

Guidelines
for
the assessment
of
Norwegian
doctoral degrees

Recommended by
Universities Norway (UHR)
13 May 2022

Implemented by the University of Stavanger 5 October 2022 after assessment in
Forsknings- og innovasjonsutvalget 26 September 2022.

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0. About the guidelines

The University of Stavanger's Guidelines for the assessment of Norwegian doctoral degrees are based on the Universities Norway (UHR)'s Guidelines for the assessment of Norwegian doctoral degrees. The aim of the guidelines is to help ensure that the assessment of doctoral degrees in Norway, i.e. the assessment of doctoral theses, trial lectures and public defences, is carried out according to a universal standard.

The assessment of doctoral degrees at the University of Stavanger is regulated by

- Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)
- Forskrift for graden dr.philos. ved Universitetet i Stavanger (Norwegian version only)

supplementary provisions, guidelines, etc. to the institution's regulations.

Everyone who is involved in assessing doctoral work at the University of Stavanger must be made aware of the institution's regulations and guidelines for the relevant degree. These guidelines focus on the assessment, and gives a description of the norms and procedures that is considered common for the assessment of Norwegian doctoral degrees.

1. About Norwegian doctoral degrees

A Norwegian doctoral degree is awarded as certification of the candidate's competence in research at third-cycle level in accordance with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

The level of competence in degrees with time norms and organised research training (the PhD degree) is assumed to be equivalent to that of the dr. philos. degree, which has no time norms or organised research training. The principle of equivalence refers to the academic standard and quality of the doctoral work, not merely its volume. Emphasis must be placed on the quality, relevance and significance of the doctoral work, and not on whether it has been published or made public at the time of assessment or where it may have been published or made public.

In the organised research training, competence can also be documented through practical tests and participation in various activities within the training component. The absence of a requirement for training in the dr. philos. degree is expected to be compensated by more extensive thesis work than what would be required for the organised research training programmes. Irrespective of the type of degree, the candidate must satisfy the same minimum requirements for research competence – demonstrated through the qualification framework's requirements for knowledge, skills and general competence at the third-cycle level.

Organised research training can lead to a scientific PhD, 'philosophiae doctor', or an artistic PhD, 'philosophiae doctor in artistic research'.

Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)

Section 1-3 The PhD degree is conferred on the basis of an:

- approved academic thesis
- approved completion of the training component
- approved trial lecture on an assigned topic
- approved public defence of the thesis (disputation).

Forskrift for graden dr.philos. ved Universitetet i Stavanger (Norwegian version only)

§ 5 Graden dr. philos. ved Universitetet i Stavanger tildeles på grunnlag av:

- Godkjent vitenskapelig avhandling
- Godkjent offentlig forsvar av avhandlingen (disputas)

To godkjente prøveforelesninger

2. Distribution of work between committee members

The members of the assessment committee must assess the doctoral work, trial lecture(s) if relevant, and public defence on an independent basis.

The chair of the assessment committee is the point of contact between the committee and the institution. The committee chair ensures that deadlines are met, that the assessment meets the requirements for academic quality and that the external committee members are familiar with the entire assessment process. The chair is responsible for initiating the work of the assessment committee, for coordinating the committee members' recommendations and for submitting the final recommendation to the institution.

The chair helps to clarify the distribution of work between the committee members.

3. Assessment committee's assessment of the doctoral work

3.1 Requirements for the thesis or for the artistic PhD result

Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)

Section 6-1. Thesis requirements

The thesis must be an independent piece of academic work that meets international standards with regard to ethical requirements, academic levels and methodologies.

The thesis must contribute to the development of new knowledge and present an academic level meriting publication in a suitable format as part of the discipline's research-based knowledge development.

The thesis may consist of a monograph or a compendium of several shorter scientific or academic papers.

If the thesis consists of several shorter papers, clarification about how they are interrelated must be included in a synopsis of the thesis («kappe»). This introductory section should, from a holistic perspective, summarise and compile the issues and conclusions that are presented in the works, documenting the context of the thesis. The introductory section must also account for the choice of theory and methodology and assessment of the results according to international standards and academic standards within the subject area. The candidate must be the sole author of the introductory section.

