

Guidelines on the assessment and public defence of the PhD thesis at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Social Sciences

The guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the Ministerial Order no. 114 of 8 March which came into force as from 1 May 2002. The following guidelines are a combination of the regulations of the Ministerial Order and the supplementary regulations of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The PhD must be submitted to the PhD Office

1. As a principal rule the PhD thesis must be written in Danish accompanied by a summary in English. Alternatively, the PhD thesis can be written in English accompanied by a summary in Danish.
2. The PhD thesis must be submitted to the PhD Office in six copies. (Three copies for the assessment committee, one for the supervisor, one to be stored and one for the University Library). Furthermore, a English summary of the PhD thesis in a pdf file must be submitted. The summary will be made publicly available at the Faculty website prior to the public defence.
3. The PhD thesis can only be accepted for assessment if the Faculty of Social Sciences judges that the total PhD programme has been satisfactorily completed. No later than the time at which the PhD thesis is submitted, the principal supervisor shall submit a statement about the progress of the PhD studies, including a report on the carrying out of the individual parts of the PhD plan (completed PhD courses, experience in the dissemination of knowledge and stays at other research institutions). The principal supervisor shall involve any project supervisor and other supervisors in the wording of the statement. If one of the members of the assessment committee is from abroad, the statement must be in English.
4. The PhD thesis cannot be submitted for assessment by two or more authors jointly.
5. The principal supervisor can decide that manuscripts of other articles, or previously published articles, may be included in the PhD thesis. In case the PhD thesis consists of papers it is compulsory to add a summary clearly showing the relation progression between the papers as well as recapitulating the results of the research.
6. If parts of the PhD thesis have been written in cooperation with others, a declaration from each of the authors must be attached stating the extent of the PhD student's contribution to the total work.

Composition of the assessment committee

The assessment committee must be composed of three members who must be professors, full-time associate professors or persons with corresponding professional qualifications. Two of the members must come from outside the institution, preferably from abroad, and one must be employed at the University of Southern Denmark. The PhD student's supervisors shall take part in the work of the committee in a non-voting capacity. The principal supervisor must be invited to the meetings of assessment committee and must be informed about emails etc.

In order to meet the deadlines of the Ministerial Order concerning the preliminary assessment and the public defence of the PhD thesis the PhD student must inform the principal supervisor about the expected date for the handing in of the PhD thesis. The Head of Department must be notified about the expected date of handing in the PhD thesis in order to prepare the composition of the assessment committee for approval by the Dean before the PhD thesis is submitted.

1. The Head of Department recommends the composition of the assessment committee and points out the chairman of the committee.
2. The PhD Office must be notified about the composition of the assessment committee. The Head of Department is obliged to make sure that the recommended members of the committee have agreed to participate in the work of the committee. CV for the members from outside the institution must be enclosed.
3. The Dean must approve the final composition of the assessment committee.
4. The PhD Office informs the author about the composition of the assessment committee and the author must be offered eight days to register any objection.
5. The author is to be informed about the final composition of the committee and shall be given eight days to withdraw the PhD thesis from the provisional assessment.

The preliminary assessment of the PhD thesis

After two months at the latest the assessment committee shall submit a preliminary recommendation, with reasons, stating whether the PhD thesis, in its preliminary form, is suitable as a basis for the award of a PhD degree. The preliminary recommendation must be signed by each of the members of the assessment committee. If the PhD thesis is judged suitable the author will be informed and will receive a copy of the recommendation. If the PhD thesis is judged suitable the preliminary recommendation will be approved by the Academy Council.

As soon as possible the chairman of the assessment committee must inform the author – through the PhD Office – if the PhD thesis in its existing form cannot form the basis of a defence. If the PhD thesis is re-submitted in a revised form, it is to be assessed by the previously appointed assessment committee, unless special circumstances apply.

The defence of the PhD thesis

The defence shall take place when the assessment committee has made its preliminary recommendation and not later than four months after the PhD thesis has been submitted.

When the assessment committee submits the preliminary recommendation the chairman must inform the PhD Office about the time and place for defence and the venue of the defence. Through the defence the author shall be given the opportunity to explain the crux of the PhD thesis. The date for the defence must be fixed in cooperation with the members of the assessment committee, the author and the Head of Department. The chairman is responsible for reserving a room for the defence. The PhD Office informs the author about the defence and announces the defence at the University homepage.

The PhD thesis must be made publicly available three weeks before the defence. A summary of the PhD thesis will be available at the Faculty homepage three weeks before the defence.

Procedure for defence of the PhD thesis

The defence must be performed according to the following procedure:

1. Introduction by the Head of Department or his/her substitute (the person chairing the defence).
2. A 45-minute-long lecture by the PhD student.
3. The members of the assessment committee from outside the institution must comment the PhD thesis and examine the PhD student. The person chairing the defence must see to that this opposition is limited to one hour divided among the members.
4. The member of the assessment committee from the University of Southern Denmark has a maximum of 30 minutes for his/her opposition.
5. The person chairing the defence may allow others to make a contribution during the defence with reference to the lecture.
6. The person chairing the defence concludes the defence and may allow the PhD student to make a brief comment.

The supervisor is not expected to contribute to the defence. However, the person chairing the defence may exempt from this rule at the request of the assessment committee. In that case the supervisor will get 30 minutes at his/her disposal.

The final assessment of the PhD thesis

Immediately after the defence the assessment committee shall submit its recommendation as to whether the PhD degree should be awarded. This recommendation must be based on both the written PhD thesis and the oral defence.

If the members of the committee cannot agree to recommend that the PhD degree is awarded, the institution must inform the author immediately.

The committee must then make its preliminary recommendation as soon as possible and the author shall be given an opportunity to comment on it within one month, whereafter the committee shall make its final decision.

If only one of the members recommends the award of the PhD degree, the Academy Council may decide by a majority of two-thirds of its voting members that the PhD thesis can be assessed by a new assessment committee, if the author so requests within two weeks. If no member of the assessment

committee makes a positive recommendation, the PhD thesis may not be assessed by a new assessment committee.

The decision to award the PhD degree must be taken as soon as possible after the assessment committee has made its final recommendation. The award of the PhD degree is decided by the Academy Council.

If the preliminary recommendation is positive it will be approved by the Academy Council. If the assessment committee makes a positive recommendation after the defence the PhD degree can be awarded immediately after the defence.

In particular cases the Dean may permit amendments to the above rules.

Updated March 16, 2007