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Information about reference checks of preliminary PhD dissertations

Background

On the basis of a new legislation about scientific misconduct from 2017, the Faculty of Humanities enforces an internal quality assurance procedure of PhD theses that involves a scan of the preliminary thesis ahead of the final submission in the system iThenticate.

Sending theses for reference checks

No later than 20 working days before the final submission, the PhD student shall send his/her preliminary thesis to the inbox of the doctoral school: aauphd@adm.aau.dk, cc'ing the principal supervisor so that the supervisor is aware that the preliminary thesis has been sent to the doctoral school for a reference check.

The submission for reference check must take place before the supervisor statement is handed in.

The file is to be sent in a PDF format, and the subject field of the email should be "Preliminary thesis from xxx". The PhD student will carry on working on his/her thesis so that he/she can submit as planned.

What happens at the reference scan?

Subsequently, the preliminary thesis is scanned in iThenticate, which is the system used by the university to check references. No later than five working days from the submission of the preliminary thesis, the PhD student will receive a notification about the result of the iThenticate report.

When there is no case of doubt

The PhD student can submit his/her final thesis as planned if the iThenticate report does not give rise to any doubts.

In cases of doubt

If the director of the doctoral school finds (and it happens rarely) that there are questionable sections in the iThenticate report, a quality assurance committee will be formed, and this committee is to produce a statement within 10 working days. It is the responsibility of the quality assurance committee to decide whether or not there are aspects of the PhD student's research practice that should be changed in order for the scientific product to meet the standards of good scientific practice. In the statement, the quality assurance committee must consider whether the suggested changes are substantial to an extent that makes it recommendable for the PhD student to apply for an extension of his/her PhD enrolment, if possible.

On final submission, the thesis will be scanned again, and provided that the next iThenticate report does not raise any doubts, the thesis will be forwarded to the assessment committee.

In more cases of doubt

If the iThenticate report raises doubts on the second round and the director of the doctoral school estimates that the thesis cannot be directly forwarded for assessment, the procedure for cases regarding scientific misconduct will come into force which means that the case will be submitted to the AAU Practice Committee for processing.

Questions

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please feel free to contact the Doctoral School at aauphd@adm.aau.dk.

For more information, please see the webpage for [good scientific practice](#) at the Faculty of Humanities.