The main component of the thesis may consist of a new product or a systematised collection of material or another form of production (e.g. audio, image, video, electronic forms of production) in which its theoretical and methodological basis is not shown by the product itself. In such cases, the thesis, in addition to presenting the product itself, must have a synopsis («kappe»).

The faculty decides which language may be used in a thesis.

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§ 6. Krav til avhandlingen

Avhandlingen skal være et selvstendig vitenskapelig arbeid som oppfyller internasjonale standarder med hensyn til etiske krav, faglig nivå og metode. Avhandlingen skal ligge på samme faglige nivå som en ph.d.-avhandling, men ha betydelig større omfang.

Avhandlingen skal bidra til å utvikle ny faglig kunnskap og ha et nivå som tilsier at den vil kunne publiseres som en del av fagets forskningsbaserte kunnskapsutvikling.

Avhandlingen kan bestå av en monografi eller en sammenstilling av flere mindre arbeider. Dersom avhandlingen består av flere mindre arbeider, skal det redegjøres for sammenhengen mellom dem i en innledende del («kappe»). Denne innledningsdelen skal, i et helhetlig perspektiv, sammenfatte og sammenstille problemstillingene og konklusjonene som legges frem i delarbeidene og dokumentere sammenhengen i avhandlingen. Innledningsdelen skal også gjøre rede for valg av teori og metode og vurdering av resultatet i henhold til internasjonale standarder og faglig nivå innen fagområdet. Kandidaten skal være eneforfatter av innledningsdelen.

Avhandlingens hovedkomponent kan bestå av et nytt produkt eller en systematisert materialsamling eller ha en annen fremstillingsform (for eksempel lyd, bilde, video, elektroniske fremstillingsformer) der dens teoretiske og metodiske grunnlag ikke fremgår av produktet selv. I slike tilfeller skal avhandlingen, foruten å fremstille selve produktet, ha en innledende del («kappe»).

Dersom avhandlingen eller deler av den er blitt til i samarbeid med andre, skal kandidaten følge de normer for medforfatterskap som er allment akseptert i fagmiljøet og i henhold til internasjonale standarder.

I avhandlinger hvor det inngår arbeider med flere forfattere eller samarbeidspartnere, skal det følge en underskrevet erklæring som beskriver kandidatens og medforfatterens innsats i hvert enkelt arbeid.

Avhandlingen skal være skrevet på norsk, svensk, dansk eller engelsk.

Avhandlingen skal være offentlig tilgjengelig.

En avhandling som ikke er blitt godkjent ved en tidligere bedømmelse, kan bedømmes i omarbeidet versjon, enten som eneste arbeid eller som ett av flere sammenhengende arbeider, først seks måneder etter at fakultetet har fattet beslutning om å underkjenne avhandlingen. Bedømmelse på ny kan bare finne sted én gang.

3.2 Assessment of the scientific thesis

Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)

Section 7-5. Gathering of supplementary information

The assessment committee may require presentation of the candidate's source material and additional information for the purpose of supplementation or clarification.

The assessment committee may ask academic supervisors to provide information about the supervision carried out and the work involved in the thesis.

Section 7-6. Revision of a submitted doctoral thesis

Before producing its final recommendation, and based on the submitted thesis and any basic materials and additional information it has required, the assessment committee may recommend that the faculty permits a minor revision of the thesis. The committee is to provide a written list of the specific items that the candidate must revise.

If the faculty allows minor revisions to the thesis, a deadline normally not exceeding three months is to be set for completing such revisions. A new deadline must also be set for submission of the committee's final recommendation. The faculty's decision pursuant to this provision may not be appealed by the candidate.

If the committee finds that profound changes regarding the theory, hypothesis, material or method are necessary for the thesis to be found worthy of being defended for the degree, the committee should instead submit a recommendation that the thesis is not worthy of being defended for the degree, cf. section 7-8.

