



PHD PLAN AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The principal supervisor is responsible for the overall PhD programme, pursuant to the [PhD Order no. 1039 of 27 August 2013, section 8, subsection 1](#). The main responsibilities of the principal supervisor are assistance with the PhD plan and evaluation of progress during the PhD study in close collaboration with the PhD student. PhD students as well as principal supervisors and programme directors are expected to become acquainted with the following guidelines.

A. PHD PLAN

Within three months of the start of the PhD programme, the PhD student must prepare a PhD plan in close collaboration with the principal supervisor.

For further information on the requirements to the PhD plan, please see [the doctoral school's internal regulations on the PhD programme](#) and [template for the PhD plan](#).

The PhD student uploads the PhD plan in the IT system PhDManager. The principal supervisor, programme director and head of department will receive an email request for their approval immediately after the PhD student has uploaded the PhD plan.

B. PROGRESS REPORTS

During the PhD study four progress reports have to be made with reference to the PhD plan. A progress report consists of the PhD student's accumulative registration of activities and evaluation of these, i.e. a portfolio, and the principal supervisor's evaluation of the portfolio. This is followed by the programme director's approval, which among other things presupposes that all required documentation e. g. course certificates have been uploaded with the portfolio, and that the study is progressing satisfactorily with regard to fulfilling the requirements of ECTS and teaching hours.

The PhD student prepares a portfolio documenting the progress of the PhD study programme in terms of the PhD thesis, ECTS activities, knowledge dissemination, visits to other research environments and publications. The portfolio is a continuous document which accumulates the PhD student's activities and evaluation of these throughout the whole enrolment period. The portfolio template can be found [here](#).

The four progress reports during the PhD study consist of two written reports and two combined written and oral reports:

1st Progress report (portfolio)	= after 6 months
2nd Progress report (portfolio and oral)	= after 12 months
3rd Progress report (portfolio)	= after 24 months
4th Progress report (portfolio and oral)	= after 30 months

Part-time PhD students also have to make four progress reports at durations proportional to their period of study. If the enrolment period is six years, the deadline of the 1st progress report is after 12 months of enrolment, and so forth.

The principal supervisor and the PhD student must discuss the portfolio, with reference to the PhD plan, before the portfolio is uploaded, and together they determine whether or not the PhD plan should be adjusted.

Periods of documented illness, maternity/paternity leave and other approved leave must be taken into account when evaluating the progress of the PhD study.

1st progress report is written and is produced after 6 months of full-time study. The PhD student uploads the portfolio in PhDManager and the principal supervisor evaluates the progress of the PhD study in PhDManager under “supervisor’s comments”. After the principal supervisor has submitted his/her evaluation, the programme director evaluates the progress report.

2nd progress report is written and oral and is produced after 12 months of full-time study. The principal supervisor is responsible for organizing an oral evaluation. It is mandatory for the PhD student, principal supervisor and programme director to participate, the latter because oral evaluations may also focus on the formal requirements of a PhD study, job satisfaction and integration into the research environment. The programme director will among other things follow up on the PhD student’s participation in other national and in particular international research environments.

The PhD student makes a presentation based on extracts of written work (10-15 pages). The PhD student sends his/her written work to the principal supervisor and programme director prior to the oral evaluation session; the material shall not be uploaded in PhDManager. It is recommended that the relevant research group(s) attend the session. The aim is to give the PhD student feedback on the PhD project and to assess whether the PhD plan should be adjusted. The PhD student updates the portfolio taking into consideration the main points from the oral evaluation and uploads it to PhDManager. The principal supervisor evaluates the progress of the PhD student, based on the oral evaluation and the portfolio, in PhDManager under “supervisor’s comments”. The evaluation must include the main conclusions of the oral evaluation. After the principal supervisor has submitted his/her evaluation, the programme director evaluates the progress report.

3rd progress report is written and is conducted after 24 months of full-time study. The PhD student uploads the portfolio in PhDManager and the principal supervisor evaluates the progress of the PhD student in PhDManager under “supervisor’s comments”. After the principal supervisor has submitted his/her evaluation, the programme director evaluates the progress report.

4th progress report is written and oral and is conducted after 30 months of full-time study. The principal supervisor is responsible for organizing the oral evaluation (pre-defence). It is mandatory for the PhD student, principal supervisor and an internal discussant from AAU to participate. In special circumstances, the discussant may be external. It is recommended that secondary supervisors attend the session, if possible. The PhD student prepares an extract of approximately 50-70 pages of the PhD thesis for the discussant and gives a presentation of the PhD project. The PhD student sends the extract to the principal supervisor, discussant and programme director prior to the oral evaluation session; the material shall not be uploaded in PhDManager. The discussant gives feedback to the PhD student with a view to identifying focus points for the final stage of the PhD project. It is recommended that the relevant research group(s) also attend the oral evaluation.

As the discussant gives detailed feedback on the PhD student’s work, which resembles the work of a supervisor, the discussant cannot be a member of the thesis assessment committee.

Based on the feedback from the oral evaluation, the PhD student updates the portfolio and uploads it to PhDManager. The principal supervisor’s evaluation of progress in PhDManager must include an outline of the recommendations and conclusions from the oral evaluation. After the principal supervisor has submitted his/her evaluation, the programme director and the director of the doctoral school evaluate the progress report.

About PhDManager

PhD students should receive a system-generated email from PhDManager one month before the deadline for uploading the portfolio. Documentation of ECTS activities and knowledge dissemination must be uploaded as attachment to the portfolio. When the PhD student has uploaded the portfolio, the principal supervisor receives an email request asking for his/her approval. When the principal supervisor has approved the portfolio, the programme director must approve the portfolio. In the case of the 4th progress report, the director of the doctoral school also approves the progress report. PhDManager can be accessed [here](#). Please use your AAU password for log in.

General information about progress reports

Immediately after approval of the portfolio, the PhD student may comment on the evaluation within two weeks, cf. the PhD order, §10, 1. Comments are registered in PhDManager.

Progress reports may be rejected if the PhD student does not include sufficient documentation of ECTS activities or because of an inadequate description of the progress of the PhD project. In such cases, the PhD student will be asked to revise the portfolio and upload it for approval, as soon as possible.

If the current progress report clearly shows that the PhD student is not following the PhD plan, in spite of adjustments made to the PhD plan, the PhD student must be given three months to get back on course. The three month probation period does not give rise to an extension of the PhD student's enrolment period. The goals to be achieved by the student in the probation period are negotiated by the principal supervisor and the PhD student. After the period has expired, an assessment of the PhD student's progress is made by the principal supervisor and the programme director to determine if the PhD student can continue their studies. This chance to get back on course in connection with progress reports can only be given to the PhD student once during the PhD study, cf. the PhD order §10, 2.