



AALBORG UNIVERSITET

**Doctoral School of the  
Humanities**  
Kroghstræde 3  
9220 Aalborg Ø  
Tlf. 9940 9940

## ***Guidelines for PhD Assessment Committees***

***Doctoral School of the Humanities  
Aalborg University***



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### **The Assessment Committee**

Upon submission of the PhD thesis, the dean appoints an expert assessment committee composed of three members. One of the three members is appointed chairman of the committee. The members of the assessment committee shall be recognized researchers within the relevant field and must be professors, full-time employed associate professors or possess corresponding qualifications. The assessment committee must be composed of both male and female members, unless special circumstances apply. Furthermore, two of the members shall be external researchers, of whom at least one shall be from outside of Denmark, unless this is not practicable considering the subject in question. The PhD student's supervisors shall not be members of the assessment committee; however, the principal supervisor shall assist the assessment committee without voting rights, cf. Ministerial Order No 1039 of 27th August 2013 on the PhD programme at Danish universities.

The assessment committee shall prepare a preliminary recommendation and a final recommendation, as explicated below. All members of the assessment committee contribute to the recommendation, however; it is the responsibility of the chair to oversee that the work of the committee is in compliance with the rules and regulations; that is The Ministerial Order No 1029 of 27th August 2013 on the PhD programme at Danish universities as well as the internal study regulation of the doctoral school, which can be found on the website of the Doctoral School of the Humanities in both English and Danish: <http://phd.hum.aau.dk/index.php?id=9072> .

### **The preliminary recommendation**

Within two months of the submission of the PhD thesis, the assessment committee shall submit its preliminary recommendation to the Faculty Office as to whether the PhD thesis fulfils the requirements for the award of the PhD degree. In the event of disagreement, the majority shall prevail.

The PhD student should be able to use the preliminary recommendation to prepare the oral defence, or to revise the thesis, if the recommendation is not favourable. If the recommendation is not favourable, the assessment committee shall state in the recommendation whether the PhD thesis may be resubmitted in a revised version. In such case, a deadline for resubmission shall be stated.

In order for the PhD student to be able to prepare the defence or to revise the PhD thesis, the premises supporting the committee's evaluation should be clear and reasoned.

Finally, the preliminary recommendation should give an indication of what themes the committee would like to discuss at the oral defence. For further details on the structure of the recommendation, please see the outline on page 3.

### **The public defence**

The defence takes place after the assessment committee has submitted its preliminary assessment, and within three months of the submission of the thesis. Time and place of the public defence is decided by the programme in consultation with the chairman of the assessment committee and the PhD student. Where special circumstances apply, the director of the doctoral school may approve that the defence is postponed. Postponement of the defence is subject to mutual agreement between the parties (programme director, assessment committee, PhD student) as to a new date for the defence. The programme director appoints an academic faculty staff member to chair the public defence.



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At the defence, the PhD student must be given the chance to explain his or her work and to defend the PhD thesis before the members of the assessment committee. The PhD student's explanation of his or her work takes approximately 45 minutes and each assessment committee member can spend 30 minutes on questions and dialogue with the PhD student. The chair may allow others to make contributions during the defence. The entire duration of the defence must not exceed 3 hours, including all breaks. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that the defence does not exceed 3 hours, and that it proceeds in a dignified manner.

### **The final recommendation**

Immediately following the defence, the assessment committee shall submit its final recommendation to the Faculty Office. The Faculty Office forwards the recommendation to the Academic Council, who makes the final decision regarding the award of the PhD degree, on the basis of the recommendation of the assessment committee. The final recommendation shall include the same information as the preliminary recommendation; however, the concluding section in the final recommendation shall give an account of the date and evaluation of the oral defence and the final recommendation to the Academic Council.



## Structure of assessment

### Heading

State the name of the PhD student and the title of the PhD thesis. If the thesis was submitted without having completed a PhD programme, it should be noted beneath the heading.

### Section 1

State the name, title and institution of the members of the assessment committee and supervisors, and indicate who the chair of the committee is.

If any of the supervisors participated in the assessment without voting right, it should be stated in this section.

### Section 2

Give an account of the form of the thesis (monograph or articles), its length excluding appendices and the length of the appendices.

### Section 3

Write the actual recommendation containing a brief summary of the thesis followed by the critical evaluation.

### Section 4 (the preliminary recommendation)

Conclude the critical evaluation and state whether the thesis is suitable for defence. The *concluding* section should give an indication of what themes the committee would like to discuss at the defence.

### Section 4 (the final recommendation)

Give an account of the oral defence. If necessary, revise parts of section 3 in order for the evaluation of the PhD thesis and the oral defence to appear as an integrated whole. In conclusion, state whether the assessment committee recommends that the PhD degree is awarded and indicate whether the recommendation is unanimous or divided. If the recommendation is divided, state the individual recommendations.

### Section 5

Date and signatures of all members of the assessment committee. In special circumstances, the chair can sign on behalf of the other members of the assessment committee.

*The final recommendation should be approximately 3-5 pages.*