Forskrift for graden dr.philos. ved Universitetet i Stavanger (Norwegian version only)

§ 10. Innhenting av supplerende opplysninger

Bedømmelseskomiteen kan kreve fremlagt kandidatens grunnlagsmateriale og utfyllende eller oppklarende tilleggsinformasjon.

§ 11. Retting av formelle feil i avhandlingen

Et innlevert arbeid kan ikke trekkes tilbake før det er endelig avgjort om det er verdig til offentlig forsvar av graden.

Etter innlevering kan kandidaten søke fakultetet om tillatelse til å rette formelle feil i avhandlingen. Søknaden skal inneholde en fullstendig oversikt over de feil (errata) som ønskes rettet. Søknad om retting av formelle feil må leveres inn senest fire uker før bedømmelseskomiteens frist for avlevering av innstilling, og kan bare skje én gang.

In the assessment of the thesis, particular emphasis is placed on whether the thesis is an independent and comprehensive scientific work of a high academic standard in terms of research questions, methodology, theoretical and empirical basis, documentation, critical assessment of the literature and form of presentation. It is particularly important that an assessment is made of the suitability of the material and methods in relation to the questions raised in the thesis, and the validity of the arguments and conclusions presented.

The thesis must constitute new knowledge within the field and be of a level that makes it worthy of publishing as part of the scientific literature within the subject area.

If the doctoral work consists of a written component in combination with a product documented in a permanent format or a production, an assessment will be made of whether the content of the combined works form a whole and that this meets the requirements for an independent piece of research for the doctoral degree. This requires the committee to attend, or in some other way witness, any production that is carried out as part of the doctoral work. It must be clear from the written component that the work satisfies the requirements for

research questions, methodology, theoretical and empirical basis, documentation, critical assessment of the literature and form of presentation. The written component must also explain the choices made regarding the product or production.

If the thesis consists of a collection of several shorter pieces of work (manuscripts/articles), the committee shall, based on the summary of the thesis (cf. Section 11-1, third paragraph), assess whether the content of the individual works collectively form a whole. The summary must be written solely by the candidate, and is a very important part of the thesis both for the candidate and for the committee's assessment. In the summary, the candidate must not only summarise, but also synthesise the research questions and conclusions presented in the individual works in an overarching perspective, and in doing so show how the different works are related.

If the thesis contains several pieces of work from more than one author, the committee shall, based on the declaration of co-authorship, assess whether the candidate's contributions are identifiable and whether the candidate is solely responsible for a sufficiently large part of the thesis. If the candidate's own documentation is not sufficient, the committee can obtain additional information.

If the thesis in its entirety is submitted as a joint work, the research project and/or thesis will naturally be more extensive than would be the case for an individual piece of work. As far as is possible, each of the candidates must be assessed and tested according to the same requirements for individual pieces of work. Monographs cannot be accepted as joint work.

3.3 Assessment of the artistic PhD result

A Norwegian doctoral degree in artistic research is awarded as certification of the candidate's artistic research at third-cycle level in accordance with the Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The doctoral work must consist of an artistic result and material that documents artistic reflection, and this work must be comprehensive and independent and meet international standards with regard to the standard and ethical requirements within the discipline. The work must contribute to the development of new knowledge, insight and empirical evidence within the subject area.

In the assessment of the doctoral work, particular emphasis is placed on whether the work is an independent and comprehensive piece of artistic research of a high academic standard in terms of originality, coherence, expression and communication, and whether appropriate forms of presentation have been chosen for both the artistic result and for the documentation of artistic reflection. An assessment must be made of the process with regard to artistic choices, use of theory and methodology, dialogues with various networks and academic communities. The work must be clearly positioned nationally and internationally within the field and must contribute to the development of the subject area.

3.4 Assessment committee's recommendation and conclusion

Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)

Section 7-8. Recommendation of the assessment committee

The assessment committee delivers its recommendation as to whether the thesis is worthy of being defended for the degree. The recommendation and any dissenting opinions must be substantiated.

