotiorum gestio.

The entire course aims to reveal the mechanisms of the market economy through the prism of civil law and to explore current issues related to contracting and liability, hardship and frustration of performance, the liability of the defaulting debtor, as well as not only the obligations expressly regulated by law but also those arising under **Article 9 of the Law on Obligations and Contracts**, which may be established by the will of the parties even when not expressly provided for by statute.

Family and Inheritance Law

ECTS credits: 10

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Ivanov

Academic Hours: 45 lectures / 255 self-study

Course status: Compulsory

Annotation:

The discipline “*Family and Inheritance Law*” is included as a compulsory course within the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*, depending on the topic chosen by the PhD student. The

course covers the legal norms and institutions governing social relations arising from marriage, kinship, and adoption (*family law*), as well as those concerning the transfer of a deceased person's estate to their heirs (*inheritance law*). Through advanced study, PhD students conduct a comprehensive analysis of personal and property relations between spouses, the dissolution of marriage, filiation, the relations between parents and children, adoption, and related matters. The course also provides the opportunity for in-depth examination of both types of succession—**intestate** and **testamentary**—together with the acceptance and renunciation of inheritance, **guardianship and curatorship**, and the **partition of inheritance**.

Commercial Law – Part I

ECTS credits: 10

Academic Hours : 45 lectures / 255 self- study

Form of assessment: Exam

Course status: Compulsory

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Raya Ilieva

Annotation:

The course “*Commercial Law – Part I*” is included as an elective discipline in the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*. Commercial Law – Part I represents an autonomous and highly significant branch of the existing objective legal system. Its subject of regulation encompasses relations concerning the legal status of traders—their legal nature, specific legal capacity, establishment and functioning, commercial representation, management structures, relations between partners or shareholders within commercial companies, as well as relations between them and the company itself. The course also examines the transformation, dissolution, and liquidation of traders, together with the various forms of business combinations and associations.

Commercial Law – Part II

ECTS credits: 10

Academic Hours: 45 lectures / 255 self-study

Form of assessment: Exam

Course status: Compulsory

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Ivanov

Annotation:

The course “*Commercial Law – Part II*” is included as an elective discipline in the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*. It focuses on the general legal framework governing the conclusion, performance, and non-performance of commercial transactions, as well as commercial securities and the transfer of rights.

The course examines the specific features of various types of commercial contracts—commercial sale, leasing, commission and forwarding contracts, carriage, insurance, current account contracts, banking and stock exchange transactions, negotiable instruments, safe deposit agreements, bills of exchange, warehouse receipts, franchising, factoring, and forfeiting.

Additionally, the course covers **insolvency proceedings**, including the prerequisites for initiation, the effects of the decision to open proceedings, management of the insolvency estate, the possibilities for reorganization, the declaration of bankruptcy, and its legal consequences—all of which are closely related to *Notarial Law*.

Methodology and Methods of Legal Research

ECTS credits: 5

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Manol Stanin

Academic Hours: 45 lectures / 105 self- study

Course status: Compulsory

Annotation:

The course presents the foundations of research methodology and methods in law, as well as the information systems supporting scientific research. It aims to provide PhD students with the tools for more in-depth, structured, and goal-oriented scientific inquiry. The course introduces the stages of the research process and supports the effective organization and management of academic work.

Project Preparation and Management

ECTS credits: 5

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department: Civil Law Sciences

Faculty: Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Todorov

Department: Finance and Accounting

Faculty: Faculty of Economics

Academic Hours: 15 lectures / 135 self-study

Course status: Compulsory

Annotation:

The course “*Project Preparation and Management*” introduces PhD students to the essential aspects of project design and development, forming the basis for organizing and managing projects under various **European Union funding programs**.

English Language

ECTS credits: 5

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Academic Hours: 60 lectures / 90 self- study

Course status: Compulsory

Department: Civil Law Sciences

Faculty: Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: — **Lecturers:** Assoc. Prof. Dafina Kostadinova, Assoc. Prof. Ivanka Sakareva, Assoc. Prof. Yana Chankova,

Faculty of Philology, **Department** of German and Romance Studies

Annotation:

The *English Language* course provides practical language training for PhD students. At the lower levels, it focuses on acquiring fundamental lexical and grammatical competence, while at the advanced levels it aims at improving and expanding language proficiency.