The assessment committee must deliver its recommendation within three months of receiving the thesis. If the faculty allows rework of the thesis, the new deadline runs from the date the thesis is delivered again.

The assessment committee's recommendation is delivered to the faculty, which presents this to the candidate. The PhD candidate is given a deadline of ten working days to present written comments to the recommendation. If the PhD candidate does not wish to comment, the PhD candidate must inform the faculty of this as soon as possible in writing.

Any comments by the candidate must be submitted to the faculty.

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§ 12. Bedømmelseskomiteens innstilling

Bedømmelseskomiteen avgir innstilling om hvorvidt arbeidet er verdig til å forsvares for graden. Innstilling og eventuelle dissenser skal begrunnes.

Bedømmelseskomiteens innstilling skal normalt foreligge innen tre måneder etter at komiteen har mottatt avhandlingen. Tillater fakultetet omarbeiding av avhandlingen, løper ny frist fra den dato avhandlingen leveres på nytt.

Bedømmelseskomiteens innstilling oversendes fakultetet som forelegger denne for kandidaten. Kandidaten gis en frist på ti arbeidsdager til å fremme skriftlige merknader til innstillingen. Hvis kandidaten ikke ønsker å fremme merknader, skal fakultetet snarest underrettes skriftlig om dette.

Kandidatens eventuelle merknader skal sendes fakultetet. Fakultetet fatter vedtak i saken i samsvar med § 10.

The recommendation must contain a brief description of the work's format (monograph/collection of articles/concert etc.). It must also include reference to the key elements (e.g. theory, hypotheses, material, methodology and findings) and scientific or artistic significance of the thesis.

If the committee approves the doctoral work for public defence, a relatively brief explanation of its reasoning should be given. The committee should then endeavour to set out its recommendation in a general and concise form. In cases where the committee concludes that the doctoral work should not be approved, a more detailed explanation of the committee's reasoning is expected. The candidate can submit comments on the committee's recommendation via their institution.

Scientific PhDs:

If the committee recommends that a scientific PhD thesis should not be approved for public defence in its current form, but that a minor revision could bring it up to a satisfactory standard within the deadline specified in the institution's PhD regulations, it can recommend that the candidate be given the opportunity to undertake such work. At the University of Stavanger, the deadline for completing such minor revisions should normally not exceed three months.

When recommending a minor revision, the committee must provide a written overview of what exactly needs to be revised. The committee should indicate which areas need to be strengthened (e.g. the relationship between the data material and the conclusion, use of documentation, use of terms, clarity of research questions). Making the necessary changes does not guarantee automatic approval of the thesis in the committee's final assessment. The assessment of a thesis following a minor revision does not constitute a re-assessment; it is regarded as a postponement of the original assessment. If a thesis is rejected following a minor revision, the candidate can submit the thesis for re-assessment one more time.

4. Assessment committee's assessment of the doctoral examination

The doctoral examination for the scientific PhD consists of a trial lecture and public defence of the thesis (disputation). The doctoral examination for the artistic PhD consists of a trial lecture, and public defence of the artistic PhD result (disputation).

The doctoral examination for the dr. philos. degree consists of two trial lectures and a public defence of the thesis (disputation).

4.1 Trial lecture or other examination on an assigned topic

Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)

Section 8-1. Trial lecture

After the thesis has been found worthy of being defended, and before the public defence, cf. section 8-3, the candidate must hold a trial lecture. The trial lecture is an independent part of the examination for the PhD degree and is held on an assigned topic. The purpose is to test the candidate's ability to acquire knowledge beyond the topic of the thesis and to impart this knowledge in a lecture setting.

The topic of the trial lecture will be announced to the candidate ten working days before the trial lecture. The topic of the lecture must not have a direct connection to the topic of the thesis.

If the faculty choose to hold the trial lecture in connection with the public defence, the assessment committee will issue a topic for the trial lecture and conduct the assessment themselves. If the two lectures are held separately, the faculty may appoint a separate lecture committee which also establishes the topic of the trial lecture. At least one of the members of the assessment committee must take part in the assessment.

The trial lecture must be held in the language in which the thesis is written, unless the faculty approves the use of another language.

Section 8-2. Assessment of the trial lecture

The faculty makes a decision on the basis of the committee's recommendation, cf. section 8-1. The faculty is responsible for determining whether the trial lecture is passed or not passed. A justification must be given if the trial lecture is assessed as not passed. The trial lecture must be passed before the public defence may take place.

If the trial lecture is assessed as not passed, the candidate may register for a new trial lecture. The new trial lecture must be held on a new topic, as soon as possible, and not later than 6 months after the first trial lecture. As far as possible, the lecture must be assessed by the same committee that assessed the original lecture, unless the faculty decides otherwise. The candidate may hold a new trial lecture only once.

Forskrift for graden dr.philos. ved Universitetet i Stavanger (Norwegian version only)

§ 16-1. Prøveforelesninger

Dersom arbeidet finnes verdig til å forsvares for graden, skal kandidaten holde to offentlige prøveforelesninger, en over et selvvalgt emne og en over et oppgitt emne. Prøveforelesningene er en selvstendig del av doktorgradsprøven. Hensikten er å prøve kandidatens evne til å tilegne seg kunnskaper utover avhandlingens tema og evnen til å formidle disse i en forelesningssituasjon.

Kandidaten meddeler tittel på prøveforelesning over selvvalgt emne til universitetet én måned før planlagt disputasdato. Emne for prøveforelesning over oppgitt emne bestemmes av bedømmelseskomiteen og kunngjøres for kandidaten ti arbeidsdager før forelesningen.

Prøveforelesningene skal avholdes på avhandlingspråket med mindre fakultetet godkjenner et annet språk.

Prøveforelesningene skal vurderes av bedømmelseskomiteen som bestått eller ikke bestått. Det skal begrunnes dersom en eller begge prøveforelesningene vurderes ikke bestått.

Fakultetet fatter vedtak om godkjenning av prøveforelesning på grunnlag av komiteens innstilling.

Dersom en eller begge prøveforelesningene vurderes som ikke bestått, kan kandidaten melde seg til nye prøveforelesninger. Nye prøveforelesninger må holdes over nytt/nye titler, snarest mulig, og ikke senere enn seks måneder etter første gang. Forelesningene skal så vidt det er mulig bedømmes av samme komité som den opprinnelige, dersom fakultetet ikke har bestemt noe annet.

Kandidaten kan holde nye prøveforelesninger kun én gang.

Prøveforelesningen skal være bestått før disputas kan avholdes.

In the scientific PhD, the candidate must, during the trial lecture, document their ability to acquire and convey research-based knowledge beyond their specialist field.

In the PhD in artistic research, the candidate must, during the trial lecture, document their ability to acquire and convey knowledge beyond the topic of their doctoral work.

For the dr. philos. degree, the candidate must hold two trial lectures: one on an assigned topic and one on a self-selected topic. The trial lecture on a self-selected topic must take the form of a self-contained academic presentation as opposed to a summary of the thesis and its findings.

The trial lecture should be presented in such a way that it can also benefit students at master level. The assessment committee will give the trial lecture(s) a pass or fail grade. In the assessment, emphasis is placed on both academic content and the candidate's ability to convey this.

4.2 Disputation

Regulations for the Philosophiae Doctor (PhD) degree at the University of Stavanger (unofficial translation)

Section 8-3. Public defence of the thesis (disputation)

The public defence of the thesis should normally take place within two months after the faculty has found the thesis worthy of being defended.

The time and location of the public defence must be announced at least ten working days in advance. The committee that originally assessed the PhD thesis must also assess the public defence. The public defence is held in the language in which the thesis is written, unless the faculty approves the use of another language.

Normally, there are to be two opponents. The two opponents must be members of the assessment committee and are appointed by the faculty.

The public defence will be chaired by the dean, or by the person authorised by the dean. The candidate should be given the opportunity to defend the thesis. Others present at the public defence should be given the opportunity to comment ex auditorio.