Teaching is based on an **integrated skills approach**, developing the four main competencies—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Special emphasis is placed on oral and listening skills, academic writing, and the preparation of professional documents such as presentations, curricula vitae, abstracts, and academic articles in English.

The course includes modules on **practical grammar, vocabulary, writing exercises, reading and listening comprehension, and conversation**. Depending on the specific needs of doctoral candidates from different faculties, specialized legal and academic vocabulary and translation practice (both general and specialized) are also included.

Bulgarian Civil Procedural Law

ECTS credits: 4

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturers: Prof. Dr. Valentina Popova, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Bonchovski

Academic Hours: 45 lectures / 75 self- study

Course status: Elective

Annotation:

The course “*Bulgarian Civil Procedural Law*” is included as an elective subject within the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*. It addresses the system of legal rules governing the protection of infringed or threatened civil substantive rights, as well as the enforcement of such rights.

Alongside general and special claim proceedings, the course also covers procedures on **securing claims and enforcement**, as well as **non-contentious proceedings**.

The study of civil procedure encompasses both national and EU dimensions, as it ensures the effective judicial protection of personal and proprietary rights. The course also considers **judicial and extrajudicial procedures** that support legality in private law relations, including the establishment of legally binding evidence and procedural guarantees.

Property Law

ECTS credits: 4

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Asen Vodenicharov

Academic Hours : 45 lectures / 75 self- study

Course status: Elective

Annotation:

The course “*Property Law*” is included as an elective subject within the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*. It provides a historical overview of the development of property law, tracing the genesis and evolution of real rights, which reflect the static aspect of property relations.

The course examines ownership, limited real rights, modes of acquisition and transfer, and specific remedies available for the protection of real rights. Special attention is devoted to **possession**, as a factual control preceding the recognition of subjective real rights.

As part of the doctoral program in *Notarial Law*, emphasis is placed on **registration of acts** transferring or creating real rights over immovable property, which ensures legal certainty and stability in property transactions.

Comparative Civil and Commercial Law

ECTS credits: 4

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of examination: Written

Methodological supervision:

Academic Hours : 45 lectures / 75 self- study

Course status: Elective

Department of Civil Law Sciences
Faculty of Law and History

Lecturers:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Ivanov
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Raya Ilieva

Annotation:

The course “*Comparative Civil and Commercial Law*” examines the **Roman, German, Anglo-American, and Scandinavian legal systems** and their fundamental civil law institutions.

Its aim is to familiarize PhD students with the comparative method in legal research and with the core principles of European civil and commercial law. The course also introduces students to foreign legal terminology, the theoretical foundations of statutory legal norms, and the rules governing their interpretation and application.

This is a specialized course designed for PhD students with a strong interest in **comparative legal analysis**.

European Union Law

ECTS credits: 4

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Academic Hours : 45 lectures / 75 self-study

Course status: Elective

Department of Civil Law Sciences
Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Sc. Gabriela Belova

Department of International Law and International Relations
Faculty of Law and History

Annotation:

The course “*European Union Law*” occupies a well-established and traditional place in the curriculum of the Law Faculty at **South-West University “Neofit Rilski.”**

EU Law is fundamentally distinct from both international law and the domestic law of the Member States. It constitutes a unique, autonomous legal order that raises complex theoretical and practical issues and exists in a dynamic relationship with the national legal systems of Member States.

As a system of legal norms, **EU Law has been directly applicable in the Republic of Bulgaria since its accession to the EU on 1 January 2007.** These norms are applied by national authorities in accordance with their internal hierarchy and in recognition of the

principle of supremacy (primacy) over all domestic legal norms, including constitutional provisions.

Ethics of Scientific Research

ECTS credits: 4

Form of assessment: Exam

Type of exam: Written

Methodological supervision:

Department of Civil Law Sciences

Faculty of Law and History

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Manol Stanin

Academic Hours : 45 lectures / 75 self- study

Course status: Compulsory

Annotation:

The course addresses ethical issues arising from the development of scientific research in modern society. It emphasizes the importance of ethical standards in research and the role of scientific inquiry in promoting social progress.

The objective is for PhD students to recognize the significance of ethical norms in research activities, to analyze and explore ways of addressing practical problems through scientific and ethical means. The course also highlights ethical aspects within **national and supranational legal frameworks** governing research conduct.