The assessment committee submits its recommendation to the faculty explaining how it has assessed the public defence of the thesis. The recommendation must conclude with a statement as to whether the public defence is assessed as approved or not approved. If the defence is assessed as «not approved», the recommendation must provide a justification.

Forskrift for graden dr.philos. ved Universitetet i Stavanger (Norwegian version only)

§ 16-2. Offentlig forsvar av avhandlingen (disputas)

Offentlig forsvar av avhandlingen skal normalt finne sted innen to måneder etter at fakultetet har funnet avhandlingen verdig til å forsvares.

Tid og sted for det offentlige forsvaret kunngjøres minst ti arbeidsdager før det avholdes. Den komiteen som opprinnelig har bedømt avhandlingen, bedømmer også det offentlige forsvaret. Det offentlige forsvaret skjer på avhandlingsspråket med mindre fakultetet godkjenner et annet språk.

Det skal normalt være to opponenter. De to opponentene skal være medlemmer av bedømmelseskomiteen og utpekes av fakultetet.

Disputas ledes av dekan eller den dekan bemyndiger. Kandidaten skal gis anledning til å forsvare avhandlingen. Øvrige tilstedeværende skal gis anledning til å kommentere ex auditorio.

Bedømmelseskomiteen avgir innstilling til fakultetet der den gjør rede for hvordan den har vurdert forsvaret av avhandlingen. Innstillingen skal konkludere med om disputasen er vurdert godkjent eller ikke godkjent. Innstillingen skal begrunnes dersom disputasen vurderes ikke godkjent.

Fakultetet fatter vedtak om godkjenning av disputas på grunnlag av bedømmelseskomiteens innstilling.

Dersom fakultetet ikke godkjenner disputasen, kan kandidaten forsvare avhandlingen på nytt én gang. Ny disputas skal avholdes senest innen seks måneder og bedømmes så vidt mulig av den samme komité som den opprinnelige, dersom ikke fakultetet har bestemt noe annet.

For a more detailed description of the public defence process and the distribution of responsibilities between the participants, please refer to the University of Stavanger's regulations on doctoral degrees and any associated provisions, as well as other traditional practices for conducting a public defence.

In the scientific doctoral thesis, the public defence must take the form of an academic discussion between the opponents and the candidate on the research questions, methodologies, empirical and theoretical basis, documentation and form of presentation. Particular emphasis should be placed on verifying the validity of the core conclusions drawn by the candidate in their work. The research questions that the opponents choose to address do not need to be limited to those covered in the committee's recommendation.

A public defence of artistic research must take the form of an academic discussion between the opponents and the candidate with the aim of shedding as much light as possible on the doctoral work in terms of the artistic result and the artistic reflection. The discussion should address research questions, processes, choice of methods, theories, documentation and forms of presentation, and how the work contributes to new knowledge, insight and empirical evidence within the subject area. The research questions that the opponents choose to address do not need to be limited to those covered in the committee's recommendation.

The opponents should encourage academic discussion that challenges the candidate, not only in terms of the academic content of the doctoral work, but also on the candidate's ability to place the work in a wider scientific/artistic and societal context. During the public defence, the opponents and the candidate are encouraged to challenge each other academically in a respectful manner.

4.3 Assessment committee's assessment and recommendation

The assessment committee's recommendation culminates in a conclusion stating whether the defence of the thesis or the artistic result should be approved or not.

If a doctoral thesis is found worthy of public defence, this will normally lead to the defence being approved for a doctoral degree. If new points come to light during the defence which cause uncertainty among the committee and which cannot be clarified during the public defence, the committee should clarify and assess the potential implications of these before making its final recommendation.

If the core conclusions of the work prove, beyond doubt, not to be valid in view of *new points that come to light during the defence*, the assessment committee must not approve the defence in its recommendation. This also applies if, during the defence, objectionable factors of material significance to the assessment of the work come to light, such as a breach of research ethics norms or good academic practice. If the defence is not approved, the candidate will have one new attempt at a public defence.